



Stirling Council
Schools, Learning and Education

CONSULTATION REPORT

**REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION RELATING TO
THE PROPOSAL TO PERMANENTLY CLOSE
BUCHANAN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

20 January 2022

This Consultation Report has been issued by Stirling Council
in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

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1 Proposal

1.1 This Consultation Report has been prepared following the consultation on Stirling Council's proposal that:

- Education provision at Buchanan Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 24 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- Pupils of Buchanan Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Drymen Primary School, from 25 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- The delineated catchment area of Drymen Primary School be permanently extended to include the delineated catchment area of Buchanan Primary School from 24 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period;
- Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the Public Meetings held on 19 October 2021;
- Education Scotland's report on the proposal.

1.2 The proposal directly affects the following schools:

- Buchanan Primary School;
- Drymen Primary School.

See Appendix 1a: Buchanan and Drymen Primary School Catchment Areas

2 Purpose of Report

2.1 This is a Consultation Report prepared in compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The purpose of the Consultation Report is to:

- Provide a record of the total number of written representations made during the statutory consultation period;
- Provide a summary of the written representations;
- Provide a summary of oral representations made at the Public Meetings held on 19 October 2021;
- Provide a statement of Schools, Learning and Education response to those written and oral representations;
- Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of Schools, Learning and Education response to this report;
- State how Stirling Council reviewed the above proposal following the representations received during the statutory consultation period and the report from Education Scotland;
- Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Paper and state how Stirling Council acted upon it;
- State how Stirling Council has complied with Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above proposal;
- Provide an explanation of how representations can be made to Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15(4) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2 Decision

This Consultation Report, together with any other relevant documentation, will be considered for decision by Stirling Council Children and Young People's Committee on 24 February 2022.

2.3 Scottish Ministers Call-In

As set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Stirling Council is required to notify Scottish Ministers of its decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Paper and Consultation Report.

Scottish Ministers then have an eight week period from 24 February 2022 to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Within the first three of these weeks, they will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the eight week call-in process has been notified to Stirling Council, they will not proceed to implement the proposal approved at Stage 1.1 above. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse to consent, or grant consent to the proposal subject to conditions or unconditionally. Until the outcome of the call-in has been notified to Stirling Council, they are unable to proceed to implement the proposal.

2.4 Distribution

This Consultation Report is available from:

- Stirling Council Engage Platform (www.engage.stirling.gov.uk);
- Drymen Primary School, 11 Old Gartmore Road, Drymen G63 0DY;
- Balfron High School, Roman Road, Balfron, G63 0PW;
- Killearn Primary School, Crosshead Road, Killearn G63 9RN;
- Balfron Primary School, Moor Road, Balfron G63 0PD;
- Drymen Library, 4 The Square, Drymen G63 0BL;
- Croftamie Nursery, Croftamie Road, Croftamie G63 0EU.

Copies can be requested by email to educ-comments@stirling.gov.uk

If you would prefer this Consultation Report supplied in an alternative format or translated into another language, please contact educ-comments@stirling.gov.uk

3 Background

Reasons for Formulating the Proposal

- 3.1 Buchanan Primary School was mothballed in sessions 2017/18 (from January 2018), 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 following decision at Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee. During the period of mothballing, the catchment area of Drymen Primary School was extended to include the area covered by Buchanan Primary School and most children living in the Buchanan catchment area currently attend Drymen Primary School.
- 3.2 Buchanan Primary School is located in Milton of Buchanan and serves the village and surrounding area. The capacity of the school is 75 pupils across 3 classrooms. From 2011, Buchanan Primary School was in a shared headship with Drymen Primary School. The school is part of the Balfron High School Learning Community.

3.3 Prior to mothballing, the roll at Buchanan Primary School had fallen over the past 5 school sessions. At the start of the 2017/18 session, there were 5 children enrolled at Buchanan Primary School. Between August and October 2017, placing requests for all 5 children were submitted and accepted for Drymen Primary School.

3.4 Future pupil projections for the Buchanan Primary School catchment (using data provided by Forth Valley NHS in September 2020) indicate that the following P1 intakes are expected:

	2022	2023	2024
P1 Pupils expected	4	4	3

3.5 These circumstances result in a diminished school pupil population for Buchanan Primary School, with the unlikely prospect of an increased pupil population.

3.6 Schools, Learning and Education assessed this situation and identified that the preliminary requirements for the proposal had been met. This included identifying the reasons for the proposal; consideration of the alternatives to the proposal; and assessment of each of the alternatives.

Proposal Paper and Educational Benefits Statement

3.7 Schools, Learning and Education then prepared and published a Proposal Paper, including an Educational Benefits Statement, financial information and an explanation of the reasons for the proposal; alternatives to the proposal and the authority's assessment of these and the reasons why the authority considers the implementation of the proposal the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal.

See Appendix 2: Buchanan Primary School, Proposal & Educational Benefits Statement, 8 June 2021.

3.8 Proposed educational benefits include:

- The larger number of pupils of all age groups, allowing increased social interaction, and a variety of opportunities to work in peer levels and across stages;
- Access to a wide range of opportunities and resources to enhance the curriculum, such as Community Leadership Groups, digital learning, sports, outdoor learning, partnerships with local organisations, together with a range of wider opportunities
- Access to a wide range of staff expertise in areas such as Additional Support for Learning, modern languages, science, technology and mathematics, and music;
- Smooth transitions from Croftamie Nursery and to Balfron High School.

3.9 By highlighting the educational benefits of Drymen Primary School, the Council are not implying that many of these benefits did not already exist in Buchanan Primary School. The benefits are being considered when looking at the proposal in terms of what would be provided in the rezoned school of Drymen Primary School.

Alternatives to the Proposal

3.10 Alternatives to the proposal are:

3.10.1 Continued mothballing of Buchanan Primary School.

By August 2021, Buchanan Primary School will have been mothballed for three and a half years. This will exceed the maximum length of time recommended in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010:

'Mothballing is only appropriate for a temporary period and should be subject to regular review, at least annually, against the same requirements which led to the original decision to mothball the school (or stage of education). The maximum length of its duration is likely to depend on the location of the school and the desirability of maintaining capacity to re-open a school there, but it is unlikely that it should exceed 3 years in areas that are not very remote. The condition of the school building and cost of maintaining the mothballed provision will also be relevant.' (Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Statutory Guidance, page 17)

(Note that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, planned consultation during session 2020/21 on the future of Buchanan Primary School was not progressed. This is the reason the mothballing of the school has exceeded 3 years.)

Stirling Council does not believe that continued mothballing would be in the best interests of the community. To retain a building, which is empty and not in operation, for another year or longer, would require Stirling Council to continue to ensure security, undertake repairs and sustain maintenance contracts. During the formal consultation, concern was expressed by residents of Milton of Buchanan of the building remaining empty any longer. Where there are no anticipated enrolments of pupils, continued mothballing of the school is not justified.

3.10.2 Buchanan Primary School could be re-opened.

This is not considered a reasonable alternative at this time. The school would have a very small roll, with roll projections remaining static or decreasing. The school roll at September 2017 census was 5 pupils (6.6% occupancy). Stirling Council believes that whilst the school was in operation with a small number of pupils, the educational experience would be different and that the pupils are now benefitting from being part of a larger school. No parents during the consultation expressed a desire for the school to re-open. Buchanan Primary School would continue to have a shared headship with Drymen Primary School.

3.10.3 Rezoning considerations (see Appendix 1)

It would have been difficult to rezone as Buchanan Primary School catchment sits at the edge of Stirling Council area, adjacent to West Dunbartonshire Council.

There is no opportunity to rezone to the west towards Gartocharn as this area does not form part of the Stirling Council area.

Rezoning to the north towards Kinlochard would involve pupils travelling past Drymen and Aberfoyle Primary Schools to access Buchanan Primary School. This would signify long travel times for pupils and would entail prohibitive school transport costs, with no guarantee that any transport companies would tender for these contracts, meaning Stirling Council would be at risk of failing to meet its statutory duty to provide home to school transport for pupils.

The area to the east of Buchanan Primary School catchment is zoned to Drymen Primary School.

4 Pre-consultation

4.1 Officers from Schools, Learning and Education undertook a range of activities during March - May 2021 to inform stakeholders that a proposal would be taken to Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee in June 2021. During these activities, Officers explained the proposal and reasons for it and outlined the consultation process that would take place if the Children and Young People Committee agreed to the formal consultation at the June Committee. As part of the pre-consultation Officers attended and provided an opportunity to explore the process and particular terms used in the consultation and to ask questions regarding the process at:

- Buchanan Wellbeing Garden Group, 24 March 2021;
- Drymen Primary School Parent Council, 25 March 2021;
- Croftamie Nursery Parent Group, 25 March 2021;
- Balfron Learning Community Meeting, 1 April 2021;
- Croftamie Nursery Staff Meeting, 20 April 2021;
- Drymen Community Council, 4 May 2021;
- Drymen Primary School Staff Meeting, 6 May 2021.

Officers held telephone communication with:

- Church of Scotland Minister, Milton of Buchanan, 26 March 2021;
- Former Principal Teacher at Buchanan Primary School, 26 March 2021;
- Secretary of East Loch Lomond Trust, 26 March 2021.

Officers held discussions with:

- EIS Trade Union Stirling Council Local Authority Secretary, 6 May 2021;
- Unison Trade Union Branch Secretary, 19 May 2021.

The Headteacher of Drymen Primary School carried out a pre-consultation meeting with Drymen Pupil Council, 4 June 2021.

Written communications were sent to:

- Parents of Drymen Primary School and Croftamie Nursery;
- Staff at Drymen Primary School and Croftamie Nursery;
- Parents with children who are catchment to Buchanan PS but attend other schools;
- Chairpersons of Drymen Primary School, Balfron Primary School, Killearn Primary School and Balfron High School Parent Councils;
- Balfron Learning Community headteachers;
- Members of the community including Secretary of Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park; Chairperson of Drymen Community Council; Chairperson of Milton of Buchanan Wellbeing Group and Chairperson of Milton of Buchanan Memorial Hall Committee.

A letter from Schools, Learning and Education and a Scottish Government Guidance Booklet were shared and made available at Drymen, Balfron and Killearn Primary Schools, Croftamie Nursery and Balfron High School, 24 May 2021.

See Appendix 3: List of written communications during pre-consultation period March – May 2021

See Appendix 4: Letter to Parent/Carers/Members of the Community, 24 May 2021

5 Consultation Process

5.1 Length of Consultation Period

The consultation period for the proposal ran from 15 September 2021 until 10 November 2021. This period allowed for the statutory minimum of 30 school days.

5.2 List of Consultees:

- Parents of pupils at Drymen, Balfron and Killearn Primary Schools and Balfron High School;
- Parents of primary school aged children who live in the catchment area of Buchanan Primary School;
- Parents of pre-school children who attend Croftamie Nursery;
- Croftamie Nursery Parent Group;
- Parent Councils of Drymen, Balfron and Killearn Primary Schools and Balfron High School;
- Staff at Drymen Primary School;
- Staff at Croftamie Nursery;
- Former Principal Teacher, Buchanan Primary School;
- Headteachers in the Balfron Learning Community;
- Trade unions representatives (EIS and Unison);
- Residents of the local area;
- Milton of Buchanan Church of Scotland Minister.

5.3 Notice of Consultation

Notice of Consultation was provided to the consultees listed under section 4.2, by letter on 25 August 2021. This provided details of how to access the Proposal Paper and Educational Benefits Statement; how to submit responses via Stirling Council Engage website and in writing; and the date of the Public Meetings, explaining that due to Covid - 19 restrictions a further letter would be sent confirming arrangements for the Public Meetings nearer the time. This further letter confirming arrangements for two online Public Meetings was sent on 24 September 2021.

The Proposal Paper and Educational Benefits Statement, along with Scottish Government Guidance Booklets, were available in Drymen, Killearn and Balfron Primary Schools, Croftamie Nursery, Drymen Library and Balfron High School.

5.4 Advertisement in Local Media

Notice of Consultation and the Public Meetings were advertised on the Council's Engage Stirling platform. Information was placed regularly on Stirling Council social media accounts from September to November 2021 regarding the process, the Public Meetings, the 'Drop-In' session and to encourage participation. Posters were placed in the local area advertising the Public Meetings and subsequent 'Drop In' session. Following the Public Meetings, a further communication was placed on Stirling Council social media platforms and on Engage advising of ways to share views on the consultation until 10 November 2021.

5.5 Consultation Activities

- A consultation page was available on the Council's Engage Stirling platform from 15 September 2021 until 10 November 2021. This allowed members of the public to post views, comments or to raise questions.
- Officers attended a meeting of Croftamie Nursery staff, 27 September 2021;
- Officers attended a meeting at Drymen Primary School support staff, 27 September 2021;
- Officers attended a meeting of Croftamie Nursery Parent Group, 29 September 2021;
- Officers attended a meeting of Balfron High School pupils, 30 September 2021;
- An Officer attended a meeting of Drymen Parent Council, 4 October 2021;
- An Officer attended a meeting of Drymen Primary Pupil Council, 6 October 2021;
- An Officer attended a meeting of Drymen Primary teaching staff, 6 October 2021;
- Public Meetings were held virtually, 19 October 2021, 1.00 pm and 7.00 pm;
- An Officer attended Croftamie Nursery with a focus group of children, 26 October 2021;
- Following the Public Meetings, a 'Drop in' session was held in Milton of Buchanan Memorial Hall, 1 November 2021 at 1.30 pm.

See Appendix 4: Letter to Parent/Carers/Members of Community, 9 June 2021; Letter to Parent/Carers/Members of Community, 25 August 2021 and Letter to Parents/Carers/Members of the Community, 24 September 2021

6 Representations

- 6 children participated in the pupil consultation group at Croftamie Nursery, 26 October 2021;
- 9 pupils participated in the pupil consultation group at Drymen Primary School, 6 October 2021;
- 9 pupils participated in the pupil consultation group at Balfron High School, 30 September 2021;
- 5 members of Croftamie Nursery staff participated in a staff meeting, 27 September 2021;
- 4 members of Drymen Primary School support staff participated in a support staff meeting, 27 September 2021;
- 11 members of Drymen Primary School teaching staff participated in a staff meeting, 6 October, 2021;
- 9 parents/carers participated in the Drymen Primary Parent Council Meeting, 4 October 2021;
- 6 members of the public attended the Public Meeting held virtually online, 19 October 2021, 1.00 pm;
- 13 members of the public attended the Public Meeting held virtually online, 19 October 2021, 7.00 pm;
- 4 members of the public attended the 'Drop -In' session held in Milton of Buchanan Memorial Hall, 1 November 2021, 1.30pm;
- 14 written representations were received via Stirling Engage website, by email and by letter during the consultation period 15 September 2021 until 10 November 2021.

7 Summary of Consultation with Children and Response

The total number of pupils who attended the consultation groups was 24:

Croftamie Nursery children (living in Drymen Primary School catchment)	4
Croftamie Nursery children (living in Buchanan Primary School catchment)	2
Drymen Primary School pupils (living in Drymen Primary School catchment)	6
Drymen Primary School pupils (living in Buchanan Primary School catchment and who previously attended Buchanan Primary School)	3
Balfron High School pupils (living in Buchanan Primary School catchment and including 3 former pupils of Buchanan Primary School)	9
Total	24

Summary of comments made by:

Croftamie Nursery children:

- Children shared what they like to play with at nursery including the water tray; playing outside on the bikes; the dinosaurs; and the crane.
- The children recognised the picture of Drymen Primary School and knew that some siblings might go there and they go to school when they are five.
- The children were shown a picture of Buchanan Primary School and made comments about the trees beside the school and one child commented they thought it was a house.
- One child asked if the school had a school bus.
- The Officer created a chart with the children indicating the different choices for the school and the children discussed the options. Each child was given a post it note to make their choice. The children were asked to mark make/write/draw on the note, add to the chart and share their views.
- Two children thought the building could be used for something else like a house or a place to plant trees or a nursery.
- Two children said Buchanan Primary School should open as a school.
- Two children said it should close as a school.

Drymen Primary School pupils:

- Children said they enjoy school and their learning including visiting the library with their teachers, outdoor learning and the opportunity to be part of a range of community groups.
- The pupils understood that the school building (Buchanan Primary School) is part of the village and the wider community and were keen that it is cared for.
- The pupils knew that the Headteacher of Drymen Primary School is also the Headteacher of Buchanan Primary School and of Croftamie Nursery.
- They were keen that money be invested to turn the school building into something.
- Three children would like Buchanan Primary School to be re-opened as something for the community if it closed.
- One pupil expressed a desire for it to be re-opened as a school.
- One child was keen to know how a decision is reached and how they will be informed.

Balfron High School pupils:

- Those who attended Buchanan Primary School had happy memories of the school including how well pupils were supported in their learning, particularly those requiring additional support. They were able to explain the positive impact of having friends at Buchanan Primary School across year groups.
- The pupils who attended Buchanan Primary School understood their families' reasons for moving them in Primary 6 or Primary 7 as they had a very small peer group when families moved their children to larger primaries.
- One pupil explained his family's desire for the pupil to have a larger peer group so that they would have lots of friends prior to attending secondary school.
- One pupil did not feel that re-opening the school with a small number of pupils would be viable.
- Pupils were keen to know what would happen to the school building, if it closed. They were keen that the building be of use to the community as a public service.

Suggestions made by pupils about alternative use of the school building:
The building could be used as a gym or dentist or other public service and put to good use for the community.

Response**Educational experience**

- Drymen Primary School provides a broad and rich curriculum which is firmly grounded in the principles of Curriculum for Excellence. Children experience good quality learning across all curriculum areas and subjects.
- Class teachers plan effectively so that tasks and activities are matched to children's varying needs. Classroom learning is supplemented by learning groups across stages and between classes, bringing with that the opportunity to share learning experiences between the youngest and oldest pupils, as well as within the immediate peer group.
- At Drymen Primary School, children benefit from a wide range of opportunities for wider achievement.
- Children are happy and settled in Drymen Primary School. They enjoy the many opportunities that are available in the school.
- The headteacher at Drymen Primary School is committed to making proactive connections with the local community in its widest sense including the village of Milton of Buchanan.
- By highlighting the educational benefits of Drymen Primary School, the Council are not implying that many of these benefits did not already exist in Buchanan Primary School. The benefits are being considered when looking at the proposal in terms of what would be provided in the rezoned school of Drymen Primary School.
- Schools, Learning and Education will ensure that when a decision is reached regarding Buchanan Primary School this will be communicated to the relevant children in appropriate ways. The secondary pupils were encouraged to look on the Engage website for updates. An Officer will visit the nursery and primary children to inform them of the decision.

Use of the school building

- Stirling Schools, Learning and Education acknowledges that pupils had suggestions about alternative use of Buchanan Primary School building if the decision was taken to close the school. Pupils' suggestions for use of the building were a nursery, bakery, a place to plant trees, a house, a library, a gym, a dentist or other public service.

- It was explained to the children that no decision has been made to close the school. If that did happen, Stirling Council Infrastructure Delivery Service would work with the community to take forward the process for considering the future use of the school building and the school grounds (which has open space and includes trees and areas for planting).
- There is currently a nursery in Croftamie which is relocating to Drymen Primary School in 2022 to a separate building within the campus. There is a local library, shops, dental practice and other facilities available in Drymen. There is a local village shop in Balmaha.

See Appendix 8: Transcript of Pupil Consultation at Croftamie Nursery, 26 October 2021

See Appendix 9: Transcript of Pupil Council Consultation at Drymen Primary School, 6 October 2021

See Appendix 10: Transcript of Pupil Consultation at Balfron High School, 30 September 2021

8 Summary of Consultation with Parents and Response

The total number of parents/carers who participated in the Parent Council Meeting was 11.

Parents/Carers at Drymen Primary School Parent Council	9
Parents/Carers at Croftamie Parent Group	2
Total	11

Summary of comments made by:

Drymen Primary School Parent Council

- One parent asked for a general sentiment of the ways things are going at present with the consultation.
- The same parent responded that they would like an update on the building.

Response

- The views expressed through the consultation process have been that almost all stakeholders agree with the Council's rationale to permanently close Buchanan Primary School. More than a few residents had concerns about the future use of the school building should it close. Most local residents expressed a desire for the building to be developed and maintained as a community resource.
- If the decision was to close then the Stirling Council Infrastructure Delivery Service would meet with community members to ask what they would like to see happen with the building. There are community groups who are interested in exploring this further.

Croftamie Parent Group

- One parent asked how the closure of Buchanan Primary School fits in with the process of closing Croftamie Nursery.
- Concern was expressed around the length of time buildings may lie vacant.

Response

- Consultation will commence around the future of the Croftamie Nursery building because the decision has been taken for the nursery children to go to their new building. The Stirling Council Infrastructure Delivery Service will discuss and explore options. An Early Years Officer will liaise with Croftamie Nursery parents and share updates on this process.
- The decisions around Buchanan Primary School have not yet been taken. There are options within the consultation process. If the decision is made to permanently close the school, Stirling Council Infrastructure Delivery Service would work with the community to explore options and are aware of local communities not wishing to have buildings lying empty.

9 Summary of Consultation with Staff and Response

The total number of staff who attended meetings was 21:

Drymen Primary School teaching staff	11
Drymen Primary School support staff	4
Croftamie Nursery Staff	5
Headteacher (Drymen and Buchanan Primary Schools, Croftamie Nursery)	1
Total	21

Summary of points made by staff

- A question was asked around the future of the building if the school were to close.
- Comment was made regarding small numbers at Buchanan Primary School, children perhaps benefit from being in a larger building and that it may not be cost effective for Buchanan Primary School to remain open due to numbers.
- Point made around the impact of new housing.
- Comment made that it may be upsetting for local people who are more affected than others. Also asked about the capacity for Drymen Primary School.

Response

- If the decision is taken to close the school, Stirling Council Infrastructure Delivery Service team would liaise with the community to take forward the process for considering the grounds and building. The Milton of Buchanan Wellbeing Group are currently developing an area of the school grounds and have indicated they may be keen to explore options should the decision be made to permanently close the school.
- Buchanan Primary School roll dropped to 5 pupils in August 2017 and in October 2017 these 5 pupils moved to Drymen Primary School. The consultation process has shown that the children enjoy the many opportunities that are available in Drymen Primary School. Children who attend the school have access to a wider peer group. This provides increased opportunities to develop social skills and establish friendships.
- There are small housing developments around Drymen and Buchanan areas. The potential pupil numbers generated are anticipated to be small. These have been considered and are mentioned in the proposal paper.

- Drymen Primary School has capacity for 150 pupils and the current role is 116. This leaves room for growth. The school benefits from a refurbished library; a technology hub; opportunities for pupil and staff leadership and rich outdoor learning experiences.
- It is acknowledged that a school closure can be an emotive issue for members of the local community and should the proposal go ahead and the school building be available for asset transfer, the Council will work with stakeholders to explore how this might be used to the benefit of local residents.

10 Summary of Oral Representations made at the Public Meetings and Response

The total number of members of the Public who attended the Public Meetings held virtually online was 19:

Members of public at Public Meeting 1.00 pm	6
Members of public at Public Meeting 7.00 pm	13
Total	19

Key themes arose at the Public Meeting. These included impact on the community, educational benefits, capacity of schools, and use of the school building. Each of these key themes is summarised and responded to below.

Points Made by Members of Public

Impact on the Community

- There is a lack of facilities for people in local community.
- Families were making the choice to move school and members of the public were keen to know about the proactive opportunities undertaken to keep the school alive.
- Consideration of how the community interacts with each other and of the impact of Covid on the wider community was expressed including the importance of community events including the value of the local wellbeing group.
- A point was made regarding the importance of the school in its community in its widest sense including the heritage and culture of the wider community.
- The value of the place of the school within the community in terms of being part of the village along with Memorial Hall and the local church was acknowledged.
- Concern was expressed regarding the building (Buchanan Primary School) remaining empty any longer and deteriorating.
- Concern expressed over the land being sold for housing or for holiday homes.
- Consideration of new ways to build the community and give everyone a sense of togetherness with a new facility/community hub, if the school were to close.

Response:

- It is recognised that the local community are keen to be able to extend the community activities currently on offer. The importance of the community hall and the local church in the life of the village of Milton of Buchanan is also acknowledged.

- Memorial Hall is a community hub and is able to offer a range of events and it is recognised that the community are keen to build upon this.
- Milton of Buchanan Parish Church is a linked charge with Drymen Parish Church. The minister of the linked church recently retired and both churches are still open with visiting ministers conducting the Sunday services at present.
- Stirling Council is committed to working with the community of Milton of Buchanan to support them if a decision is taken to close the school and Stirling Council Infrastructure Delivery Service would welcome an opportunity to discuss any future use of the school building with the community, look at an option appraisal and liaise with the community to take forward the process for considering the grounds and building.
- The value of the school in its local community is acknowledged. It is important that Drymen Primary School continues to take account of the community in its widest sense respecting the heritage and culture of villages including Milton of Buchanan, Rowardennan and Balmaha.
- Members of the Milton of Buchanan wider community would be most welcome at community events at Drymen Primary (once Covid mitigations allow) and advertisement can be placed in the local area.
- There has been a dual headship at Buchanan Primary School and Drymen Primary School since 2011.
- Opportunities to support the roll of Buchanan Primary School included individual meetings with the previous Headteacher and families who were submitting placing requests prior to the mothballing. The current headteacher ensures that opportunities are available for parents to discuss potential enrolment at Buchanan Primary School at P1 transition events; through communication via school newsletters and through Parent Council meetings.
- It is recognised that Buchanan Primary School building is in need of some improvement and there is a plan for internal improvement which has commenced. The building is checked on a weekly basis.

Educational Benefits

- A range of positive experiences for pupils who attended Buchanan Primary School including Eco work, philosophy of the school and community involvement was expressed.
- A wider peer group was acknowledged as a reason for pupils moving to larger primary schools.
- The proximity of Buchanan Primary School to Drymen Primary may also be a factor in pupils moving to Drymen Primary School.
- It was felt important that the school reached out to the local community in its widest sense.
- There do not seem to be reasons for keeping the school open when there are other good schools in the area.
- Parents seem happy that their children are settled in other schools.
- Nursery relocation to Drymen Primary School was viewed positively.

Response:

- Children attending Buchanan Primary School had positive learning experiences. As the roll decreased, it appears that parents chose to send their children to other schools to allow them the opportunity to work with a wider group of peers within their age range when the school roll declined.

- From consultation with children, staff and parents at Drymen Primary School there is clear evidence that children regularly have planned opportunities to work with children of different ages through the curriculum, community groups and wider life of the school.
- Drymen Primary School have involved children in self-evaluation across a range of themes. Recently, this has included outdoor learning which demonstrates pupils at the school feel positively about their outdoor learning experiences and the positive impact this has on their learning and wellbeing. Children have also shared with staff their views on 'What makes a good lesson?' which has helped to shape Drymen Primary School's learning and teaching policy.
- Drymen Primary have gathered the views of children on how they have been supported at school. The information gathered demonstrates children feel they have positive relationships and feel safe at Drymen Primary School.

Capacity of Schools

- It was acknowledged that the roll of Buchanan Primary School had declined over a number of years.
- Questions were asked as to the reason for the declining roll and as to the capacity of Buchanan Primary School.
- A query was raised as to the impact of placing requests on local schools.
- The capacity of Drymen Primary School was discussed and specifically if there would be space if the roll continued to grow.
- Future housing developments in the local area may generate more pupils for local schools.

Response:

- The school roll for Buchanan Primary School has steadily declined since 2013. The maximum capacity of the school is 75 pupils. The school roll, at the Census in September 2017, was 5 pupils, giving an occupancy level of 6%.
- It appears that parents put in placing requests to other larger rural schools in order for their children to have access to a wider peer group and a number of children in the same year group and due to the close travelling distance to Drymen Primary School (2.5 miles).
- The capacity of Drymen Primary School is 150 and the current roll is 116, leaving room for growth. Placing requests are taken into account when considering school rolls and relating to the future capacity of the school. Placing requests are only approved if there is a space within a school.
- There is a new nursery being built at Drymen Primary School for session 2022/23 and this will not affect the capacity for Drymen Primary School.
- There are some housing developments in the local area which have been accounted for in roll projections when considering the capacity of Drymen Primary School.
- Information from the Housing Land Audit (HLA) indicates that there is a small housing development of 20 houses planned for Balmaha with a proposed building start date of 2022 which predicts 6.2 pupils to be generated in year 1 and 0.62 in year 2. This planned housing development is in the Buchanan catchment area.

Use of the School Building

- Consideration of the potential of a resource for the community, for example, for vocational skills or a resource for learning and activity or a day centre facility.

- A range of questions were asked as to what would happen to the building, if the school were to close. Community aspirations were expressed relating to future use of the building as a potential community asset, if the school did close.

Response:

- If the proposal is accepted and the school closed permanently, Stirling Council Infrastructure Delivery Service would assume responsibility for the building. Options will be considered for the future use of the property.
- Stirling Council Community Engagement team, in collaboration with Stirling Council Infrastructure Delivery Service, would work in partnership with the community to reflect the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Stirling Council would support the community with their aspirations for the building and help them to explore any ideas that the community have.
- Should the school continue to be mothballed, it cannot be used for any other purpose. Stirling Council would continue to keep the building wind and water tight, and frost protection would be on. The building would continue to be unoccupied.

See Appendix 11:

Transcript of Public Meeting, 19 October 2021 at 1.00 pm.

Transcript of Public Meeting, 19 October 2021 at 7.00 pm.

11 Written representations and Response

ENGAGE	8
Email	5
Drop In session	1
Total	14

The total number of written representations received was 14.

Key themes which arose from the written responses included educational benefits, impact on the community, title deeds relating to use of building for educational purposes, use of the school building and the consultation process. Each of these key themes is summarised and responded to below.

Educational benefits

Summary of points made

- It makes sense financially for pupils to go to Drymen Primary School and to be in larger classes with children of their own age.
- The declining birth rate is a factor which needs to be taken into account when considering the options.

- The proximity of Buchanan Primary School to Drymen is a factor for parents moving their children to Drymen Primary School.
- The continuing capacity of Drymen Primary School is a reason for the children moving permanently to Drymen Primary School.
- It would make sense for Buchanan Primary School to reopen as a nursery school.

Response

- Drymen Primary School provides a broad and rich curriculum which is firmly grounded in the principles of Curriculum for Excellence. Children experience high quality learning across all curriculum areas.
- Class teachers plan effectively so that tasks and activities are matched to children's varying needs. Classroom learning is supplemented by wider opportunities such as Community Groups across stages and between classes, bringing with that the opportunity to share learning experiences between the youngest and oldest pupils, as well as within the immediate peer group.
- Children have opportunities to lead school improvement initiatives and participate in a range of clubs and activities. This promotes the development of their leadership skills and supports wider achievements.
- Croftamie Nursery is moving to the campus of Drymen Primary School in August 2022 and will become Stirling's first indoor/outdoor nursery. The relocation of Croftamie Nursery to Drymen Primary School will help to support smooth transition for children as they move from nursery to school.

Impact on community

Summary of points made

- Concern expressed over the land being sold for housing or for holiday homes and as to the future of the building and the grounds which have been a core factor of people's lives for many years.
- For the growth and development of the local community, Buchanan Primary School should be re-opened. The school is an asset to the community along with Memorial Hall.
- The effect this could have on a young family's decision to move to the village was expressed.
- The proposed closure allows the building and grounds to become a potential asset to the community.
- It would be beneficial to have a community use of the building and this could encourage inter-generational activities.
- Local residents would like the building to remain as a community asset and have shared some suggestions with the council as to how the building could be used in the future.

Response

- Stirling Council recognise that there will be an impact on the community and should the decision be made to progress to permanent closure of Buchanan Primary School the appropriate teams within Stirling Council will continue to liaise with the community to support community resilience.
- Prior to mothballing, Buchanan Primary School building was only used for the purpose of educating primary school aged children during school hours. Public meetings, local events, fetes, surgeries and recreational activities are all held in the Memorial Hall at Milton of Buchanan.

- It is acknowledged that the local community are very interested in the future use of the mothballed school should the proposal go ahead and the teams in the Council would be happy to engage on future community aspirations.
- If families with children moved to the community, they can live in the community and attend a local rural school 2.5 miles from Milton of Buchanan. Free transport is provided for pupils living further than 2 miles from their catchment school. Prior to mothballing of Buchanan Primary School, some families living within the catchment already chose for their children to attend larger schools locally, mainly Drymen Primary School, to seek opportunities for wider social interaction, opportunities for group work with peers and transition to high school.

Title deeds relating to use of building for educational purposes

Summary of points made

- A point was made regarding a clause in the title deeds stating that Buchanan Primary School should always be used as a place of learning. This would mitigate against the building being used for housing or holiday lets.

Response

- The legal team at Stirling Council have accessed both the title deeds and a summary of the relevant conditions. There was a title condition restricting the use of the land to education purposes that was imposed at the time of the transfer of the land in the late 1920s. However, due to changes in the land system implemented in 2004, this condition is no longer enforceable, as the party entitled to enforce it has not taken the necessary steps to preserve their right. As such, the Council has a discretion as to the future use of the building, should the consultation exercise determine that the school should be closed.

Consultation Process

Summary of points made

- Concern was expressed by one member of the public regarding the lack of accessibility of the Public Meetings held virtually during the consultation period.

Response

- It is part of legislation when undertaking a community consultation, to hold a Public Meeting in the local area for interested persons. It is appreciated how important it is that all members of the Milton of Buchanan community were included in the consultation process, and Officers met with groups in the community including the Milton of Buchanan Wellbeing Group who were very keen to hold the meeting in the Memorial Hall.
- Officers considered carefully the options for the Public Meeting and were keen to involve as many community members as possible. The importance of safety for members of the public, service staff and possible vulnerable persons also had to be considered in terms of exposure to Covid. National guidance was consulted and adhered to in terms of Covid guidance for schools.
- An additional 'Drop In' session was held in Memorial Hall in the village of Milton of Buchanan on 1 November, 2021 to provide a further opportunity to share information and take account of people's views in writing.
- In addition to the two Public Meetings and 'Drop In' session, Officers attended a range of meetings to share information and consult, including meetings with groups of pupils at Drymen Primary School, Croftamie Nursery and Balforn High School and Drymen Community Council.

- Views were gathered through attendance at these meetings or through Engage, by email or in writing to the Interim Head of Education.
- Households within the local area received two letters by post regarding the consultation process and ways to have their views recorded in the letter of 24 September, 2021. (See Appendix 4)

See Appendix 12: Written Representations from Public Consultation – 15 September to 10 November 2021.

12 Summary of Education Scotland Report and Response

12.1 Education Scotland Report

In line with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was provided by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the Proposal to close Buchanan Primary School. This report is attached as Appendix 10.

In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- Attendance at the public meetings held on 19 October 2021 in connection with the Council's proposals;
- Consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the Council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
- Virtual Visit to Drymen Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

Section 4 of the Education Scotland report summarises their findings and conclusions as follows:

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has strong educational benefits for children attending Drymen Primary School. Children are making wider friendships with the increased number of peers. There are greater opportunities to participate in teams, clubs and activities and to develop leadership skills. The broad and rich curriculum is being developed by a larger staff team with growing opportunities, for example, in languages and outdoor learning. Almost all children, staff and parents are positive about the proposal. Should the proposal go ahead and the school building be available for asset transfer, the Council should work with stakeholders to explore how this might be used to the benefit of local residents.

Stirling Council's Response to Education Scotland's Report

12.2 Stirling Council welcomes the report from Education Scotland and accepts its findings. The points raised by Education Scotland within the Education Scotland report were also key themes identified through the consultation process and are addressed in this Consultation Report. The main points identified in the Education Scotland report for further consideration are as follows:

Should the proposal go ahead and the school building be available for asset transfer, the council should work with stakeholders to explore how this might be used to the benefit of local residents.

12.3 The Council has set out its commitment to ongoing engagement with all stakeholders and the process for taking the proposal forward within this Consultation Report.

13 Alleged Omissions or Inaccuracies

13.1 Section (10) (3) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 also places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission within the Proposal document which has either been identified by the Council or raised by consultees. This section of the 2010 Act also requires the Council to provide a statement on the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, or, if no action was taken, to state that fact and why.

13.2 The following inaccuracies or omissions within the Proposal document were either identified by the Council or raised by consultees during the consultation period:

- Prior to the beginning of the consultation period, Section 8 Financial Information was amended to include:

8.2 There is also an additional reduction in revenue for session 2018/19 of £16,185 from Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) allocated to small schools. GAE funding contributes to overall local authority revenue relative to that of the other Scottish local authorities and may vary annually. Any decrease in numbers of pupils in small rural schools does not therefore necessarily decrease the total GAE allocated to Stirling Council.

- During the consultation period, the following pupil numbers were amended on the proposal paper in 2.4 (6 children changed to 7 children), 2.5 (6 children changed to 4 children; five children changed to three children) and 2.7 (7 children changed to 8 children; five children changed to six children) to ensure accuracy of enrolment figures.

14 Compliance with Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

14.1 Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 states that:

After the Education Authority has received Education Scotland's report, the Authority is to review the relevant proposal having regard (in particular) to:

- written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period,*
- oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting,*
- Education Scotland's report.*

14.2 Following receipt and consideration of 14 written responses during the consultation period, the oral representations made at the Public Meetings, and Education Scotland's report, officers reviewed the proposal.

14.3 The feedback from the consultation was considered by relevant Officers within the Council's Schools, Learning and Education, Finance, Human Resources and Infrastructure Delivery Service teams. This ensured that the Council met the requirements of sections 9(1), 12 and 13(3) (b) of the 2010 Act.

15 Compliance with Section 12A (2)(c) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

- 15.1 Throughout this consultation Stirling Council has given special regard to the provision of rural schools within Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 15.2 Buchanan Primary School is designated as an accessible rural school. In terms of Section 12A (2) (c) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Stirling Council has given regard to the three required factors as follows:

Factor

Any viable alternative to closure

Response

Consideration of possible viable alternatives to the closure of Buchanan Primary School are discussed in the Proposal Paper. In summary these are:

- Continued mothballing of Buchanan Primary School

By January 2021, Buchanan Primary School will have been mothballed for four years. This exceeds the maximum length of time recommended in the Scottish Government guidance to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010:

‘Mothballing is only appropriate for a temporary period and should be subject to regular review, at least annually, against the same requirements which led to the original decision to mothball the school (or stage of education). The maximum length of its duration is likely to depend on the location of the school and the desirability of maintaining capacity to re-open a school there, but it is unlikely that it should exceed 3 years in areas that are not very remote. The condition of the school building and cost of maintaining the mothballed provision will also be relevant.’ (Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Statutory Guidance, page 17)

If a decision were taken to continue to mothball the school, there is no evidence to suggest the projected roll would increase and that there would be sufficient children to ensure the viability of the school. Mothballing is a temporary measure and if the proposal were to be revisited there would be no anticipated change in circumstances in the foreseeable future.

During the consultation in both the written and oral representations, there were no consultees who put forward mothballing the school for a further year.

To retain a building, which is empty and not in operation, for another year, would require Stirling Council to continue to ensure security, undertake repairs and sustain maintenance contracts. An empty building within a community is not ideal for the Milton of Buchanan residents and is causing concern as reported during the consultation period with community groups. Where there are no anticipated enrolments of pupils, continued mothballing of the school is not justified.

- Buchanan Primary School could be re-opened.

The school would have a very small roll, with roll projections remaining static or decreasing. No parents/carers have indicated at P1 enrolment or Nursery/P1 Induction meetings that they were interested in the school re-opening. Buchanan Primary School would continue to have a Shared Headship with Drymen Primary School. Thus the school reopening is not considered a reasonable alternative at this time or in the future. Parental views were sought and taken into consideration during the formal consultation period. No parents expressed a desire for the school to be reopened

Education Scotland in their report on the educational benefits of the proposal comment on this aspect of the proposal:

There are a number of educational benefits for children and staff should the proposal go ahead. Children who spoke with HM Inspectors were positive about the proposal. They enjoy the many opportunities that are available in Drymen Primary School. Children who attend the school have access to a wider peer group. This provides increased opportunities to develop social skills and establish friendships. The availability and use of digital technology at Drymen Primary School, and the rich outdoor learning environment, engage and motivate children to learn. Children have opportunities to lead school improvement initiatives and participate in a range of clubs and activities. This promotes the development of their leadership skills and supports wider achievements.

Parents who spoke with HM Inspectors were positive about the proposal. They recognise the increased opportunities for children in terms of a wider circle of friends. They express positive views on the wide and rich opportunities children are experiencing at Drymen Primary School. They do not wish Buchanan Primary School to be re-opened.

Factor

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the Proposal (if implemented) with reference in particular to:

- The effect caused by travelling arrangements including (in particular), that on the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities and any environmental impact;
- The travelling arrangements are those to and from the school of (and for) the school's pupils and staff and other users of the school's facilities.

Response

- Through discussion with pupils it was evident that they accepted travel arrangements as part of their educational experience.
- Stirling Council provides free school transport to the children who live more than two miles from their zoned school by the shortest available route. Therefore, children living in the Buchanan catchment area are entitled to free school transport. Costs for transport are met by Stirling Council and not individual schools or families.
- Currently, most children travel in one minibus and this is the most economically and environmentally friendly option.
- The travel distance of 2.5 miles is not significant and time taken is approximately 10 minutes.

- Children living in both Milton of Buchanan and in Drymen who attend secondary education require transport from the villages to Balfron.
- Families living in rural areas often travel to access sport and leisure facilities, for example, Brownies, swimming and meeting friends.

Factor

The likely effect on the local community in consequence of the Proposal (if implemented) with particular reference to:

- The sustainability of the community;
- The availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community.

Response

- Milton of Buchanan's proximity to Drymen and other villages has meant that most services and facilities required by residents are currently accessed in the villages of Drymen, Killearn or Balfron. Pre-school provision is provided at Croftamie and from August 2022 will be on a shared campus with Drymen Primary School. Secondary school education provision is located in Balfron. Closing Buchanan Primary School will not impact on access to these services and facilities.
- In recent years until January 2018, Buchanan Primary School building has only been used for the purpose of educating primary school aged children during school hours. Milton of Buchanan has a Memorial Hall used for public meetings, local events, fetes, surgeries and recreational activities.
- Employment could be generated in the village if primary education ceases and the school building were to be converted for other uses.
- The Report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, published in April 2013, makes the following statement about this aspect of rural schools:

It is important to recognise that a school's primary function is to provide pupils with the best possible educational experience. (Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, Scottish Government, 2013, page 30).

Education Scotland in their report on the educational benefits of the proposal comment on this aspect of the proposal:

The local community are very interested in the future use of the mothballed school should the proposal go ahead. They are concerned that if left unattended the building could fall into disrepair. Local residents would like the building to remain as a community asset and have shared some suggestions with the council as to how the building could be used in the future.

16 Legal Issues

- 16.1 The Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 throughout this statutory consultation.
- 16.2 The Council is mindful of its duties in respect of equality and the Equality Impact Assessment did not identify that any parent, child or young person would be treated less favourably as a result of this proposal.

16.3 Under the terms of the Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2010, it is a legal requirement that the Council should not reach any formal decision without having reviewed the relevant proposal having regard, in particular, to:

- Relevant written representations received from any person during the consultation period;
- Oral representation made to it by any person at the Public Meetings held on 19 October 2021;
- The Education Scotland report;
- Preparing a Consultation Report; and
- Waiting until a period of three weeks starting on the day on which this Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed form has expired.

16.4 It is the intention that this Consultation Report should be published, both electronically and in written form, on 20 January 2022. This meets the statutory requirement to publish this report more than three weeks before consideration of the proposal by Stirling Council.

17 Scottish Ministers Call-In Closure Procedure in terms of Section 15 (4) of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

17.1 Scottish Ministers have eight weeks to decide whether or not they are going to issue a call-in notice to Schools, Learning and Education Services. The eight weeks begins on the day Stirling Council takes their final decision to implement a closure proposal.

17.2 There is a three week period during which anyone can make representations to Scottish Ministers requesting that they call in Stirling Council's decision. This three week period begins on the day Stirling Council takes their final decision to implement a closure proposal.

17.3 Therefore, anyone who wishes to make representations to Scottish Ministers can do so until 17 March 2022. Scottish Ministers will have until 21 April 2022 to take a decision on the call-in of the closure proposal.

17.4 Anyone who would like to make representation to Scottish Ministers requesting them to call –in a local authority decision to close a school should email schoolclosure@gov.scot .This correspondence should clearly set out which of the criteria they feel are grounds for the case to be called in, and provide specific evidence to support their request.

17.5 There is a section of the Scottish Government website which includes this information and the process etc.:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/Buildings/changestoschoolestate

17.6 Stirling Council cannot, therefore, implement its final decision until the eight week period has elapsed, unless Scottish Ministers have earlier informed the Council that they do not intend to call-in the decision.

18 Personnel Issues

18.1 There are no staff currently working in Stirling Council who moved from Buchanan Primary School when it was mothballed. The remaining member of staff retired in August 2021.

18.2 The Headteacher of Buchanan Primary School is a shared headship with Drymen Primary School. If a decision is made to close Buchanan Primary School the Headteacher will remain as Headteacher of Drymen Primary School. This post will become subject to job sizing.

19 Likely Impact on Buchanan Community in Consequence of the Proposal (if implemented)

19.1 The local community has been defined in three ways, as demonstrated in the Buchanan Primary School wider community map (Appendix 1b).

19.2 The first community considered is the school community. The existing school community has already become part of a larger, sustainable school community and as such will bring together all the children within the Buchanan community. In recent years until January 2018, Buchanan Primary School building has only been used for the purpose of educating primary school aged children during school hours.

19.3 The second community considered is the Milton of Buchanan village community. Milton of Buchanan has a Memorial Hall used for public meetings, local events, community lunches, surgeries and recreational activities. Memorial Hall is located in the village adjacent to the school, and implementation of the proposal would therefore not affect the holding of community events in the village. During the informal consultation phase a community group were keen to develop an area of the school grounds for growing vegetables and meeting together to support wellbeing in an outdoor setting in the village. The Council gave permission for the group to use a designated area of the school grounds until February 2022 with the understanding that if the school re-opened the community group could work with the children to grow vegetables and if the school did close, the group could discuss further community use of the school grounds and/or building.

19.4 If the proposal is implemented, the children will continue to live in the community and will attend a school 2.5 miles from their existing school. Prior to mothballing of Buchanan Primary School, some families living within the catchment already chose for their children to attend larger schools locally, mainly Drymen Primary School. Two other local primary schools, Killearn Primary School and Balfron Primary School are also within travelling distance at 7.7 miles and 7.5 miles respectively. Thus should parents wish to place their child at another local school, choices are available.

19.5 It is therefore unlikely that closure of the school will encourage families with school-age children to leave the community or discourage young families from moving to the community. It is the view of the Education Service that there will be no significant impact on the desire for housing in the area. As outlined previously, there is one small development proposed in the settlement of Balmaha within the Housing Land Audit and two small developments proposed within the former Croftamie Primary catchment; and should another developer come forward this should not have any significant impact for the Education Service and would not be likely to lead to refusal to support any planning application.

19.6 The third community, the wider community of Milton of Buchanan village, will have a more sustainable school estate, with a reduction in the costs resulting from maintaining empty buildings. The community will be able to develop the community activities provided through Drymen Primary School. There should be no impact on the use of services and facilities in this wider community by residents of the Milton of Buchanan community as a result of the closure of Buchanan Primary School.

19.7 If the proposal is implemented the Education Service does not consider that there will be any adverse effect on the local community, whether defined as the school community, the village community or the wider rural community surrounding the village of Milton of Buchanan. Overall the Education Service considers that there may be a positive effect on the local community with options regarding the future use of the building to be discussed with the community who have shown a keen interest in the prospect of increased community initiatives in Milton of Buchanan if the school did close; the increased opportunities for peer activities for the children in the Buchanan catchment area and increased community opportunities for families and individuals through the school and village of Drymen.

20 Environmental Issues

20.1 As Buchanan Primary School has not been in operation for 4 years, there has been a reduction in travel time between Buchanan Primary School and Drymen Primary School by the shared Headteacher. This will have had a small positive environmental impact and increased the time available to the Headteacher for leadership, management and educational duties. It is unlikely that the arrangements school staff make to get to school will change in any significant way as there are no existing staff at Buchanan Primary who are employed elsewhere. There is unlikely to be any environmental impact arising from the arrangements staff make to get to school.

20.2 The nursery (currently situated in the village of Croftamie) is moving to a new purpose built nursery in the grounds of Drymen Primary School in August 2022. This will have a positive environmental impact as parents/carers will have one drop off point for school and nursery pupils.

20.3 Other users of the school premises or facilities will not be affected in relation to transport arrangements. The Memorial Hall is adjacent to the school. Any community events which might have been held in the school are likely to continue to be held in the Memorial Hall resulting in a neutral transport effect. There were no other users of the school premises prior to the mothballing of Buchanan Primary School.

21 Review of Proposal

21.1 Following the period of statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Buchanan Primary School, Schools, Learning and Education has reviewed the Proposal as follows:

- It has given due consideration to the oral representations made at the Public Meetings, and to all the written representations received. These have been summarised and responded to in this Consultation Report.
- It has considered the points raised by nursery and primary school children living in both Buchanan Primary School and Drymen Primary School catchment areas, and Balforn High School pupils living in the Buchanan Primary School catchment area. These have been responded to in this Consultation Report and provide important feedback for staff working with children and families from the Buchanan Primary School catchment area. The comments and wishes of Drymen Primary School staff and Croftamie Nursery staff have been carefully considered. The comments and wishes of Drymen Primary School parents and Croftamie Nursery parents have also been carefully considered.

- Schools, Learning and Education has considered the content of the report by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the Proposal and are reassured that children living within the Buchanan catchment area are gaining from the educational benefits outlined in the proposal paper.
- Throughout this consultation Stirling Council has given special regard to the provision of rural schools. Buchanan Primary School is designated as an accessible rural school. In terms of Section 12A (2)(c) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Stirling Council has given regard to the three required factors. Stirling Council has given due consideration to the likely educational benefits, the likely effect on the community and the likely effect of different travel arrangements; details of this are included throughout this consultation report.

22 Conclusion

22.1 The Proposal to permanently discontinue education provision at Buchanan Primary School is being progressed due to:

- A period of 3 years of mothballing the school which was reached in January 2021;
- Prior to mothballing, the school roll had fallen to 0 by October 2017;
- Future projections for the school catchment area to 2024 indicate that there will be an average of four pupils predicted to be of age to start school each year.

22.2 A Proposal Paper on the future of Buchanan Primary was presented at the Children and Young People Committee on 8 June 2021. The recommendation was that Schools, Learning and Education proceed to statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Buchanan Primary School. This was approved by the Committee.

22.3 Throughout this consultation, Stirling Council has given special regard to the provision for rural schools within Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

22.4 The statutory consultation process was robust and provided an opportunity for stakeholders to identify key issues of concern. These issues have been fully considered and Schools, Learning and Education's response is detailed in earlier sections of this report.

22.5 Education Scotland provided a report on the educational aspects of the Proposal. The benefits identified by Education Scotland concur with those identified by Stirling Council as in the Proposal Paper. Education Scotland recognised that children at Drymen Primary School identify many advantages to attending this school. The Education Scotland report reflects the views of parents who recognise the increased opportunities for children in terms of a wider circle of friends. They express positive views on the wide and rich opportunities children are experiencing at Drymen Primary School.

22.6 No parents of children who could enrol for Buchanan Primary School have chosen to do so.

22.7 There is capacity in Drymen Primary School to continue to accommodate all children from the Buchanan Primary School catchment and any predicted to start school in the future.

- 22.8 This proposal, if implemented, has the potential to provide recurring savings to Stirling Council, based on 2018/19 figures, of £90 972.
- 22.9 If the proposal is accepted and the school closed permanently, Stirling Council Infrastructure Delivery Service, who are the Corporate Landlord, will progress with their surplus property procedure which involves consultation with other council services to investigate any other potential operational use. If no other operational use is found then the property will be deemed surplus.
- 22.10 If the proposal is implemented and there is interest in the building becoming a community resource Stirling Council's Infrastructure Delivery Service can provide support to the local community in developing their plans and aspirations.

23 Recommendation

Therefore as a result of:

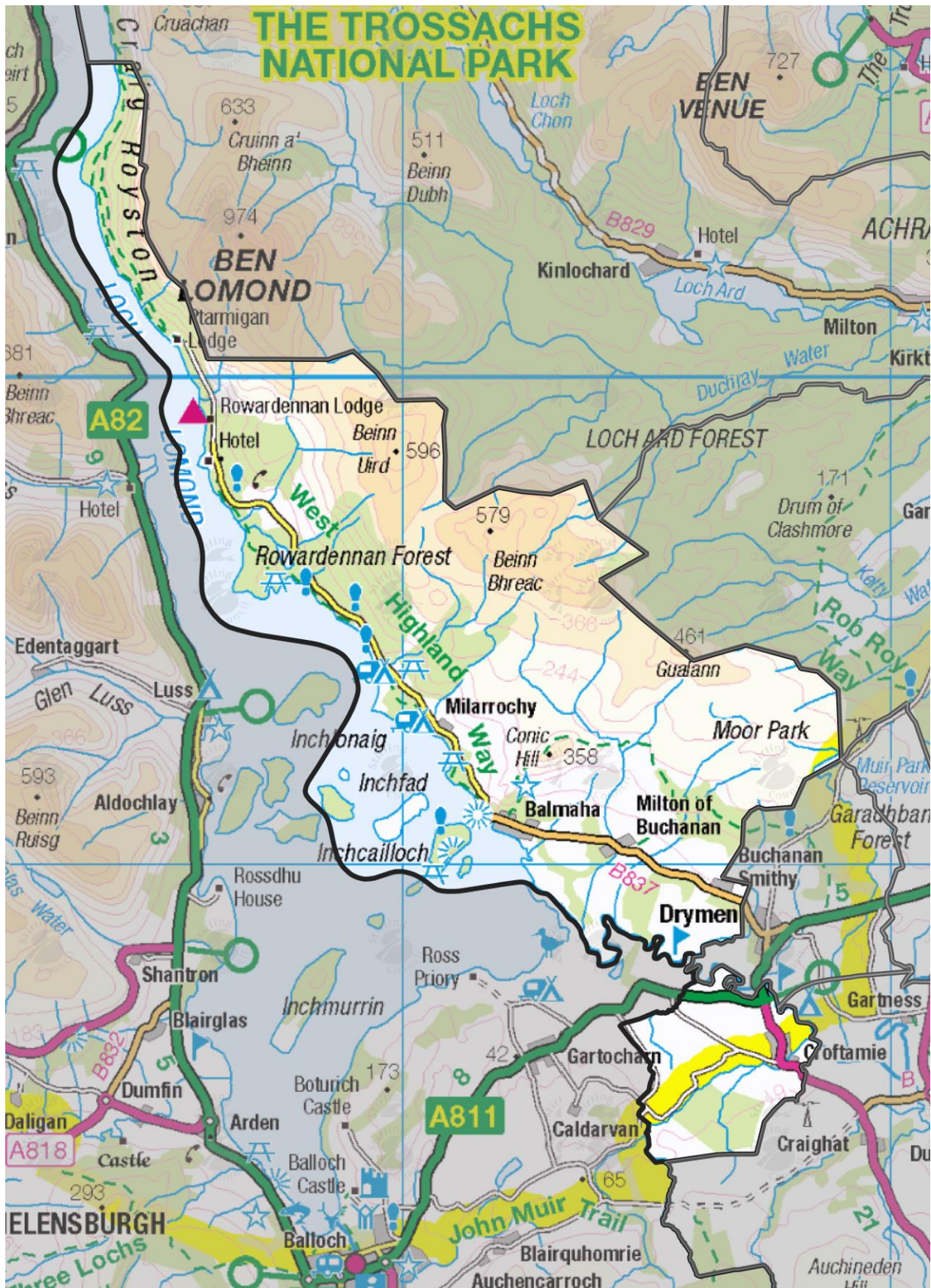
- The significant decline in the roll at Buchanan Primary School;
- The lack of any pupils enrolling for Buchanan Primary School;
- The educational benefits, which will accrue from the Proposal to close Buchanan Primary School, and the merging of its catchment area with that of Drymen Primary School, which have been identified by Schools, Learning and Education and endorsed by Education Scotland.

Stirling Council therefore recommends that:

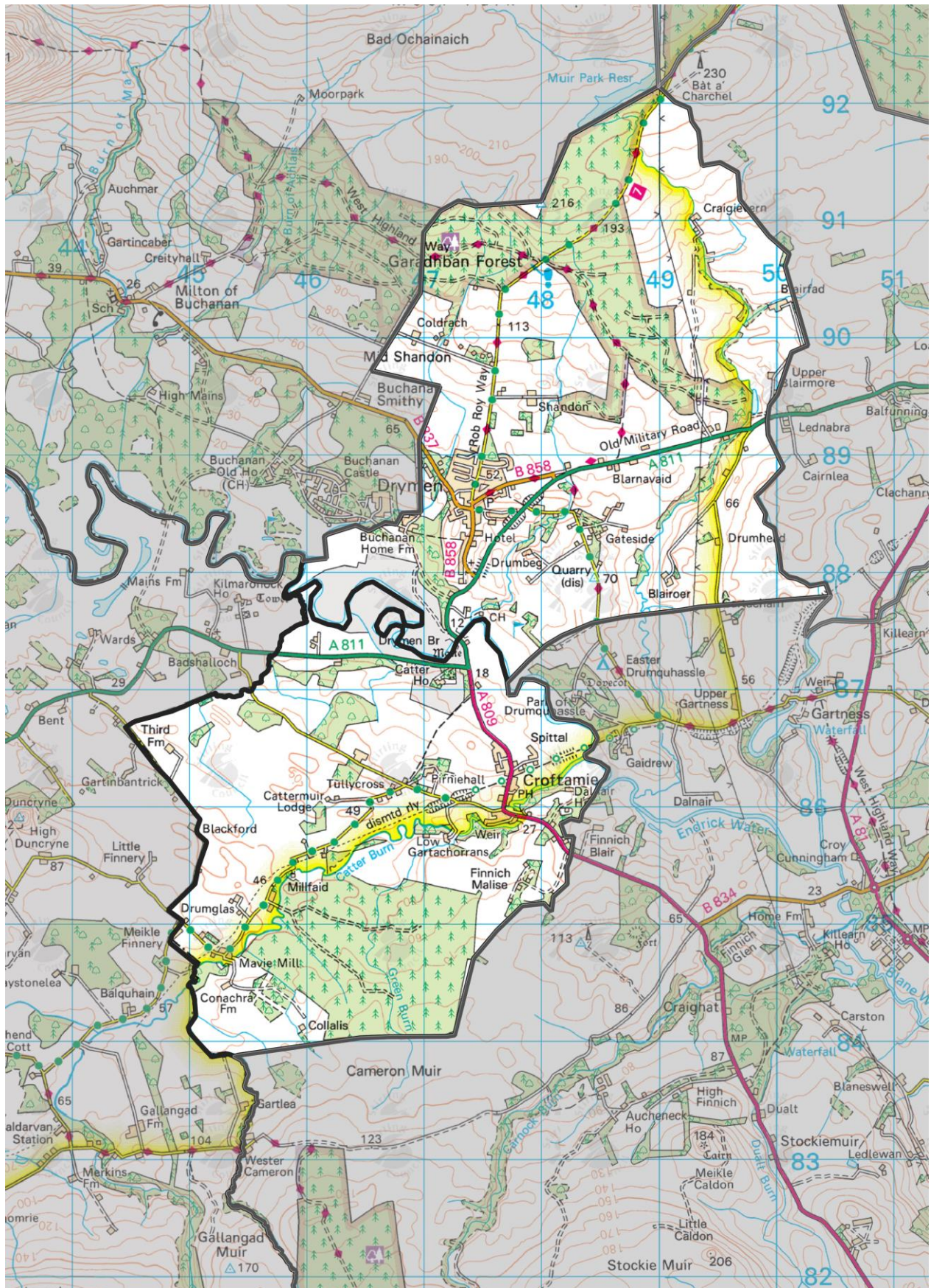
- Education provision at Buchanan Primary School be discontinued with effect from 24 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- Pupils of Buchanan Primary School catchment continue their education as currently, that is, at Drymen Primary School or whichever school they are currently attending;
- The delineated catchment area for Drymen Primary School be altered permanently to include the delineated catchment area of Buchanan Primary School from 25 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Appendices

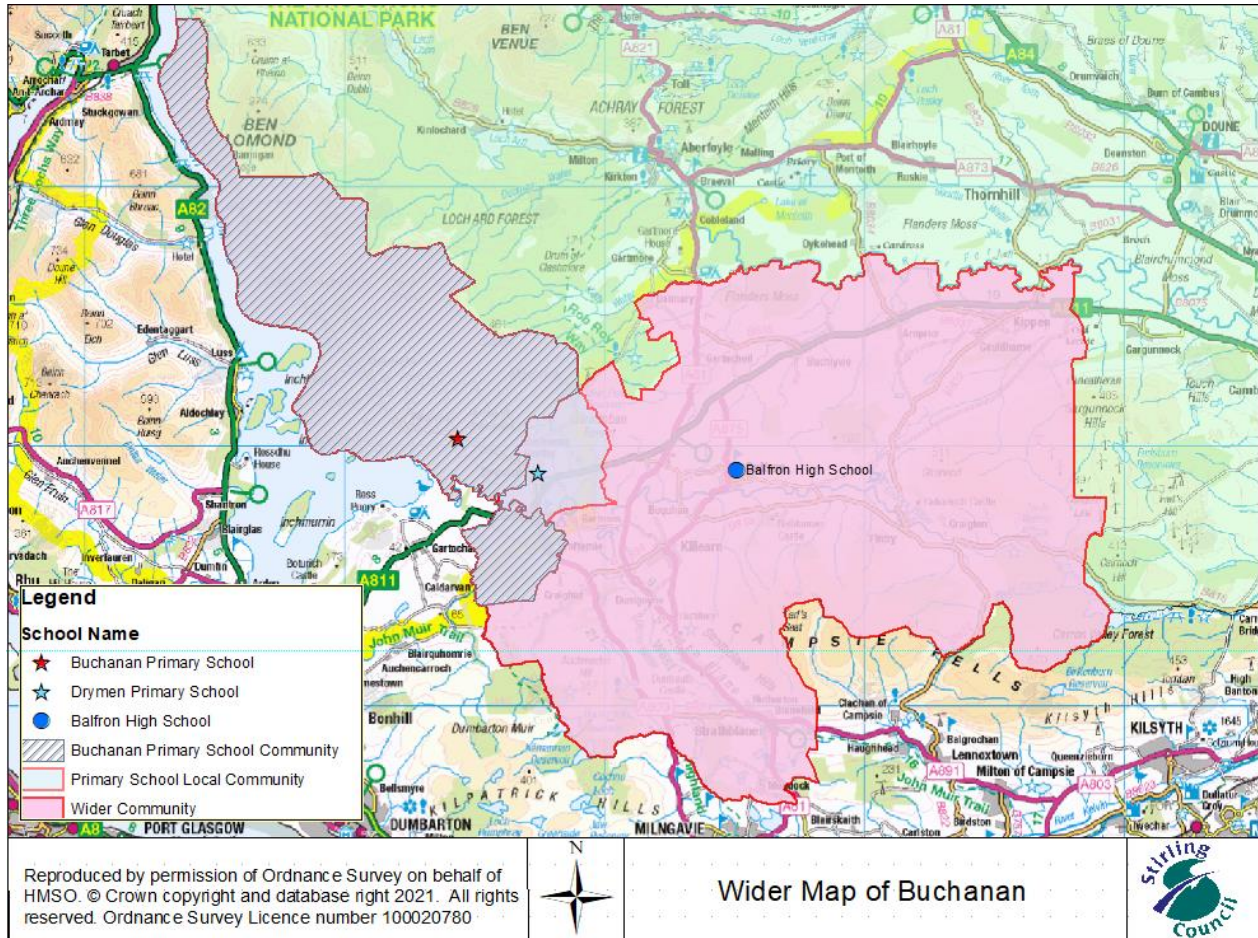
Buchanan Primary Catchment Area



Drymen Primary School Catchment Area



Wider Map of the local area around Buchanan Primary School



Stirling Council
Schools, Learning and Education
Buchanan Primary School
Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Proposal

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Buchanan Primary School was mothballed in sessions 2017/18 (from January 2018), 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 following decision at Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee. During the period of mothballing, the catchment area of Drymen Primary School was extended to include the area covered by Buchanan Primary School and most children living in the Buchanan catchment area currently attend Drymen Primary School.
- 1.2 In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, this paper proposes a formal consultation be undertaken to consider that:
- Education provision at Buchanan Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 24 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter;
 - Pupils of Buchanan Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Drymen Primary School, from 25 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter;
 - The delineated catchment area of Drymen Primary School be permanently extended to include the delineated catchment area of Buchanan Primary School from 25 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter.

2. Reasons for Formulating the Proposal

- 2.1 Prior to mothballing, Buchanan Primary School operated as a single teacher primary school serving the village of Milton of Buchanan and the surrounding area. The capacity of Buchanan Primary school is 75 pupils. Buchanan Primary School is an associated primary school for Balfron High School.
- 2.2 Prior to mothballing, the roll at Buchanan Primary School had fallen steadily over the past 5 school sessions.

School Roll by Year (at September Census)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
School Roll	22	20	14	8	5

- 2.3 At the start of the 2017/18 session, there were 5 children enrolled at Buchanan Primary School. Between August and October 2017, placing requests for all 5 children were submitted and accepted for Drymen Primary School.

- 2.4 For session 2018/19, there were 7 children for Primary 1 enrolment who lived in the Buchanan Primary School catchment area. These 7 children enrolled for P1 at Drymen Primary School.
- 2.5 For session 2019/20, there were 4 children for Primary 1 who lived in the Buchanan Primary School catchment area. Three children enrolled at Drymen Primary School. One submitted a placing request to attend another local school.
- 2.6 For session 2020/21, there were 4 children for Primary 1 who lived in the Buchanan catchment area. Two of these children enrolled at Drymen Primary School. Two submitted placing requests to attend other schools.
- 2.7 For session 2021/22, there were 8 children for Primary 1 who lived in the Buchanan catchment area. Six of these children enrolled at Drymen Primary School. Two submitted placing requests to other schools.
- 2.8 There have been no parents/carers living within the Buchanan Primary School catchment area who have expressed an interest to enrol any pupils in Buchanan Primary School during the period of mothballing.
- 2.9 Currently in Drymen Primary School, there are 29 children from the Buchanan catchment area out of a roll of 109 in the school. The number of children from Buchanan are spread across Primary 1 to Primary 7. All of the children are settled at Drymen Primary School.

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Drymen PS 2021/22	6	3	3	7	1	5	4

- 2.10 Future pupil projections for the Buchanan Primary School catchment (using data provided by Forth Valley NHS in September 2020) indicate that the following P1 intakes are expected:

	2022	2023	2024
P1 Pupils expected	4	4	3

These circumstances result in the unlikely prospect of an increased pupil population for Buchanan Primary School.

- 2.11 Information from the Housing Land Audit (HLA) indicates that there is a small housing development of 20 houses planned for Balmaha with a proposed building start date of 2022 which predicts 6.2 pupils to be generated in year 1 and 0.62 in year 2. This planned housing development is in the Buchanan catchment area.

When Croftamie Primary School closed in 1997, the families living in that catchment area had a choice as to whether they wanted their children to attend Buchanan Primary School or Drymen Primary School. There are currently 2 small housing developments planned for the former Croftamie catchment area. One has a total of 6 houses planned with 1.86 pupils generated in year 1 and 1.86 pupils generated in year 2. The other has 14 houses planned with 4.34 pupils generated in year 1 and 0 pupils generated in year 2. There is currently no information on a proposed start date for these 2 small housing developments.

3 Most Appropriate Response to Reasons for Proposal

- 3.1 Drymen Primary School is proposed as the catchment area school for pupils resident in Buchanan Primary School catchment. Drymen Primary School is 2.5 miles by road from Buchanan Primary School. This provides a local primary school within reasonable travelling distance of the Buchanan community.
- 3.2 The roll (P1 - P7) of Drymen Primary School is 116 (as of August 2021). The school has a build capacity of 150 and an optimum capacity of 131.
- 3.3 There are planned housing developments within the Drymen catchment area which are currently delayed. The roll projections for Drymen Primary School will be kept under review to monitor the impact of any further changes in the number of completions/timing of the planned developments. Pupils from the Buchanan Primary School catchment area are included any roll projections.
- 3.4 Croftamie Nursery is to be relocated to Drymen Primary School from August 2022 and will form part of Drymen Primary School and Nursery Class. This will have a capacity of 37 children.

4 Likely Impact on Buchanan Community

- 4.1 Prior to mothballing of Buchanan Primary School, some families living within the catchment already chose for their children to attend larger schools locally, mainly Drymen Primary School, due to wanting opportunities for wider social interaction and opportunities for group work with peers. Drymen Primary school is approximately 2.5 miles from Buchanan Primary School. Two other local primary schools, Killearn Primary School and Balfron Primary School are also within travelling distance at 7.7 miles and 7.5 miles respectively. Thus should parents/carers wish to place their child at another local school, choices are available. It is therefore unlikely that closure of the school will encourage families with school-age children to leave the community or discourage young families from moving to the community.
- 4.2 In recent years until January 2018, Buchanan Primary School building has only been used for the purpose of educating primary school aged children during school hours. Milton of Buchanan has a Memorial Hall used for public meetings, local events, fetes, surgeries and recreational activities.

5 Travel Plan for Pupils

- 5.1 Currently children who live within the Buchanan Primary School catchment area and who are distance entitled to transport are transported by a combination of methods to Drymen Primary School. Some pupils have been awarded parental mileage contracts, whilst others are transported on a minibus or taxi. Currently 8 pupils use the school minibus; 3 pupils use the school taxi and 5 families (7 children) make use of the parental mileage contract. If the proposal is accepted, this arrangement would continue as pupils resident in the Buchanan Primary School catchment area would be distance entitled to transport, if they live more than two miles from their zoned school by the shortest available route (School Transport Policy, March 2020).
- 5.2 Currently 18 young people living in the Buchanan Primary School catchment area are transported to Balfron High School by bus due to distance entitlement. If the proposal is accepted, there would be no change to this provision.

- 5.3 Drymen Primary School has a School Travel Plan which encourages active, safe and sustainable travel to and from school. The Travel Plan group is comprised of school staff and pupils. Partners involved in the planning included parents/carers and local residents of the school and the Drymen Community Development Trust.

6 Future Use of Buchanan Primary School Building

- 6.1 Buchanan Primary School is located in Milton of Buchanan. The school building is single storey and was originally constructed in 1965, with a later extension in 1995.
- 6.2 There have been no particular concerns about the school building since it was mothballed in January 2018. In August 2018, Buchanan Primary School was assessed under the new Core Fact assessment criteria and from a condition perspective has been rated at 75% and a B rated property with approximately £67,500 of investment required over the next 5 years. A new suitability assessment was not carried out due to being mothballed, however the last recorded suitability assessment was carried out on 31 October 2014 and was rated as 90% resulting in an A rated building. The building is checked regularly and has not deteriorated in this period. If the school was to be re-opened, some decoration work would be required.
- 6.3 If the proposal is accepted and the school closed permanently, Stirling Council Infrastructure Delivery Team would assume responsibility for the building.
- 6.4 The property will become surplus to the Council's operational requirements and prepared to be marketed. All options will be considered for the future use of the property to support the village in terms of both housing and non-housing options. Options regarding the use of funds from any potential sale of the building will be considered.

7 Drymen Primary School Building

- 7.1 As reported to the Children and Young People Committee on 26 November 2019, Drymen Primary School has been assessed under the new Core Fact assessment criteria and from a condition perspective has been rated at 72% and a B rated property with approximately £77,250 of investment required over the next 5 years. The suitability assessment rates the building as 92% and at an A rating.
- 7.2 The Children and Young People Committee were asked to support the feasibility work through an option appraisal and a strategic business case to be undertaken to look at solutions for the future development of the school.

8 Financial Information

- 8.1 The costs for a full financial year, based on 2018/19 figures, if Buchanan Primary School were to re-open would be £142,767. The additional costs for a full financial year, based on 2018/19 figures, for Drymen Primary School are £51,795. Thus the annual recurring savings, based on 2018/19 figures, would be £90 972.
- 8.2 There is also an additional reduction in revenue for session 2018/19 of £16,185 from Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) allocated to small schools. GAE funding contributes to overall local authority revenue relative to that of the other Scottish local authorities and may vary annually. Any decrease in numbers of pupils in small rural schools does not therefore necessarily decrease the total GAE allocated to Stirling Council.

9. Rural School Status - The Case for Closure and Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives

9.1 Buchanan Primary School is classified as an accessible rural school according to criteria applied by the Scottish Government.

9.2 The Schools (Consultation) Scotland Act 2010 states that local authorities must identify the reasons for formulating the proposal. The proposal for closure was formulated for the following reasons:

- Buchanan Primary School has been mothballed since January 2018.
- In October 2017, the Education Service was advised that, due to a number of pupil movements out of Buchanan Primary School, there were at that time 0 pupils attending the school. The five remaining children had enrolled at Drymen Primary School in October 2017.
- The school roll for Buchanan Primary School had steadily declined since 2013. The current maximum capacity of the school is 75 pupils. The school roll, at the Census in September 2017, was 5 pupils, giving an occupancy level of 6%.
- The Education Service have monitored the school roll and reviewed the number of nursery pupils eligible to commence P1 in August 2018 and each session thereafter. No parents/carers of nursery pupils enquired about a place for Primary 1 in Buchanan Primary School.
- There is currently no indication in the Housing Land Audit to suggest that new housing development within the local area would allow the school to have a sustainable school roll.
- The Education Service has reviewed the local primary school in close proximity to Buchanan Primary School which is Drymen Primary School. Drymen Primary School has space for the number of pupils projected from within the existing catchment area of Buchanan Primary School. The schools have had Shared Headship since 2011 and the children from Buchanan Primary School participated regularly in shared events with Drymen Primary School from 2011 until the remaining pupils left in October 2017.

9.3 The Education Service is also required to consider whether there are any reasonable alternatives to the proposal.

9.4 Continued Mothballing of Buchanan Primary School

By August 2021, Buchanan Primary School will have been mothballed for three and a half years. This exceeds the maximum length of time recommended in the Scottish Government guidance to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010:

'Mothballing is only appropriate for a temporary period and should be subject to regular review, at least annually, against the same requirements which led to the original decision to mothball the school (or stage of education). The maximum length of its duration is likely to depend on the location of the school and the desirability of maintaining capacity to re-open a school there, but it is unlikely that it should exceed 3 years in areas that are not very remote. The condition of the school building and cost of maintaining the mothballed provision will also be relevant.' (Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Statutory Guidance, page 17)

(Note that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, planned consultation during session 2020/21 on the future of Buchanan Primary School was not progressed. This is the reason the mothballing of the school has exceeded 3 years.)

9.5 To retain a building, which is empty and not in operation, for another year, would require Stirling Council to continue to ensure security, undertake repairs and sustain maintenance contracts. An empty building within a community is not ideal for the Milton of Buchanan residents and is causing concern as reported during the informal consultation period with community groups. Where there are no anticipated enrolments of pupils, continued mothballing of the school is not justified.

9.6 Buchanan Primary School could be Re-opened

The school would have a very small roll, with roll projections remaining static or decreasing. No parents/carers have indicated at P1 enrolment or Nursery/P1 Induction meetings that they were interested in the school re-opening. Buchanan Primary School would continue to have a Shared Headship with Drymen Primary School. Thus the school reopening is not considered a reasonable alternative at this time or in the future. Views will be sought and taken into consideration during the formal consultation period.

10 Educational Benefits Statement

10.1 This Educational Benefits Statement considers the educational benefits for pupils to attend Drymen Primary School, which would be designated as the catchment school, should the proposal be implemented. By highlighting the educational benefits of Drymen Primary School, it is not implied that many of these benefits did not already exist in Buchanan Primary School. The benefits are being considered when looking at the proposal in terms of what would be provided in the rezoned school of Drymen Primary School.

10.2 Drymen Primary School provides a broad and rich curriculum which is firmly grounded in the principles of Curriculum for Excellence. Children experience high quality learning across all curriculum areas and subjects. Contexts for learning are motivating and relevant to children and are explored through learning experiences which are challenging and enjoyable.

10.3 Drymen Primary School's vision, "We Care for Each Other; We Care for Ourselves; We Care for our Environment" encapsulates the school's aims for children and families to work in partnership in a nurturing environment with an emphasis on the child as an individual and sustainability. The school values of Kindness, Teamwork and Respect were recently created with the school community and underpin the school ethos.

10.4 At Drymen Primary School, children benefit from a wide range of opportunities for wider achievement. In the last year, this has included participation in the school's Community Leadership Groups which contribute to the Eco Schools Award. There are opportunities for sporting achievement with Active Stirling which led to the school's Gold Sports Award. In addition, pupils benefited from a Health Week and a literacy-focused week on Reading, including an author visit to open the school's newly developed library. Two Gold and a Bronze award were presented to P7 children last year as part of the Scottish Mathematics Challenge.

10.5 Literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are central aspects of all learning at Drymen Primary School. There are robust systems in place for tracking and monitoring children's progress in learning. Most pupils achieve appropriate levels or above in literacy and numeracy. This is broadly in line with local and national levels.

- 10.6 There are very good opportunities for learning languages. All children have regular opportunities to learn French through a whole school progressive approach to languages learning from Primary 1 to Primary 7. Spanish is being introduced as a third language from Primary 5. Makaton is led by the Makaton Leaders in P1 and P2 and weekly signs are introduced at assembly.
- 10.7 There is good access to a range of technologies including iPads and laptops to support and enhance learning for pupils at Drymen Primary School. Plans are underway to purchase more digital resources for the school and a plan is underway to develop a Technology Hub in the current ICT suite to promote creativity and learning through play using STEM resources.
- 10.8 Learning experiences are differentiated to meet the pupils' needs and pupils benefit from being able to work on co-operative learning tasks with others. The Headteacher and Principal Teacher meet regularly to discuss the children's progress and a range of interventions are planned to provide additional support. These are monitored and outcomes discussed with families.
- 10.9 Drymen Primary School has a Support for Learning Teacher for half a day each week. This assists in meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with Additional Support Needs. Children with similar needs may work together in groups and benefit from short term support or targeted interventions. This year, the school's pupil equity fund (PEF) allocation is funding a teacher for an extra day, providing support for individuals in writing and outdoor learning wellbeing groups.
- 10.10 At Drymen Primary School, there are pupils of all age groups within the school which allows pupils the opportunity to work in pairs, groups, at peer level and across stages in the school and in mixed groups. It also allows the sharing of ideas, peer support, informal mentoring and relationship building, all of which contribute to the whole school experience for all pupils. This provides opportunities to develop skills for life, learning and work, including leadership, co-operation, and problem-solving skills.
- 10.11 Every teacher at Drymen Primary is involved in leadership of change through involvement in school improvement groups, leading a specific aspect of school improvement. This demonstrates commitment to continuous improvement and a strong sense of teamwork at the school.
- 10.12 Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop skills in team games and sports during physical education, physical activity and sport lessons at Drymen Primary School. The school grounds include a playing field, a wooded area and an enclosed playground space. These provide a wide range of opportunities for the pupils to experience a range of team and individual sports. Pupils have represented their school and community in a range of events including lacrosse, Scottish dancing, cross country and Stirling's Track and Field event. Young Sports Leaders from Balfron High School regularly support Drymen Primary pupils in developing sports skills.
- 10.13 Outdoor learning at Drymen Primary School is an important strength; children are provided with wide and varied opportunities to learn outdoors. Older classes have benefitted from partnership working with the Rangers from the National Park. Staff have recently benefitted from outdoor learning professional learning in numeracy and maths. This led to the purchase of additional outdoor learning resources. Established links are in place with Drymen's local library and Drymen Parish Church and this provides enriching opportunities and experiences for the curriculum.

- 10.14 Pupils attending Drymen Primary School have increased opportunities for social interaction as a result of attending a larger school. All pupils have opportunities to interact and socialise with groups of children their own age both in the classroom environment and during break and lunch times and before and after school. The benefit to pupils is that they are given opportunities to widen their social circle, allowing them to foster positive peer relationships.
- 10.15 All pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to be involved in improving their school at Drymen Primary School, such as being in a Community Leadership Group, which focus on improving the environment and their community. This has included contribution to community events including road-safety awareness. The school has been recognised for its eco-work involving children and the local community, recently being awarded their sixth Eco Schools Scotland Green Flag. There are opportunities for children to plant trees and bulbs in the school grounds.
- 10.16 The leadership team at Drymen Primary School is made up of the Headteacher, Principal Teacher and an Acting Principal Teacher for session 2020/21. The Headteacher has recently completed an additional leadership qualification. The Principal Teacher has been part of a Stirling-wide development group on play in early years. This year, the Acting Principal Teacher is completing a middle leadership qualification. The school is part of a School Improvement Partnership, working with two other Stirling schools to promote effective self-evaluation for school improvement. The school has a well-planned and committed approach to continuous improvement.
- 10.17 In a larger school, there are more regular opportunities for staff to review and improve practice as a school, including linking with partner services and other schools in the wider learning community. Access to peer support and development allows staff to engage in professional learning opportunities more readily, sharing ideas and experiences, and supporting delivery of high-quality teaching and learning. Recently, Drymen Primary School teaching and support staff broadened their understanding of nurture approaches and positive behaviour through attending professional learning with all schools in the Balfron Learning Community. Teachers also shared assessments and planning in Listening and Talking with colleagues in Balfron Primary school to share and raise standards in literacy.
- 10.18 At Drymen Primary School parents play a key role in the leadership and ethos of the school. The school has an active Parent Council who play a key role in school improvement planning. This has included purchasing numeracy and maths resources and funding extra-curricular excursions for all pupils. The Parent Council organise a range of social and fundraising events to support the school.
- 10.19 Parents are welcomed into school and encouraged to be involved in their children's learning, including attendance at pupil-led events, for example science afternoons and assemblies. The school uses Twitter and short videos to engage with families to give them a snapshot of life in the school and the children's achievements. The positive relationships fostered with parents by the school allows them to further support their children in their learning at school.
- 10.20 There have been a range of activities run by parents and staff after school and at lunchtimes, including football, book club, choir and cross country. This provides the pupils opportunities to develop their interests and talents as well as building on school relationships by continued interaction with their peers across a range of ages and stages. The benefits of healthy activities and sports have an impact on the pupils' health and wellbeing, which in turn improves their readiness to learn.

- 10.21 Drymen Primary School benefits from effective transition arrangements with Croftamie Nursery, including the Principal Teacher visiting fortnightly from October to begin working with the children. Plans to relocate Croftamie Nursery to Drymen Primary will further enhance these processes. Transition from P7 to secondary school is supported by the larger number of pupils in Drymen Primary School, offering peer support and friendship groups. Drymen Primary involve staff from Balfron High School in review meetings for children with additional support needs to ensure smooth transition to secondary school.
- 10.22 Thus there are a wide range of educational benefits for pupils resident in Buchanan Primary School catchment area if they are to attend Drymen Primary School. All areas of their development including learning, social, emotional and physical can be enhanced by being part of a larger school. Drymen Primary school is able to provide a broad, relevant and engaging curriculum with a wealth of experiences which will help children to be prepared for life, learning and work in the 21st Century.

List of written communications during pre-consultation period March – May 2021

- Letter to all Drymen Primary School parents including a 'Proposed Changes to Your Child's School' Leaflet;
- Letter to Drymen Primary School Staff and Croftamie Nursery staff;
- Letter to all Croftamie Nursery parents including a 'Proposed Changes to Your Child's School' Leaflet;
- Letter to parents including 'Proposed Changes to Your Child's School' Leaflet; for children who are catchment to Buchanan PS but attend other schools;
- Note in Balfron HS Newsletter to all parents; copies at school office of 'Proposed Changes to Your Child's School' Leaflet;
- Note in Balfron Primary and Killearn Primary Newsletter to all parents; copies at school office of 'Proposed Changes to Your Child's School' Leaflet.
- Letters to Chairpersons of Drymen Primary School, Balfron Primary School, Killearn Primary School and Balfron High School Parent Councils;
- Letter to Church of Scotland minister, Milton of Buchanan Parish Church;
- Letter to former Principal Teacher of Buchanan Primary School;
- Letter to Balfron Learning Community headteachers;
- Letters to members of the community including Secretary of Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park; Chairperson of Drymen Community Council; Drymen Community Development Trust; Secretary of East Loch Lomond Community Trust; Loch Lomond & Trossachs Community Partnership; and Chairperson of Milton of Buchanan Memorial Hall Committee.

Schools, Learning and Education
Stirling Council
Wolfcraig
Dumbarton Road
Stirling FK8 2LQ

Interim Head of Education - Bryony Monaghan

Email: educ-comments@stirling.gov.uk
Date: 24 May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer/Member of Community

Review of Education Provision at Buchanan Primary School

In school sessions 2017/18 (from January 2018), 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee took the decision to mothball Buchanan Primary School. This was because the roll at the school had declined over the last 5 years and in October 2017 the roll fell to zero. Mothballing is a temporary school closure and Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee have reviewed this annually.

During session 2021/22 with the approval of Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee, the Education Service plan to review Buchanan Primary School under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 with a view to proposing permanent closure of the school. This will involve a full consultation process:

- Stirling Council will produce and publish a Proposal Paper and an Educational Benefits Statement. These papers will be taken to Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee on 8 June 2021. These documents will be available on Stirling Council website in June 2021.
- Meetings will be held with Drymen Primary School Parent Council, and Drymen Primary School staff team and pupils will be consulted.
- Meetings will be held with Croftamie Nursery Parent Group, and Croftamie Nursery staff team will be consulted.
- Drymen Community Council and other community groups will be consulted.
- Balfron High School staff and parents, and users of school facilities will be informed of the consultation.
- Parents of children in the Buchanan catchment area who attend other schools will be informed of the consultation.
- A Public Meeting will be held and this will be open to all interested parties.
- Responses will be invited at all stages from interested parties.
- Education Scotland will prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal.

Stirling Council will then produce a final Consultation Paper. This will be accessible to the public and copies/electronic links will be available. It is aimed that the final Consultation Paper will be taken to Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee in April 2022 where a decision will be made.

The process aims to be robust, open, transparent and fair. [Guide to the Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) As Amended provides helpful information. If you have any queries, please contact Stirling Council, Schools, Learning and Education Service.

Yours sincerely



Dr Carolyn McDaid
Service Manager, Schools Learning and Education

Schools, Learning and Education
Stirling Council
Wolfcraig
Dumbarton Road
Stirling FK8 2LQ

Interim Head of Education - Bryony Monaghan

Email: educ-comments@stirling.gov.uk
Date: 9 June 2021

Dear Parent/Carer/Member of Community

Review of Education Provision at Buchanan Primary School

On 8 June 2021, Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee agreed to a formal consultation to consider the permanent closure of Buchanan Primary School under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The consultation will take place from 15 September 2021 until 10 November 2021 (closing date).

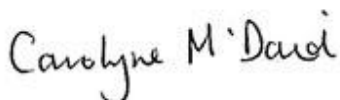
- Stirling Council has published a Proposal Paper and an Educational Benefits Statement. These are accessible to the public at www.engage.stirling.gov.uk
- Paper copies of the Proposal Paper and an Educational Benefits Statement are available from the School Office at Drymen Primary, Killearn Primary, Balfron Primary, Croftamie Nursery and Balfron High School.
- A summary of the proposal is attached.
- Meetings will be held with Drymen Primary School Parent Council and Croftamie Nursery Parent Group. Pupils at Drymen Primary School and Balfron High School will be consulted. Staff at Drymen Primary School and Croftamie Nursery will be consulted.
- A Public Meeting will be held in September/October 2021. This will open to all interested parties. This may be an in-person public meeting or a remote public meeting dependent on any Covid-19 restrictions. Details of the arrangements will be provided early in the new school session.
- Following the school summer holidays, responses will be invited from interested parties from 15 September 2021 until 10 November 2021. Responses can be made at www.engage.stirling.gov.uk or to the Interim Head of Education at educ-comments@stirling.gov.uk.
- Education Scotland will prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal.

Stirling Council will then produce a final Consultation Paper. This will be accessible to the public and copies/electronic links will be available. The final Consultation Paper will be taken to Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee by February 2022 where a decision will be made.

The process aims to be robust, open, transparent and fair. [Guide to the Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) As Amended provides helpful information. If you have any queries, please contact Stirling Council, Schools, Learning and Education Service.

A further letter about the consultation will be sent at the beginning of the new school term in August 2021 and this will confirm arrangements.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Carolynne M'Dauid'.

Dr Carolynne McDaid
Service Manager, Schools, Learning and Education

Schools, Learning and Education
Stirling Council
Wolfcraig
Dumbarton Road
Stirling FK8 2LQ

Interim Head of Education - Bryony Monaghan

Email: educ-comments@stirling.gov.uk
Date: 25 August 2021

Dear Parent/Carer/Member of Community

Public Consultation of Education Provision at Buchanan Primary School

On 8 June 2021, Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee agreed to a formal consultation to consider the permanent closure of Buchanan Primary School under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The consultation will take place from **15 September 2021 until 10 November 2021 (closing date)**.

- Stirling Council has published a Proposal Paper and an Educational Benefits Statement. These are accessible to the public at www.engage.stirling.gov.uk
- Paper copies of the Proposal Paper and an Educational Benefits Statement are available from the School Office at Drymen Primary School, Killearn Primary School, Balfron Primary School, Croftamie Nursery and Balfron High School.
- Meetings will be held with Drymen Primary School Parent Council and Croftamie Nursery Parent Group. Pupils at Drymen Primary School, Croftamie Nursery and Balfron High School will be consulted. Staff at Drymen Primary School and Croftamie Nursery will be consulted.
- A Public Meeting will be held on **Tuesday 19 October 2021 at 7 pm**. This will be open to all interested parties. The meeting may be an in-person meeting held in Drymen Primary School or a remote online public meeting. This will be dependent on any Covid-19 restrictions that may be in place in schools. I will write to confirm arrangements following updated government guidance. Arrangements will also be shared on www.engage.stirling.gov.uk
- Responses are invited from interested parties from **15 September 2021 until 10 November 2021**. Responses can be made at www.engage.stirling.gov.uk or to the Interim Head of Education at educ-comments@stirling.gov.uk
- Education Scotland will prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal.

Stirling Council will then produce a final Consultation Paper. This will be accessible to the public and copies/electronic links will be available. The final Consultation Paper will be taken to Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee by February 2022 where a decision will be made.

The process aims to be robust, open, transparent and fair. [Guide to the Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) As Amended provides helpful information. If you have any queries, please contact Stirling Council, Schools, Learning and Education Service.

Yours sincerely



Dr Carolyn McDaid
Service Manager, Schools, Learning and Education

Schools, Learning and Education
Stirling Council
Wolfcraig
Dumbarton Road
Stirling FK8 2LQ

Interim Head of Education - Bryony Monaghan

Email: educ-comments@stirling.gov.uk
Date: 24 September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer/Member of Community

Public Consultation of Education Provision at Buchanan Primary School

On 8 June 2021, Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee agreed to a formal consultation to consider the permanent closure of Buchanan Primary School under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The consultation will take place from 15 September 2021 until 10 November 2021 (closing date).

As part of the consultation **Public Meetings** will be held on **Tuesday 19 October 2021, at 1.00 pm – 3.00 pm and at 7.00 pm – 9.00 pm**. The Public Meetings are open to all interested parties and will provide an opportunity to:

- Hear more about the proposal and alternatives to the proposal being considered by the Council.
- Ask questions about the proposal and the alternatives.
- Have your views recorded so that they can be taken into account as part of the consultation.

Due to current restrictions in schools, the Public Meetings will be held **online** (virtually). If you would like to attend one of the meetings, please contact educ-comments@stirling.gov.uk or telephone 01786 233633. We will then be in touch to provide arrangements for accessing the meeting.

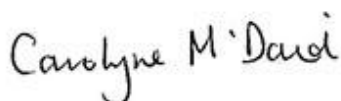
You can also make responses to the consultation at www.engage.stirling.gov.uk or by writing to the Interim Head of Education at educ-comments@stirling.gov.uk or at Schools, Learning & Education, Stirling Council, Wolfcraig, Dumbarton Road, Stirling, FK8 2LG. This must be done between 15 September 2021 and 10 November 2021.

Information on the consultation is available at www.engage.stirling.gov.uk, including a Proposal Paper and an Educational Benefits Statement. Paper copies of the Proposal Paper and Educational Benefits Statement are also available from the School Office at Drymen Primary School, Killearn Primary School, Balfron Primary School, Croftamie Nursery and Balfron High School.

Following the consultation, Stirling Council will produce a final Consultation Paper. This will be accessible to the public at www.engage.stirling.gov.uk and paper copies will be available in the schools listed above. The final Consultation Paper will be taken to Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee by February 2022 where a decision will be made.

If you have any queries, please contact Stirling Council, Schools, Learning and Education Service.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn M. Daid".

Dr Carolyn McDaid
Service Manager, Schools, Learning and Education

Transcript of Pupil Consultation on 26 October 2021 at Croftamie Nursery

Present:

Kay Robertson, Officer Stirling Council Schools, Learning & Education

ECE at Croftamie Nursery

Pupil 1, Pupil 2, Pupil 3, Pupil 4, Pupil 5, Pupil 6.

All pupils lived in the catchment area for Drymen Primary School with 2 pupils living in the former catchment area for Buchanan Primary School, currently rezoned to Drymen Primary School.

Using language appropriate for the age group and using a Talking Teddy to turn take, the current situation regarding the mothballing of Buchanan Primary School and the consultation process was explained. Options within the proposal paper were outlined: the proposals of closure, remaining open and continuing mothballing of the school.

It was explained that the purpose of the meeting was to capture the children's views regarding the public consultation of the closure of Buchanan Primary School.

Officer	Can you tell me what this is a picture of? (picture of Croftamie Nursery)
All children	Croftamie Nursery!
Officer	What do you like to play and learn at Croftamie Nursery?
Child 3	Play.
Child 2	I like playing with the crane.
Child 4	The water tray.
Child 5	The dinosaurs
Child 6	Outside on the bikes
Officer	Can you tell me what this is a picture of? (picture of Drymen Primary)
Pupil 5	My brother goes there. It is Drymen Primary.
Pupil 4	I haven't been to the school there but I go to the dentist in Drymen.
Pupil 5	When I am 5, I will go to school.
Officer	Can you tell me about this picture? (picture of Buchanan Primary)
Pupil 2	I like the leaves on the trees.
Pupil 1	It looks like a spooky house. Are there skeletons?
Officer	There are no skeletons. Do you know what this building is called? (shaking of heads) It is called Buchanan Primary. It is closed just now. There are no children there just now.
Pupil 1	Is there a school bus in that house?
Officer	There is not a school bus there. I need your help. We need to ask you what you think.
Pupil 4	This is quite tricky.
Officer	It is quite tricky. We have choices to make. We could keep the school closed for a bit longer; or close it all the time or open it again as a school. (shows large paper with options) You have a post-it note each and pens, can you make a mark or write or draw what you think and we will stick it here (3 columns with options). (Children drew their thoughts and each spoke as they put their thoughts down).

Pupil 6	I think it should stay open.
Pupil 4	I think it should stay closed.
Pupil 5	I think it should stay open.
Pupil 2	I have written closed.
Pupil 1	I think it should be a house now.
Pupil 3	I think it could be something else like a nursery.
Pupil 1	Is there a bed in there?
Officer	No there is not a bed in there.
Pupil 1	It could be a nursery with clocks in it. We have clocks at our nursery.
Pupil 4	We could plant trees there.
Officer	These are all good ideas. Thank you. I would like to come back one day and tell you what is decided. Thank you for all your help.

Transcript of Pupil Consultation on 6 October 2021 with Drymen Primary School Pupil Council.

Present:

Kay Robertson, Officer Stirling Council Schools, Learning & Education

Patrick Robertson, Head teacher Drymen Primary School

Pupil 1 (P3), Pupil 2 (P5), Pupil 3 (P7), Pupil 4 (P7), Pupil 5 (P7), Pupil 6 (P6), Pupil 7(P4),

Pupil 8 (P6), Pupil 9 (P6)

All pupils attend Drymen Primary School and 3 had previously attended Buchanan Primary School as pupils.

Officer explained the current situation regarding Buchanan Primary School.

Officer explained that the purpose of the meeting was to capture the children's views regarding the public consultation of the closure of Buchanan Primary School.

Officer	Can you describe what you like about your school (Drymen Primary)?
Pupil 1	Lots of people to make friends with; kind teachers; and you can go to the library.
Pupil 2	I like tree surveys and outdoor learning.
Pupil 3	There are nice manners and the children and their teacher go to the library and read books. I like all the community groups you can be part of.
Officer	As you know, Mr Robertson is also Headteacher of Buchanan Primary School and Croftamie Nursery. There are no pupils there at present. There are 3 options for Buchanan Primary (reopen/ continue to mothball/close). What are your views?
Pupil 5	Maybe it could re-open as somewhere for people to go, like a bakery.
Pupil 4	It should be closed until it has a use.
Pupil 9	It's a pretty building so it should re-open as a school.
Pupil 7	The school is a really nice building. It should not be mothballed any more.
Pupil 1	Personally I think it should be closed and turned into a library.
Pupil 6	It could re-open as something else. Not a school.
Pupil 2	It could be reopened as a gym
Pupil 3	My mum used to go there and it was really nice.
Pupil 2	I would like it to be cared for.
Pupil 5	I would like it to be opened as something for the community as money could be put into it. Maybe everyone there could be some money into changing it to something else.
Pupil 1	Whose decision is it?
Officer	There is a process around the consultation and the decision making. We are asking lots of people their views and then we will write a report and a committee will come together to make a decision. Thanks to everyone for their views. I will return to speak to the Pupil Council once a decision is made and let you know the decision.

Transcript of Pupil Consultation on 30 September 2021 at Balfron High School

Present:

Kay Robertson, Officer Stirling Council Schools, Learning & Education

Sally Kennedy, Officer Stirling Council Schools, Learning & Education

Pupil 1 (S1), Pupil 2 (S2), Pupil 3 (S2), Pupil 4 (S3), Pupil 5 (S3), Pupil 6 (S5), Pupil 7(S5),
Pupil 8 (S5), Pupil 9 (S6)

All pupils lived in the Buchanan Primary School catchment area and 3 had attended Buchanan Primary School as pupils.

The current situation regarding the mothballing of Buchanan Primary School and the consultation process was explained. Options within the proposal paper were outlined: the proposals of closure, remaining open and continuing mothballing of the school.

It was explained that the purpose of the meeting was to capture the pupils' views regarding the public consultation of the closure of Buchanan Primary School.

Officer	Please share your thoughts or ask any questions about Buchanan Primary School
Pupil 7	What happens to the building? Does it just stay vacant?
Officer	There are the three options for the school to re-open, continue mothballing or for the school to close. If the decision is made to close the school Stirling Council Assets Team would involve the community in consideration of future use of the building and grounds. The Milton of Buchanan Wellbeing Group already work in the grounds and have expressed interest in possibly finding out more about the future use of the building if closure did go ahead.
Officer	Do you have views on the future of the school which you would like to share?
Pupil 7	If there's only 5 or 6 pupils, there's not much point and they can go to Drymen Primary School. The building could be used as a gym or dentist or other public service and put to good use for the community.
Officer	You may have heard of Trossachs Primary School near Callander which closed and the community were involved in deciding what happened to the building and they now have a community facility including a community café.
Pupil 1	Where is the school located?
Officer	As you go through Milton of Buchanan from Drymen it is on the left side of the main street beside the Memorial Hall.
Pupil 4	The reason I didn't go to Buchanan Primary School was because when my dad went there it had 30 pupils in the whole school and he felt he didn't know anyone when he went to Balfron High.
Pupil 9	I liked being at Buchanan Primary School. There was good access to learning support. It was very good, more individualised than you get in a bigger school. We had multiple children with disabilities who got very good attention you might not get in a bigger school.
Pupil 8	You were able to make close relationships as a very small group, particularly with different year groups, For example X and I are still friends at high school although we are in different years.

Officer	Was there a reason you moved like a house move so changed school?
Pupil 9	My friend moved in P7 to another school and there wasn't other people my age so I moved to a different school too.
Officer	Is there anything else you would like to know or ask? You can go online at Stirling Engage and see the documents and information and you are able to give your views there too. You are also most welcome to attend the Public Meetings on 19 October 2021. Thank you for taking time to talk with us .If anyone wants to stay on and share any views or thoughts please do.

Transcript of Public Meeting held on Tuesday 19 October 2021 at 1.00 – 2.00 pm

This meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams

Present

6 Members of the Public

Stirling Council Officers:

Carolynne McDaid – Service Manager, Schools, Learning and Education, Chairperson

Kay Robertson - Lead Officer, Schools, Learning and Education

Sally Kennedy - Lead Officer, Schools, Learning and Education

Carolann Morrow – Team Leader, Schools, Learning and Education

Bryony Monaghan - Interim Head of Education

Tracey Mills - Service Manager, Infrastructure, Assets and Support

Aileen More – Team Leader – Schools, Learning and Education

Lisa Macauley – Education Accountant

Isabelle Smit – Forward Planning Officer, Schools, Learning and Education

Kate O'Neill – Early Years Improvement Officer

Geraldine Donald –Team Leader, Project Delivery, Infrastructure, Assets and Support

Patrick Robertson – Headteacher of Buchanan Primary School, Drymen Primary School and

Croftamie Nursery

Maria Spiers – Education Scotland

<p>Chairperson (CMD)</p>	<p>Good afternoon. I'd like to welcome you to this Public Meeting which is part of the statutory consultation on the proposal to permanently close Buchanan Primary School.</p> <p>I'm CMD and I'm a Service Manager within the Education Team within Stirling Council and I'm going to chair our meeting this afternoon.</p> <p>Please note that this meeting is being recorded so that we can transcribe it and produce an accurate record of the meeting. This transcript will form part of the final consultation report. (Officer) has begun the recording of our meeting this afternoon.</p> <p>Before we do introductions, I'm going to begin with some protocols specific to this being an online virtual meeting.</p> <p>It would be helpful if everybody could please mute their microphone when they are not speaking. That will help the sound quality of our meeting. And that can be done, as somewhere on your screen you will have a microphone symbol, and you can switch that on and off. Don't worry if you forget, we will do a gentle reminder but it's not a problem if you do forget.</p> <p>Also in order to participate in the meeting, if you could please raise your hand. Again there is a button to help to do that, a button with a smiley face with a hand raised. If you click that on I will try and monitor that to ensure that anybody who wants to say anything can join into the meeting.</p>
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	<p>And as I explained earlier we also have the chat function which will come up probably on the side of your screen and you can type things in to there, comments or questions, and I will try and monitor that too.</p> <p>If there are any technical issues (Officer) is going to come back into the meeting when she can and help out with that.</p> <p>Now I am going to ask each of the Officers who is present to introduce themselves and if you go on to the chat function we'll do it in the order that our names are there and the Officers can introduce themselves and explain their role within this consultation.</p> <p><i>Officers introduce themselves</i></p> <p>Thank you. Okay that's the team that are here. Now those who have joined our public meeting I am going to ask you to introduce yourself. Your name would be absolutely fine but if you want to tell us if you have a particular connection with the school or community, some of you might be a parent or you might live in the community, feel free to do so although you don't need to. I will ask everyone to introduce themselves in the order of the list we have of people coming along today.</p> <p><i>Members of public introduce themselves</i></p> <p>Thank you for that.</p> <p>So as I said earlier this meeting forms part of the formal consultation on the proposal to permanently close Buchanan Primary School. I think we are probably all aware there will be a similar meeting this evening.</p> <p>In terms of the format of our meeting this afternoon in a moment (Officer), one of our Officers, will provide a brief background to the proposal and I'm sure many of you have read about this and if you haven't you can go on to Stirling Council's Engage website and access it there. After that (Officer), another of our Officers, will explain a little more about the consultation process. And then we will open the meeting up for discussion, comments and questions.</p> <p>We are keen to hear your views and want to provide this opportunity for you to express them and to ask any questions. We will do our best to answer your questions but we may have to go and find that out and would either come back to you in person or in the formal consultation report.</p> <p>I'm going to hand over first to (Officer) who is going to give a brief background to the proposal.</p>
Officer (KR)	<p>Good afternoon everyone. I would like to provide some background information. As you will know the primary school in the village of Milton of Buchanan is Buchanan Primary. Since 2011 the school has had a shared headship with Drymen Primary and both schools worked together on some aspects of learning, for example, on things like transition to High School.</p>

	<p>From 2013 the roll of Buchanan Primary had been steadily falling and in August 2017 fell to 5 pupils. Several families were choosing to send their children to Drymen Primary by a placing request. From October 2017 Buchanan Primary has had no pupils. From January 2018 until the present time the school has been mothballed and that is the term used according to Scottish Government guidance when a school is closed as a temporary measure.</p> <p>Each year Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee in accordance with legislation have reviewed this. This year, on 8th June 2021, Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee agreed to a formal consultation to consider the permanent closure of Buchanan Primary under the Consultation Act.</p> <p>As (Chairperson) said Stirling Council has produced and published a Proposal Paper and an Educational Benefits Statement. These are accessible to the public at www.engage.stirling.gov.uk and paper copies have been made available in the local area as well. So I'll now hand over to (Officer) who will give an overview of the consultation process.</p>
Officer (SK)	<p>Good afternoon everyone. I'd like to explain more about the consultation process itself. There are three phases within the consultation process: Pre-Consultation, Formal Consultation and then a Reporting phase.</p> <p>During the pre-consultation phase between 10th March and mid May 2021, the Local Authority shared information to raise awareness about the process and the proposal. This took place through meetings and communications with a variety of groups and individuals including: Drymen Primary School Parent Council, their Pupil Council and staff teams, as well as Croftamie Nursery Parent Group and staff team. There was also communication with trade unions, the former Principal Teacher from Buchanan Primary School, Milton and Buchanan Wellbeing Group and the local minister.</p> <p>Information was communicated to parents, children, various groups and users of school facilities, some previously mentioned and also to all parents of Drymen Primary School and Croftamie establishments, all children who are catchment to Buchanan Primary School but attend other schools, for example, Killearn or Balfron Primary School, Balfron Learning Community headteachers, who put a note in school newsletters and made copies of documentation available in their school offices and was shared with relevant Chairpersons of Parent Councils.</p> <p>Notification was sent to Education Scotland who are involved, as (HMIE) said, in considering the proposal consultation and will produce a report.</p> <p>The formal consultation period is now currently underway and runs from 15th of September until the 10th of November 2021 that takes in a period of 8 weeks which is 35 school days. It is general practice when undertaking a community consultation, to hold a Public Meeting in the local area for interested persons. We do appreciate how important it is that all members of the Milton of Buchanan community are included in the consultation process, and thought it might be helpful to have some background around the service decision to hold the Public Meetings online. We did meet with several groups in the community including the</p>

	<p>Milton of Buchanan Wellbeing Group who were very keen to hold the meeting in the Memorial Hall. We did discuss as a team the options for the Public Meeting at length and we were very keen to involve as many community members as possible. We also felt it was important to be aware of safety for members of the public, service staff and possible vulnerable persons in terms of exposure to COVID.</p> <p>One of our Officers has been liaising with (Member of Public), Chairperson of the Milton of Buchanan Wellbeing Group, around the possibility of exploring other options for the consultation process, to ensure that all members of the community feel included. We are also consulting with other council services including legal services about this.</p> <p>In addition to the two Public Meetings today, during this period Officers are attending a range of meetings to share information & consult, includes meetings with the groups I have previously mentioned as well as groups of pupils at Drymen Primary School, Croftamie Nursery and Balfron High School and Drymen Community Council.</p> <p>Documents are available at school offices, Drymen Library and online.</p> <p>Views are being gathered through attendance at these meetings or through Engage which is our online method, by email or in writing to Interim Head of Education and some responses have already been received by email or through Engage.</p> <p>Education Scotland are kept informed and have access to the proposal documents and are invited to Public Meetings and will prepare report on the consultation. They will also be conducting a virtual visit in November to the school.</p> <p>Following the consultation period a report is prepared reflecting oral and written responses and taken to Children and Young People’s Committee for a decision which is aimed around about the 24th February 2022.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>Thank you (Officers).</p> <p>Before we begin, can I check everyone can hear?</p> <p>What I’d like to do now is open the meeting up to any comments, questions or discussion. So if we just want to get going with that that would be lovely thank you.</p>
Member Of Public	<p>Not having any children in the area and not having an emotional attachment to the area, it is quite easy for myself and my wife (who will probably join the meeting tonight) to not be emotionally connected to the school and if there is no call for a school well I can’t see how it is any possibility or sense in keeping a school open, or potentially open especially when there are other great schools in the area and everybody with kids seems to be happy.</p> <p>All I would say is that there is being a rural area, there is quite a lack of facilities for people. Whether it be kids, teenagers and particularly older folk who are daunted by the technology that I think would enable them to participate easily in things like this (online meeting) but not just from a</p>

	<p>communication and linking up point of view but also just to become au fait with technology and vocational skills. Whether they want to learn to make clothes and knit things, play a musical instrument, make short films, take advantage of technology, and take photographs. At some level I see the school as potential, if it was to close, as a potential resource that the community is crying out for just as a resource for learning and activity.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>Thank you very much for those comments. I am going to do two things. First I'm going to ask (Officer) because you mentioned about the need for a school if it seems the children are settled in other schools and attending - (Officer) could give a bit of information about the number of children there are in the community and the schools they are attending and (Head teacher) might be able to come in there too.</p> <p>And then I will ask (Officer) to talk a bit about if the school was to permanently close what the situation would be with the building because you then mentioned the school as a potential resource.</p> <p>So that is the two points I could ask Officers to follow up on. So (Officer) first of all and maybe (Head teacher) as well, about the school situation. Thank you.</p>
Officer (KR)	<p>Yes there are currently twenty-nine children attend Drymen Primary School who are, what would have been, part of the Buchanan Primary School catchment area. So twenty-nine children across Primary 1 to 7 attending Drymen Primary.</p> <p>We also have another four families (eight children) attending Killearn Primary School and they are also in the Buchanan Primary School catchment area.</p> <p>We did have one pupil who was at Balfron Primary from the Milton of Buchanan catchment area but they have now moved further afield out of the local area. And we also have currently eighteen young people at Balfron High School who are part of the Buchanan Primary School catchment area when they were at primary stage.</p> <p>I do a lot of work with (Head teacher) (Head teacher of Drymen and Buchanan Primary Schools) and the feedback that we have had from consultations and from him is that children are happy and settled in Drymen Primary.</p> <p>I hope that has given you an understanding of the numbers involved.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>And I think (Officer), just to add that the decline in the roll of the school happened really through parental choice. There was a decline in the roll which happened around birthrate - we are clear of that and then as the roll began to fall from about twenty pupils, increasingly it seemed that more parents and pupils were making a choice to go to what are very close (Drymen Primary is only two and a half miles away) but bigger schools and sometimes we saw that happening with primary seven pupils.</p>

	<p>(Officer) did the consultation with some of the high school children and I think some of them had said that they had moved towards the end of the primary experience in order to have experience of a primary school that was bigger before going to a large high school.</p> <p>(Officer) has also done consultations with the Parent Council and the feedback from parents (Officer).</p>
Officer (KR)	<p>The feedback from parents has mainly been around the building actually and what would happen with the building. Somewhat similar to what Member of the Public mentioned there, concerns that they don't want the building to be lying empty so it was mainly concerns from that point of view from the parents.</p> <p>And as (Chairperson) said the young people at Balfron High spoke about that by that time the numbers had got so small they didn't really feel they had the same peer group. So it was usually about Primary 6 or 7, I understand from them that their families were putting them to slightly bigger schools.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you, (Officer). (Officer).
Officer (TM)	<p>Hi folks, so we haven't done any work on what the potential future use of the building may be because we can't until we know what the outcome of the process is. So I can talk you through the process and I can talk you through an example of what has happened elsewhere.</p> <p>On the outcome of the decision of this process if it was declared that the service no longer required the building then from a council asset management prospective we would declare the building as surplus. We would then look at the options from other council services and options within the community we would want to support moving forward.</p> <p>There would be a whole option appraisal on the back of the service deeming that they do not require the building. This happened when Trossachs Primary School came through the process and very early on there was a community organisation that saw an aspiration in using the building and council Officers supported the community aspiration and that went to a full asset transfer. And I believe that that particular location is working pretty successfully and being developed as planned.</p> <p>So we are open to options but we can't really do anything until obviously the council and the service in the first instance declare the building as not required because we certainly don't want to pre-empt any decision that may or may not go a particular way. There is mechanisms in place to support any community aspiration, any particular model moving forward if that is what was required.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you (Officer). Okay, any other questions, comments, thank you?
Member Of Public	So we understand from what Tracey has just told us that at a very high level this consultation is strictly confined to whether the school should close, or not and any consideration about the possible future use of the site is out with this consultation. Given that I'd just like to ask one related

	question. I assume that the answer to this is no but the avoidance of doubt I put it whether any Stirling Council Officer or Councillor has sought a valuation of the site yet.
Officer (TM)	I am happy to come in (Chairperson).
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you (Officer).
Officer (TM)	We value the site on an ongoing basis for insurance purposes, not for a market value purpose which is probably where I think you're coming from. And no we wouldn't do that at this stage because we don't know what the outcome of the process is. On the basis that Education didn't want the building then there would be certain things as a council that we would then have to do. In valuing that property at that point of time would be something that we would do but the value that we have on the building at the moment is really for insurance purposes not for resale purposes. So yes, we value it but not for the purposes I think you are asking for.
Member Of Public	Thank you.
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you.
Member Of Public	Hello thank you. As this meeting is simply still about establishing whether the school is at all viable in the future or not, I just wonder whether the Council or anybody has researched as the children were leaving the school at the time, why was that the choice the parents made and what efforts were made at the time to think what could we do to keep this school alive? And why were people making that particular choice would be a good, proactive and creative way to keep the school alive and provide something that would make parents and children decide that the school is a good option?
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you. (Officer) are you able to come in with (Officer) perhaps on that?
Officer (SK)	Ok, I think further back in the process there was consideration about possibly re-zoning catchment areas to increase the roll of the school. That was looked into and there weren't really options within that that were viable that were going to carry out what you are asking of us. So with the area, there were no opportunities to change the catchment areas west because it is not Stirling Council property and it is not Stirling Council land and the other areas around about that were looked at too. So increasing the catchment wasn't going to help that situation. (Officer) do you have the detail of the other part of that question?
Officer (KR)	Yes, I think the point was around how we looked at proactively keeping the school alive and being as creative as we could. I think as we have talked about the numbers, there was this steadily declining roll and parents were making the decision to move their children and by the time we got to October 2017 there were no pupils.

	<p>Since then (Head teacher), Head teacher, was able to explain carefully to parents when they came forward at enrolment for Primary 1 and at transition activities from nursery to Primary 1 that he was Head teacher of both schools and he remains Head teacher of both schools and that they were very welcome to ask any questions around Buchanan Primary School including enrolling at Buchanan.</p> <p>To our knowledge there hasn't been any enquiries from prospective parents around enrolling at Buchanan Primary School. So it is a difficult one because there weren't any parents coming forward and saying that's where they would like their children to go. And from our enquiries it seemed to be, as (Chairperson) has mentioned, around having a larger peer group to work with and to be part of. So that seemed to be one of the themes that was coming through or did come through.</p>
Officer (SK)	<p>I think as well, at the time of the declining roll the Head teacher was the Head teacher of both of the schools and knew the families well and was in discussion with the families so would have had closer knowledge of the reasons that the parents were choosing to change. But, as (Officer) said, from the consultation with the senior pupils and the pupils at Balfour High School that certainly seemed to be the case that they were looking for a broader range of peer group.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>Can I add in and this is just from our perspective, we wonder if whilst Buchanan is a rural school it is only two and a half miles away from the nearest school, Drymen Primary. If you went to other authorities for example, Highlands or the Islands some of your rural schools would be a much greater distance away. So it is actually quite close and indeed because of where the housing is, many of the children in the Buchanan catchment actually live closer to Drymen Primary School.</p> <p>At the point the roll started dropping and I think what may have happened is it fell below twenty, each pupil who moved school possibly had an impact on the others, so some children then ended up that when it got below ten as the only child in their year group. And then I think a situation for example where, a parent and child decided at Primary 7 that they would move to Drymen Primary School and there was a younger sibling and the decision was made that they went too. So it was around about families as well and we believe that that might be some of the factors that contributed.</p> <p>I am aware that at the time the roll was dropping the Head teacher did discuss, my understanding is, with all the families individually the circumstances and what they felt was the right thing for their child, does that help?</p>
Member Of Public	<p>Yes, thank you for that. My understanding is that the school declined after the Head teacher (name of a former Head teacher) left. She was solely responsible for the school and I think the decline happened when Buchanan was basically incorporated with Drymen Primary School. That is my perception of what happened. I understand your points and it's only two and a half miles away but I do think for sure that it has made a huge impact on the community and how the community interacts with one another and how the children feel incorporated in their community. I</p>

	<p>think that has a great impact. It is not just Buchanan it is the whole of East Loch Lomond Side so even though you are talking about miles but when you come from Rowardennan, that is a different story and even those two miles make a difference but the children are growing up in a different environment than in Drymen.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>Thank you very much. (Officer) have you got your hand up to say something?</p>
Officer (KR)	<p>I would like to add in about the research. Another interesting point is that we are able to get numbers from Forth Valley NHS. They are able to indicate what numbers would be expected into Buchanan Primary in Primary 1 over the next few years. For 2022 it is 4, for 2023 it is 4 and for 2024 it is 3. So we are not talking about large numbers but I totally understand what you are saying about the children. When we did speak with the children in Drymen Primary, many of whom had attended Buchanan Primary, they spoke of their time there.</p> <p>We also spoke of the positive development of this local well-being group who are now holding coffee mornings in Milton of Buchanan and joining in with planting. There were a lot of children who were able to speak warmly about these things happening and were feeling part of their community again. They were particularly interested in what would happen with the building.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>Thank you (Officer). OK I'm going to open up again. Comments or questions?</p> <p>Officers is there anything else anyone would like to add in?</p>
Officer (KR)	<p>Something that has come up at some of our consultation activities has been around housing developments so I don't know whether Isabelle wants to give a bit of information around housing developments. Unfortunately, with housing developments you don't tend to get huge numbers of children but maybe if Isabelle could give us an overview that would be helpful.</p>
Officer (IS)	<p>Yes, I'm very happy to. In terms of housing development within the area there are some very small housing developments that are planned within the existing Buchanan Primary School catchment. But as (Officer) mentioned we do expect very minimal numbers to come from those, maybe one or two pupils.</p> <p>As I'm sure people in the community are aware of there is a larger scale housing development happening in Drymen, which is a catchment of Drymen Primary School. The planning of that housing development was first submitted to Loch Lomond and Trossachs planning authority in 2018. So post the decision to mothball Buchanan Primary School. In fact, that development hasn't had any impact on this decision making process and those pupils will be in the catchment of Drymen Primary School.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>Thank you.</p>

Member Of Public	Yes I think what we have just heard from Isabelle rather raises an interesting question. The number presently on roll at Drymen I think is not very far from its capacity. If there is a big housing development planned in Drymen, it could quite soon push Drymen over its capacity limits. Generating another possible need for re-opening of another school like Buchanan.
Officer (IS)	<p>That is certainly true. We are monitoring very closely the numbers that are going to come from that housing development in Drymen. Due to Covid and the fact that things tend to build out a bit slower that has actually been delayed. But as I said we are monitoring that.</p> <p>I think what I would say though is that the housing development is situated within Drymen Primary School catchment rather than Buchanan Primary School catchment. So our first look at mitigating for those additional pupils would be to extend Drymen Primary School. I understand the point that there is another primary school building certainly that is there. But I think from our point of view there is other considerations as well, one of them would be transport and there is a certain amount of revenue cost and things like that if you were to recatch the pupils from that new development into Buchanan Primary School for instance. Those would be ongoing revenue costs for our staff to bus those pupils whereas actually the development is within walking distance of Drymen Primary School so that promotes what Stirling Council try and do with being able to walk or cycle to school.</p> <p>I will just reiterate that we weren't aware of that development happening at the time when Buchanan Primary School was mothballed. And certainly we haven't had any indication that there would be a decision from those parents to want their children to attend Buchanan instead of Drymen. As I say we are just monitoring the numbers now to see what the impact will be.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you (Officer). (Officer) did you want to add in there?
Officer (KR)	I was just going to say, just for interest, because I've got all the figures, the current roll of Drymen Primary is 116 and there is capacity for 150 so there is still a considerable room for growth there. I thought that might be worth noting.
Chairperson (CMD)	And also to add in Isabelle because I am aware of this, any projections you have done over the last few years have included the Buchanan pupils because we were aware of the school moving towards capacity. Although as (Officer) said there is still space there. So when (Officer) has done any analysis of roll or projections she has included the Buchanan catchment area children in the Drymen numbers to ensure that they are fully accounted for.
Officer (IS)	Yes, absolutely. To just reiterate there what (Chairperson) has said, the Buchanan pupils and all of the pupils within that catchment area are included in all of the projections so there would never be a question of there not being enough space for those Buchanan pupils because we count those in to the school roll figures.

Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you. Any other comments or questions?
Member Of Public	I just wanted to come back to the housing situation because it is severely short of affordable housing. There is this very small development plan that has been ticked off as going ahead. Three plus years ago, it is very small and probably wouldn't have such an impact on the school but we are really in the dark about "Is this ever going to happen?" Would there be plans for further developments in this area for affordable housing because there is such a need for it.
Officer (IS)	<p>So in terms of the planning it is not actually Stirling Council planning authority that looks at most of the planning in that area it is under the Loch Lomond and Trossachs planning authority.</p> <p>We do have one development in the area which is building out. This is Dalnare House so I am aware that that one is building out as planned. I am in contact with colleagues at Loch Lomond and Trossachs planning authority and they have advised as you have said that these things are being delayed. I think Covid is probably having an impact there as well. But it would be the people there who would have more knowledge and information about that because it isn't within the Stirling Council planning authority.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>Thank you. Any other questions?</p> <p>Ok in a moment I am going to hand over to (Interim Chief Education Officer).</p>
Chief Education Officer (BM)	<p>Thank you very much. My main purpose is to thank everyone for their involvement in this meeting.</p> <p>But before I go into a bit of detail of those thanks I would just like to point out as (Chairperson) said that you are not at the end of the opportunity to ask questions or add in your thoughts. And that you can share that information with others who maybe haven't attended this meeting or don't plan to attend this meeting this evening that there are opportunities out there for you. So there are a variety of ways to do that. We want to make that as open as possible and not restrict access to anybody so you can email us, there is an educ-comments email address that can be used for that. I will ask someone to post that in the chat so it is visible for everybody. You can also phone through that line of communication and the number is 01786 233633, so you can phone and ask questions or give us further comments through that route. You can write a letter to me, we are checking on a weekly basis for any communications that come in through that route, although we are based in our houses at the moment (as you can see from the variety of backdrops). We are still able to check that route of communication as well, so please go ahead and do that. There is an address you can find online for Stirling Council. And our main route for feedback and consultations support is the Engage Stirling website. (Officer) gave that website address earlier on but I will repeat that just now it is www.engage.stirling.gov.uk. So it is not your last chance if you leave this meeting and think you want to ask or tell us something there are more opportunities to come back in or come back this</p>

	<p>evening if that is something you'd really like to do.</p> <p>But my main purpose is to thank everybody for coming, so thank you so much. The members of the community have come a long and asked such good questions and very pertinent questions as well as the school and what somebody early on in the discussion said was the remit of this consultation. You have also asked other questions which are of interest to the wider council and will influence what happens next if the decision is taken to for the school to close. So that is very helpful, thank you very much for that and giving us that insight into what matters to you as a community.</p> <p>Thank you all and thank you to the Council Team, the colleagues from across the Council who have attended today and the Schools, Learning and Education Team for planning such a clear meeting today for us. Finally thank you to Maria from Education Scotland for coming along to observe as well.</p>
<p>Chairperson (CMD)</p>	<p>Thank you (Interim Chief Education Officer). We really do want to reinforce that. The consultation is still currently open and there are lots of other ways or there are other ways in which to engage to ask questions, give comments or feedback. So please continue to do that and do encourage others to do that.</p> <p>We popped in the phone number, the e-mail and the Engage link, but you all had contact details to access this meeting so you can come back through that or ask for the contacts through that too.</p> <p>As we let everybody go I think someone joined very late in the meeting with initials LM and if they want to hang on I can have a word with them, I think they joined about 10 minutes from the end.</p> <p>So, I'm going to say thank you very much for your time. It really was very interesting, it will be very helpful. There is a full consultation report that will be produced and probably go to our Education Committee in January, but we will write out to the community as we have done before to let you all know about that, what the timeline around that is and how you can access the report. It will go on Engage as well and your comments and questions from today will all be accounted for in that.</p> <p>OK thank you very much everybody it has been good to meet you all.</p> <p><i>Brief discussion around Member of Public who was late. The outcome is she will attend the second meeting in the evening.</i></p>

Transcript of Public Meeting held on Tuesday 19 October 2021 at 7.00 pm– 8.30 pm

This meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams

Present

13 Members of the Public

Stirling Council Officers:

Carolyn McDaid – Service Manager, Schools, Learning and Education, Chairperson

Kay Robertson - Lead Officer, Schools, Learning and Education

Sally Kennedy - Lead Officer, Schools, Learning and Education

Carolann Morrow – Team Leader, Schools, Learning and Education

Bryony Monaghan - Interim Head of Education

Tracey Mills - Service Manager, Infrastructure, Assets and Support

Aileen More – Team Leader – Schools, Learning and Education

Lisa Macauley – Education Accountant

Isabelle Smit – Forward Planning Officer, Schools, Learning and Education

Kate O'Neill – Early Years Improvement Officer

Patrick Robertson – Head teacher of Buchanan Primary School, Drymen Primary School and Croftamie Nursery

Maria Spiers – Education Scotland

Gary Johnstone – Education Scotland

Chairperson (CMD)	<p>Good evening everyone. I'd like to welcome you to this Public Meeting which is part of the statutory consultation on the proposal to permanently close Buchanan Primary School.</p> <p>I'm Carolyn McDaid and I'm one of the Service Managers within the Education Team within Stirling Council and I'm going to chair our meeting this evening.</p> <p>Before we begin, and this will allow some people time to arrive, and before we do introductions and I outline the purpose of the meeting, I'm going to begin with some protocols specific to this being an online virtual meeting.</p> <p>I think we've had the opportunity to speak with many of you about this on the telephone, but not everybody, so please note that this meeting is being recorded so that we can transcribe it and produce an accurate record of the meeting. This transcript will form part of the final consultation report which I'll discuss later on.</p> <p>Can I ask that everyone please mutes their microphone when they're not speaking and that will help the audio within the meeting? Please don't worry if that causes any problems but if possible, do that. Somewhere on your screen you'll have a microphone icon. It's a cup shape with an oval on the top and if you just click that on and off that will put your mic on and off.</p> <p>During the meeting, can I ask if possible, if you use the raise hand button if you want to speak and then I'll do my best to try and invite people in. Again, on your screen there's a raise hand button, it's a smiley face with a hand beside it and if you click that then that will light</p>
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up beside your name and your picture.

There's also what we call the chat function on Teams and I'm going to ask everybody, if possible, to open that up just now. So on your toolbar there'll be a speech bubble with some squiggly lines in it which are bits of writing and if you click on that, it'll open up the chat function. For many of us it's on the right hand side of our screen, and you can scroll up and down that. I've put some names in which I'll explain later, and during the meeting if you want to pop anything into the chat function, you're more than welcome to do so. I'll try and keep an eye on that and any comments in there will be included in the transcript.

And finally, (Officer) who is doing the technical bit tonight, will introduce herself soon, but if anybody's got any technical issues, she's going to pop her email and her phone number in the chat function so that you can get in touch with her during the meeting if needed.

So let's get going and what I am going to do first of all is ask all of the Officers who are present to introduce themselves and give a very brief indication of their role as part of this consultation.

Now if you go to the chat function, the Officers' names are in there and if the officers just introduce themselves in the order that's in the chat function.

Officers introduce themselves

Welcome and thank you for those introductions.

Yes Teams looks different on all of our screens so it's difficult for me to tell you exactly where things are but yes, to the side of the chat function there's a scroll bar right on the edge, that will hopefully help you move up and down.

Would those members of the public who are here tonight like to introduce themselves too. I have a list of who we were expecting so I can read down that, and just tell us your name and if you want, you can tell us about your connection to the school or the community. You might live in the community or you might be a parent of a pupil who went to the school; you might have gone to the school yourself. Tell us something if you wish, if not, we're happy just to hear your name and see you pop up on the screen.

Members of the public introduce themselves

I want to thank everyone for their introductions and add I am a former primary school Head teacher and that took me back to my days in class when I would take the register. Anyway, let's get going with the meeting.

As I said this meeting forms part of the formal consultation on the proposal to permanently close Buchanan Primary School. In a moment I'm going to ask (Officer) to provide a brief background on the proposal. I know many of you already have some knowledge about that, some of you have your own history with that and also many of

	<p>you have read some of the documents which we have shared on our Engage website. I'll then ask (Officer) another one of our Officers, to explain a little more about the consultation process and that is probably going to take about 5 minutes.</p> <p>I will then open up the meeting up for discussion, comments and questions. I do want to say that we are here to hear your views and provide an opportunity for you to express these and to ask any questions. We will try to answer your questions but I want to say at the outset that we might have to go away and find information and if that is the case then we will respond to you personally or we will respond to those questions in the final consultation report which we will explain about later on.</p> <p>Also, there are lots of ways in which people can participate: these 2 Public Meetings; we have had other meetings which you will hear about; we have the Engage website; you can email in and so forth. So you will hear more about that and this is a key part of our consultation.</p> <p>I'm going to hand over to (Officer) who is going to give a bit of background to the proposal.</p>
Officer (KR)	<p>Good evening everyone. I would like to give some background information. As you will know the primary school in the village of Milton of Buchanan is Buchanan Primary. Since 2011 the school has had a shared headship with Drymen Primary and both schools worked together on some aspects of learning, for example, on things like transition to High School.</p> <p>From 2013 the roll of Buchanan Primary had been steadily falling and in August 2017 fell to 5 pupils. Several families were choosing to send their children to Drymen Primary by a placing request. From October 2017 Buchanan Primary has had no pupils. From January 2018 until the present time the school has been mothballed and that is the term used according to Scottish Government guidance when a school is closed as a temporary measure.</p> <p>Each year Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee in accordance with legislation have reviewed this. And this year, on 8th June 2021, Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee agreed to a formal consultation to consider the permanent closure of Buchanan Primary under the Consultation Act.</p> <p>As (Chairperson) said Stirling Council has produced and published a Proposal Paper and an Educational Benefits Statement. These are accessible to the public at www.engage.stirling.gov.uk and paper copies have been made available in the local area as well. So I'll now hand over to (Officer) who will give an overview of the consultation process.</p>

Officer (SK)	<p>Good evening everyone. I'd like to give a brief overview of the consultation process itself. Within the consultation process itself there are three phases within the consultation process: Pre-Consultation, Formal Consultation and then a Reporting phase.</p> <p>During the pre-consultation phase between 10 March and mid May 2021, the Local Authority shared information to raise awareness about the process and the proposal. This took place through meetings and communications with a variety of groups and individuals including: Drymen Primary School Parent Council, their Pupil Council and staff teams, as well as Croftamie Nursery Parent Group and staff team. There was also communication with trade unions, the former Principal Teacher from Buchanan Primary School, Milton of Buchanan Wellbeing Group and the local minister.</p> <p>Information was communicated to parents, children, various groups and users of school facilities, some previously mentioned and also to all parents of Drymen Primary School and Croftamie establishments, Balfron Learning Community headteachers, all children who are catchment to Buchanan Primary School but attend other schools such as Killearn or Balfron Primary School and Balfron High School who put a note in school newsletters and made copies of documentation available in their school offices and information was shared with relevant Chairpersons of Parent Councils.</p> <p>Notification was sent to Education Scotland who are involved in considering the proposal consultation and will produce a report.</p> <p>The formal consultation period is now currently underway and runs from 15 September 2021 until the 10 of November 2021 that takes in a period of 8 weeks which is 35 school days. It is general practice when undertaking a community consultation, to hold a Public Meeting in the local area for interested persons. We do appreciate how important it is that all members of the Milton of Buchanan community are included in the consultation process.</p> <p>And thought it might be helpful to have some background around the service decision to hold the public meetings online. We did meet with several groups in the community including the Milton of Buchanan Wellbeing Group who were very keen to hold the meeting in the Memorial Hall. We did discuss as a team the options for the Public Meeting at length and we were very keen to include as many community members as possible. We also felt it was important to be aware of safety for members of the public, service staff and possible vulnerable persons in terms of exposure to Covid-19.</p> <p>One of our Officers has been liaising with (Member of Public), Chairperson of the Milton of Buchanan Wellbeing Group around the possibility of exploring other options for the consultation process, to ensure that all members of the community feel included. We are also consulting with other Council services including legal services about this.</p> <p>In addition to the two Public Meetings today, during this period, Officers are attending a range of meetings to share information and</p>
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	<p>consult, this includes meetings with the groups I have previously mentioned as well as groups of pupils at Drymen Primary School, Croftamie Nursery and Balfron High School and Drymen Community Council.</p> <p>Documents are available at school offices, Drymen Library and online.</p> <p>Views are being gathered through attendance at these meetings or through Engage which is our online method, by email or in writing to Interim Head of Education and some responses have already been received by email or through Engage.</p> <p>Education Scotland are kept informed and have access to the proposal documents and are invited to the Public Meetings and will prepare a report on the consultation. They will also be conducting a virtual visit in November to the school.</p> <p>Following the consultation period a report is prepared reflecting oral and written responses and taken to Children and Young People's Committee for a decision which is aimed around about the 24th February 2022.</p>
<p>Chairperson (CMD)</p>	<p>Thank you (Officers).</p> <p>I would like to welcome the Member of Public who has just joined us. I am happy to stay on at the end of the meeting and chat with anybody individually. I'm hoping that you can hear us and join in.</p> <p>Okay, what we are going to do now is open the meeting up for any discussion, questions or comments. So if possible, please just raise your hand and let's get going. I know some of you are keen to mention and raise some issues.</p>
<p>Member of Public</p>	<p>Thank you for the overview of the process, it is really helpful. I think just to say what has already been said in the meetings that we have had with (Officers), thank you to both of you for your input in all of this it has been really helpful.</p> <p>I think having been here for 17 years and having my 2 children go to the school, and through discussions, I think just to raise that Buchanan is a distinct community and people have said through Covid that it has brought home just how much of a community it really is. We set up a community "WhatsApp", myself and a number of people from the community and as well as some random things that got shared it has been really helpful for communication.</p> <p>I think to reflect back it is a distinct community and the school building, I understand the educational work that has been done and the assessment that has been done. My daughter was in the school right up until it became a shared headship and I took the decision to move my daughter because there was a very different philosophy. I think for the children who came through the school laterally it was a very positive experience, a school that was very much ahead of its time in terms of the eco work that was done, so just to celebrate that.</p>

	<p>The loss of the school, the educational assessment and all of the work that has been done, I think fair enough for the children that are moving forward. But I think the loss to the community is that the school was very much at the heart of the community. There was football days, there was events and lots of older members of the community came to things that the school put on. There was a wildlife garden and I think the community aspect when it was mothballed, it was a shame to see a resource sitting there at the heart of the community desolate. And it has been left to rot and I am aware that has been during the pandemic but that is our community. The building has not been kept up in a positive way and I appreciate the reasons for that. I know that is no one's fault and I am not blaming anyone but what I think we'd really like to do is for people to see the potential for what that space has.</p> <p>We have set up the well-being group and that has just been a response to Covid and getting something going but it is really thinking about our community in its broadest sense. The isolation, the older population, the mixed community but the potential that it has to bring people together so just to say that is what we would want to have some consideration for. The hall is there and (Member of Public) is obviously here from the hall and the hall does a really good job for the events that it has, but it is not the same in terms of that wider community benefit.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
<p>Chairperson (CMD)</p>	<p>Thank you very much for that. It is good to hear the positive comments about the school when some of your children attended and also the positive comments about your community.</p> <p>I'm going to ask (Officer) to respond and then we will come to (Member of Public). (Officer), I think it would be helpful to for you to share a bit about the roll of the school and how that changed and led to the school being mothballed. And then after that, given what (Member of Public) was saying, (Officer), I wonder if you could explain what would happen if the decision was made to close the school? If that were the decision, what would happen thereafter around the building? Okay, to (Officer) first and then to (Officer) and then we will take some more questions.</p>
<p>Officer (KR)</p>	<p>Just before I go on to the part about the roll, I would like to thank you again for the positive comments about the school and I would like to say that those have come strongly through when we met with the group of young people from Balfron High School, all of whom had attended or live in the Milton of Buchanan catchment area and they talked about the positive experiences of early on at Buchanan Primary. Then they did talk about how things were difficult when the school became so small for them to have a peer group. But they spoke so warmly of the individual attention they received and the very positive atmosphere of the school.</p> <p>As I said earlier, the roll declined steadily over a number of years with eventually in 2016/17 being 8 pupils and then 5 pupils. I think at this stage, and that has come through from our consultation with the young people from Balfron High as well, is that some families were looking for a wider peer group for their children, so were making a decision to</p>

	<p>move to other larger schools. And it almost had a knock on effect as one family left then another thought well my children now don't have friends so there was a bit of a knock on effect there until there were just the 5 pupils remaining.</p> <p>In the consultations with the pupils at Drymen Primary there were pupils who had been at Buchanan, and again were very happy to be involved in the process, but again at that time were looking for a wider friendship group. So I hope that gives you an overview on the declining roll etcetera. Thank you.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	Thanks (Officer). (Officer).
Officer (TM)	<p>Good evening. What we normally do is we do not do any work pre the decision of the outcome of the consultation because one we don't want to pre-empt what the decision will be and nor what the Committee will want to confirm on the back of it. So if the decision was that the property was to not be opened for school purposes and education decide not to progress with a primary school on this basis, like any other service they would let us know that the service no longer requires the building.</p> <p>From an internal prospective we would look to see if any other service requires access in use of the building and thereafter that if that still wasn't taken up we would deem the property surplus to our requirements. Thereafter that we would welcome any opportunity to discuss any future use with community activity, community involvement and look at an option appraisal. We have worked quite closely with other buildings that have been closed. So quite recently on the back of Trossachs Primary School closure the community came with us on the back of a decision being made and said can we work with you to work through a business model to realise our community aspirations and we supported that.</p> <p>So just to confirm there is no preconceived ideas from an asset prospective and there is no assessment being done at this point in time on the back of waiting to see what the outcome of the consultation is, but we do have a process which I have just outlined that we would follow.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you for that as well, (Officer).
Member of Public	Hi. Because I hadn't had any involvement with the school and I have never actually been inside the building, I'm curious as to the capacity of Drymen Primary School with the upcoming development in Balmaha with 20 homes. The proposed developments in Drymen and the effect that might have on the capacity of Drymen Primary School in the longer term and I don't know what the thoughts are on that.
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you. I'm going to asking (Officer), our Planning Officer to respond. (Officer), I think it would be helpful to share some information. (Officer) does all of our work on housing and developments and what that will mean for schools - so in terms of the developments and the capacity of Drymen Primary School.

Officer (IS)	<p>Hi. Part of my job is to do school roll projections and they do take into account all of the housing developments that are planned in any catchment area. I work together with the Loch Lomond and Trossachs Planning Authority as well as Stirling Council who are both involved in the Drymen and the Buchanan catchment areas.</p> <p>We have a pupil product ratio which means that we assume that every house that is built yields about 0.3 primary school pupils and thanks to that number we can gauge ahead of time how many pupils we think are going to come from any development. So there are some developments within the Buchanan catchment area and we have accounted for those. So at this time all of those already projected to join the Drymen Primary School roll and they are quite small in scale. So realistically from these small developments we wouldn't imagine that there would be a huge number of pupils. But certainly, we do plan for a small increase from those.</p> <p>You mentioned the larger development in Drymen which has been planned, as far as I know, for 88 new houses and it has been delayed due to Covid and other difficulties. We were expecting it to start building out already and it hasn't been the case. So we do manage that on an ongoing basis. A couple of things from there, the planning application for that development in Drymen, the larger one, was first submitted to Loch Lomond and Trossachs Planning Authority in 2018 so this came on to our radar after the Buchanan Primary School had already been mothballed. So the existence of that development didn't have any impact at the time of taking the decision to mothball but, in any case that development is linked to Drymen Primary School and there has not been any talk about re-catching that to the existing building at Buchanan for several reasons: first of all it is right in the centre of Drymen so, part of the village and as such it would be catchment to Drymen Primary School, and another one of the key considerations there is also transport. It is placed in a way where the children would access the Primary School on foot or by bike.</p> <p>Obviously any considerations around re-catching would involve significant ongoing transport costs if we were to move them elsewhere so that isn't something we have considered. So we continue to monitor the roll at Drymen Primary School just to make sure that there is capacity for all of the Buchanan catchment area pupils: both the ones who we already know about and potential newcomers moving in are accounted for in the numbers that we project for Drymen Primary School.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you.
Member of Public	Can I ask for a follow up please?
Chairperson (CMD)	Of course, yes you can.
Member of Public	And the nursery in Croftamie, am I correct in saying that it is going to move into Drymen Primary School as well?

Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you for that. We have (Officer) who is our Early Years Officer – (Officer) are you able to respond to that one?
Officer (KO)	Yes, of course (Chairperson). Yes it is. We are hoping that we will be able to re-locate into Drymen next year. We are really excited. We are not just re-locating we are actually looking at having Stirling's first outdoor/indoor nursery so it is a wonderful opportunity for the children. We are working really hard on making sure that it is a fantastic experience for all.
Member of Public	And will that have any impact on the capacity of the school?
Officer (KO)	None.
Chairperson (CMD)	These are good questions. (Officer) you had your hand up, would you like to respond as well?
Officer (KR)	I just wanted to come in there because (Member of Public) did ask about the Buchanan Primary School building. I thought I'd come back to that because you said you had not been in the building but you are interested in the capacity of the building. So I'd just like to answer that point. Buchanan Primary does have capacity for 75 pupils, there are 3 classrooms in the building, as well as a hall/lunch hall as well. I thought I would answer that for you. Just following on from what (Officer) said. In Drymen, there are currently 116 pupils in Drymen Primary School and there is a capacity for 150 but as (Officer) said the nursery is a separate building so that wouldn't come into those 150. And another point because people are asking about numbers etc. It is quite interesting to share because we have looked into the projected roll within the local area and we have been able to get some numbers from the NHS Forth Valley, who have indicated that in 2022 the predicted numbers would be 4 pupils for coming into Primary 1, 2023 (this is a note of Buchanan area) 4 pupils and 2024, 3 pupils. I thought that would be interesting to share those numbers with you. Thank you.
Member of Public	Thank you very much.
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you everyone. (Member of Public) you have waited really patiently, thank you.
Member of Public	I still can't see (it is probably my machine) a list of Officers and names so if I get names mixed up I apologise. So far a lot of the information seems all very static, until of course (Officer) gave in response to (Member of Public) some projected figures for both Drymen and Buchanan. I wanted to raise a question about the reasons why the school roll at Buchanan has gone up and down. Now it is perhaps out with the

	<p>scope of this meeting to discuss all the reasons why. At the time my son was at the school they actually added another school room because there were so many kids in the Buchanan catchment area, which includes Rowerdennan it is not just the Milton.</p> <p>So a bit more reference and background knowledge perhaps, and again we don't need to discuss all the points tonight about why the roll has gone up and down. If there is no school, families won't come into the community so therefore you won't need a school. It is a self-defeating circle. Why has the roll gone up and down?</p>
Officer (IS)	<p>(Chairperson), I am happy to make a short point and then maybe some other people will also want to.</p> <p>(Officer) has already mentioned part of the birth rates we get from NHS Forth Valley. You may be aware or maybe not that the birth rate has been falling dramatically I would say in all of Scotland, and actually if you look at these birth rates because I am always surprised every single year to just see the drop. It really is significant over all of our Primary 1 pupils - it is halved in some catchment areas so that will be a part of why it has lowered in Buchanan as well. I think that is just part of a general trend in lower birth rates.</p> <p>And just the other thing that I would say and (Chairperson) I'm just picking on this because it was mentioned at the last meeting, the school is only 2 and a half miles away from Milton of Buchanan. It will be further away from Rowardennan, I do get that point. But Drymen Primary School from the actual distance is within reasonable distance compared to some other rural areas where we would hope that that wouldn't put families off. Particularly because the Council provide free school transport for any pupils living further than 2 miles from their catchment school. So any pupils or incoming families looking to move to the area would have the reassurance of a reasonably short bus drive or mini bus drive which is paid for by the council.</p>
Member of Public	<p>Can I come back? What I was looking for was some information perhaps, on a wider perspective of the economic reasons on why the school roll has gone up and down. I understand the information about the birth rates across the country in Scotland and that's a very good point. But if we go back to transport since I have lived in this area transport links have deteriorated quite substantially. And again that's another area that would bring families into this area, if the kids could get about and people who want to work could get about. In my time the bus links have just deteriorated to the point where a lot of the buses are now stopped. The kids are being used to being on the bus all the time.</p> <p>But overall I was looking for more of a substantial wider perspective on why. But I recognise this is quite an involved discussion and it is maybe not what we can get into tonight. But you certainly won't get more people in if you don't have a school.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>Thank you. I will bring (Officer) in in a minute. I'm just going to follow up on what (Officer) said. As (Officer) was saying the birth rate of</p>

	<p>Buchanan is in line with birth rates across Scotland. The other factor which appeared to happen was parents putting in placing requests for Drymen Primary School. Now we don't know the exact reasons for parents' choices although the Headteacher at the time did discuss these with those individual families, so we have some understanding but I'm not able to present it as an accurate record.</p> <p>I think there is something about the proximity of these 2 schools, that Drymen is only 2 and a half miles away. And many of the children in the Buchanan catchment actually live closer to Drymen. Now a lot of other rural schools are probably much further apart so if we went to the Highlands or somewhere like that, the chances of being just 2 and a half miles away from the next school might be less likely.</p> <p>The other thing would be living in a beautiful and rural community like you do, if people are choosing to do that they probably understand that there is a likelihood their children will attend a smaller school. Rural schools tend to be smaller. So they then have made the choice to go to Drymen which is also a small rural school. Drymen is not a big school, so if parents are thinking I want my children to go to a small rural school the next one is Drymen.</p> <p>I also wonder if there are aspects, for example, there are other activities in Drymen that the children were going to and making friends, for example, Brownies, Scouts and Cubs. Did that contribute to people making those choices?</p> <p>(Officer) mentioned earlier, it would definitely appear to be and parents did speak with the Head teacher at the time when the roll started to drop quite dramatically and when it came to about 10 that it was around peer groups. They might have been the only child in their peer group left in school. That did appear, as (Officer) said to have a knock on effect. As one family moved with 2 children, it meant that there was only 1 child left in a particular year group.</p> <p>So I think there were a range of issues that were part of the reason. I wouldn't like to say that we know them accurately but from the conversations that we had with parents, and from our own discussions, we think those might be factors. I will hand over to (Officer).</p>
Officer (SK)	<p>Thank you (Chairperson).</p> <p>I just wanted to say that sometimes consideration can be given to re-zoning and re-looking at the catchment area of schools in order to increase the school roll. In terms of Buchanan Primary School, it sits right at the edge of Stirling Council area and it is adjacent to West Dunbartonshire Council. So there was limited opportunity to be able to think about re-zoning the catchment areas for Buchanan Primary School but that might have been something that could have been considered.</p>
Member of Public	<p>It is not quite on the edge. Rowardennan is 5 miles up the road. It is not quite on the edge but I understand your point.</p>

Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you very much for that. Can I bring in (Member of Public), your hand was up.
Member of Public	<p>I think to continue on a bit and it is not to revisit the conversation about what happened but I think I have my own view that I wouldn't want to necessarily have publicly documented.</p> <p>I agree with all of your points in terms of people making parental choices, but when there is a shared Headship, I will just re-iterate the point that the philosophy of the school, when the Headteacher was there, was very different. And she had a wider community approach. The reason I'm bringing that up is around (Member of Public's) point around the wider implications for the community. Back to the point I made earlier that I understand the educational assessments and decisions around numbers and all of that but I think for a community like Buchanan the implications of the school closing are huge. If that land is sold and that land becomes a holiday home then we are on a trajectory that is irreversible for this community.</p> <p>I just wanted to re-iterate the point of when we take a single lens approach to something that has wider implications for the broader community, I think we are already seeing that in certain parts of the catchment. So I was one of the parents who took my child out of the school and moved to Balfron actually. I understood as I was doing that the decision I was making, but there was reasons for that. All I'm saying is when we are thinking about (it is great to hear about the Nursery) there are lots of things that can be done for the wider community benefit.</p> <p>The last thing I wanted to say is that wider consideration of taking something out of the community may have irreversible consequences for us all actually when we think about the population of this area and the culture and the heritage that exists. Buchanan School the different buildings are in and around 3 different parts of the area, so there is 3 different school houses. It is 150 years of culture and heritage so that is what I meant when I said I was a newcomer in terms of 17 years. Let's not lose what some of the older population have contributed to the area when we think about the community. So I will get off my soap box but I just think if we think about the wider lens. That was all.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you for that. (Officer) do want to come in on that point? And then I will come to (Member of Public).
Officer (SK)	I take your point (Member of Public) about things change when there is a shared Headship. I think as well a lot of communication went on between Buchanan and Drymen at the time and continued. The Head teacher linked and spent time in both of the schools. And as (Officer) said, at the start of the meeting, the schools were involved in things like transition to High School and worked together so they did do things together and they were working in their own communities at the same time. I don't know if that is your experience but that is certainly what the aim was for the shared headship and it still does have the shared headship. As (Headteacher) said he is the Headteacher of Drymen and Buchanan Primary School and Croftamie Nursery.

Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you (Officer).
Member of Public	Yes, thanks. This is just a follow up point to what I was asking before. There are quite a number of pupils from out with the Drymen/Buchanan catchment area transferring into Drymen Primary School. Is that being taken into consideration in terms of projections? I'm aware of children moving from Buchlyvie and around the area into Drymen.
Officer (IS)	Do you mean putting placing requests into Drymen? So we do account for all of that. As part of our projections what I do is I compare the number of Primary 1s we would have expected to get from the birthrate figures against the actual number of Primary 1s that we did get. So obviously if we actually got more because people have put placing requests in because Drymen is a good school and pupils are keen to go there, that will be reflected and the average of the trend is then just projected on for future years just to make sure that we are also taking into account the parental choice and the placing requests coming in. So it is within our calculations.
Member of Public	Yes, because I was talking to a parent of a child at Buchlyvie who has recently moved to Drymen and she was saying that she has moved to Drymen and she was saying that the roll there has drastically dropped, at Buchlyvie, so I just wondered if that trend continues and more and more children are requesting places if that had been taken into consideration.
Officer (IS)	It is taken into account to a certain point. The other thing I would say, however, is (and this is the case for all of our schools) whilst we respect placing requests and things like that we wouldn't be keen for all of Buchlyvie to come to Drymen or anything like that. And actually, with placing requests, they are only approved if there is space anywhere in the classroom so we wouldn't create an additional classroom. Legally we are not allowed to. That is something that can't really be done just because it is a use of public finance that isn't approved. So we don't create extra classrooms for them and certainly we are not looking to encourage everyone to come together in the one school.
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you, (Officer). Whilst we acknowledge the parental right to make a choice where they send their children to school, and that is the placing request process that allows parents to make that choice, we do look at it in the context of the individual school. If there is space they will be accepted and if there is not space then, unfortunately, a placing request can't be accepted. (Member of Public) is it your hand that is up?
Member of Public	Yes, (Chairperson). I just want to pick up on a few points that have been made. In particular one or two that (Member of Public) was making about the value of the school as a community resource, and in particular as an educational resource. I appreciate Stirling Council statutory responsibilities in terms of education don't extend beyond the age of 18. But of course lifelong learning is a thing these days and it

	<p>has been for a long time. There is a lot of potential I think for the re-purposing of Buchanan School for university of the third age, we have a lot of older people in the catchment area, workers, educational association and evening classes. I think we need to look very much at the value of the campus site that we have for all ages in the community. And that includes children, because there are children in the area and outside the area, the land that exists beside the building itself is a very valuable resource for children as well as older people.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>Thank you very much for that. (Officer), do you want to respond first and then we will come to (Member of Public)</p>
Officer (KR)	<p>I would just like to come in following the previous comments from (Member of Public) who talked about looking at the whole community benefit, looking at the situation from the wider lens. And I wondered if it might be helpful, I know at this afternoon's meeting (Officer) gave an example of a rural school where the community were able to look at community use of a building. Obviously, I know we can't pre-empt anything with the consultation process but (Officer) was able to give an exemplar and I'm wondering if that might be helpful (Chairperson), if (Officer) was able to give a bit more information again at this meeting about the example of the community interest at Trossachs Primary.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>(Officer), I will ask you to do that and then I'm going to say before you start that I will then come to (Member of Public and Member of Public) because I think they have had their hand up for a long time.</p>
Officer (TM)	<p>To be honest with you we have got a couple of examples across the entire estate not just use of old school buildings where the community have pulled together all of their aspirations and that might be from a wellbeing perspective or from an education perspective. And being able to build a model that actually supports the running of the building and helps support the community outcome process.</p> <p>We supported a local organisation in Trossachs with a whole business modelling process and an asset transfer request and they are now progressing on their plans to take it forward.</p> <p>So we have done a variety of different opportunities from our operational estate – schools, community centres where we have got the expertise in-house where we can help the community nurture their aspirations to make sure that the building does stay as a part of the community. Depending on the outcome of the process and again I don't want to pre-empt what the decision might be because I can't. We, as a part of the Committee process, if the outcome was that we were to progress with the closure we would probably make a commitment to work with the community to help them realise their aspirations and we would probably work on a particular time period.</p> <p>I think we outlined a 6 month period where we supported Trossachs community to help them realise their aspirations and how we wanted to take it forward. So again, there is no right or wrong answer in how you progress this. It is all very much bespoke to what the community want to do and what the community aspirations are. But the Council do</p>

	<p>have the skillsets across a whole load of services to help make things like that happen.</p> <p>So depending on the outcome of the consultation and approval process we can certainly put a team in place that would help whatever process you wanted to take forward.</p>
<p>Chairperson (CMD)</p>	<p>Thanks (Officer).</p> <p>(Officer) is quite right, what will happen just so we are clear here, as (Officer) says we must not pre-empt the consultation decision. But what will happen is during the consultation period we will gather all the views and then a report is produced by ourselves with a recommendation of what we believe the next steps should be. That will be after we have reflected on all of the comments and feedback. That then goes to our Children and Young People’s Committee who make the decision. We think that working with our timescales we are aiming to do that in February. Then their decision may go to Scottish Ministers as well for further decision so it is quite a lengthy process it has to go through. What (Officer) is talking about is only if the decision were to be made for the school to close permanently.</p> <p>I’m going to go to (Member of Public) then (Member of Public) and then back to (Member of Public).</p>
<p>Member of Public</p>	<p>Hi there. It has been really useful to hear the discussion tonight and the context in which it was set out. I think it was (Officer) who mentioned the school having been mothballed in January 2018.</p> <p>So we have been without that community facility from even before I joined. But on reflection I think it would be useful to be able to understand how best we can re-utilise that facility that (Member of Public) has talked about that educational opportunities and I think with the age and the socio-demographic changing significantly from what it has been in the communities. It would be useful to maybe consider a day centre facility. Not only for those of more senior years but potentially those with learning needs and other requirements in the vicinity that actually might be quite lonely and isolated in their existence if they are in assisted living circumstances. And one of the examples I have seen of that in my previous community was a place called (name of Health Centre) which is actually receiving a lot of third sector rewards for what they are doing, not only with the elderly but with the disadvantaged within the community as well.</p> <p>So I think some life can be breathed into a building and a community of volunteers hoping to get in with that and potentially even build on the great work that has been done on the Wellbeing Group and the grounds and gardens that they have started on. But again I think it is not to pre-empt an outcome I did generally think there is probably a lot more that could be done with that facility.</p> <p>Potentially including a place where the community could come together and look for opportunities for employment maybe in running a small cafeteria for walkers or for the local community or certain groups. There is an awful lot of things that could be done if we look forward</p>

	<p>and although it is regretful to lose a valuable asset as it has been in the past it is maybe moving with the times in terms of the community's socio-demographic and the age profile. And looking for new ways in which we can build that community and give everybody that sense of togetherness that we are probably missing at the moment with not having a suitable facility.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you very much for that.
Member of Public	<p>So we live directly across from the school at the moment and obviously the closure of it affects us quite significantly. We have already had to chase youths out of the inside of the school and the alarm goes off frequently and it looks very tired. It has only been closed for a couple of years already.</p> <p>Realistically, it is only a couple of more years before a use is agreed for what next steps are agreed. So what is going to happen in the interim to prevent it from becoming more of an eyesore, to protect the security of it, to prevent anti-social behaviour and prevent it from becoming somewhere that is graffitied and people break in. Because it happens all the time, people trying to get into derelict and abandoned properties.</p> <p>Across the road and next door to us and across the road from the school is also a burnt out house. So the area just screams for people to come and misbehave so we wanted to know what is being considered to protect it.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you. (Officer)?
Officer (TM)	<p>So we acknowledge that that needs a bit of TLC at the moment and because of Covid and lockdown obviously our teams have concentrated on our occupied buildings. But there is a plan for internal improvement over the coming weeks to get it back to where it should be.</p> <p>Now we actually have the building already getting checked on a weekly basis where we look for any intruders and what not. I'm interested to hear about the alarms going off because that is something that has not been brought to my attention, but I can check with the team just in case there is a fault going on.</p> <p>I'm not aware of youths breaking into the building either but I will check with the team because that has not been reported back to myself. But certainly what I can say is that we will carry on inspecting it and we will carry on making sure that it does not become an eyesore in the local community.</p>
Member of Public	With the youths we chased them away because they were trying to get in through one of the doors and we went and challenged them so they didn't actually get in. But the alarm does go off quite frequently because we speak to the security guys when they do come, it can go off all afternoon.

Officer (TM)	I will look into that because that, certainly a one off usually comes to my attention but the ongoing one certainly hasn't come to my attention. So I will just make sure there isn't a fault in the system somewhere along the line.
Chairperson (CMD)	Thanks, (Officer) that would be much appreciated if you would look into that, thank you. Okay (Member of Public).
Member of Public	<p>I'm glad my question now comes after (Member of Public) because of course when they turned the water off at the school, they turned the water off at the hall. There seems to be a lot of things about the building that people come down and look at. So (Officer) yes please have a look. They should be 2 separate buildings but they are not.</p> <p>But perhaps this is one of my main points that the school and the hall and the church are almost effectively one unit in the village of Milton of Buchanan. It is very hard to see and there is physically very little space between the hall and the school. So the hall is very concerned about the possibility that the (the Hall Committee disagrees with the school closing I think fundamentally) building could be demolished. It is quite an attractive area to live in and that would surely put the hall itself at risk.</p> <p>The hall is hemmed in if you take a look at the plans – the church is on one side and the school is on the other, there is virtually no land out to the back of the hall and the land that is on the front is always under a big dispute. But of course as a parking lot there is nothing the hall can do without an effect of the school or the church. And of course I could turn that comment on its head and say every time when something happens to the school or to the church, it effects the hall.</p> <p>The hall was built in 1925 which I think pre-dates the school building it probably is associated with the buildings that (Member of Public) are referring to that are across the road from. So when they built the hall it wasn't hemmed in but it is now. They are a unit and the Hall Committee certainly doesn't want the building to go and the Hall Committee would very much like to with those who are interested from the Education Office to the Wellbeing Group, whoever might be interested in it. So that we can improve the activities in the services that the hall provide by using what is available at the school.</p> <p>And if anyone is looking for an example: the hall was not built with a kitchen and the kitchen is not to a professional standard, the way the building, and we have had architects and all sorts of work people come into look at it, I could give you lots of detail, is built it is not possible to install a professional/catering kitchen where we could add additional events to the hall's repertoire. So for the hall to move forward it very much needs the school without a doubt.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	Okay, thank you for that. Can I ask everyone to please pop their hand down unless they want to speak? Okay all hands are down but are there any other questions or comments or anything anybody would like to raise?

Member of Public	I don't know if you can see my hand? I keep putting it up but I'm not sure if you can see it?
Chairperson (CMD)	I cannot but thank you for pointing that out. I'm so sorry (Member of Public).
Member of Public	<p>I just want a note to be made that over the years, in and around Rowardennan and Balmaha and Buchanan the local authorities and National Park have put into place developments and it is always developments for tourism. There is never development for the local community and we were always told that it would be taken into account that this was a village or these were villages. And I have to say that has never actually happened.</p> <p>We've always been overlooked as villages and as a community and development for tourism has been at the top of the agenda. And I'm hoping, and I know this is not the place we should really be talking about this, but I'd like the comments registered that this community is widely spread out over 7/8 miles and it needs to have a hub for us all to come together.</p> <p>Drymen has a centre and the people are all around it and they can come into that centre and be together. We don't have that advantage so it is very important that we have a hub that our community can come together and survive. Because there has been so much development and so many houses have been taken up for businesses and it means there is no place for families to come into. It is a difficult area for a family to come into in the first place. So all the more reason for us to have this hub. So that the community can stay alive because if there is any more development our communities and our villages as we know them will simply disappear. And all the East Coast of Loch Lomond will become a holiday park. And I just wanted to put that point of view forward because it is very important to this community that we are able to come together.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	Thank you. (Member of Public) I saw your hand up there.
Member of Public	<p>We have been living here for no more than 2 years and I myself don't know much about the area. But I was just worried about, I don't know the relation or the possibility that Stirling Council with the National Park in relation to for example, planning permissions because I'm talking about planning permissions.</p> <p>Because I don't know if there is more encouragement for developments or a balance between the necessities that families have to develop their own houses just for family. And that can maybe be an influence for less families live in the area of the National Park because Buchanan School I suppose was more useful for the people who were living from Buchanan, Rowardennan and far because we have this school in Drymen.</p> <p>I don't know if for example, if Stirling Council could have made the possibility to talk with the National Park in relation to trying to find a more balanced possibility for the development of properties for families. Because now what is happening is that less and less families</p>

	<p>live in this area and of course less children live in this area. And the community is starting to die. And to me this is a problem because it is like the spirit of the place could disappear.</p> <p>When you go for a holiday somewhere you don't only go for a holiday because of the beauty of the place, you also go on holiday so you can buy things because it is from Scotland, from the people who live in the area. I can see the community go down and down and traditions are disappearing and it affects the whole area because tourist people don't live here. They come for a week, they go on back and they leave their rubbish behind. But there is not people who live in the area who love the area and this is very serious thing.</p> <p>In concrete what I was trying to bring to the meeting was that I don't know if Stirling Council could have any sort of agreement or working together with the National Park in collation to plan this sort of balance for the sustainability and the future of communities in this area within the National Park.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>Thank you (Member of Public). Thank you for that.</p> <p>What I'm going to do is – I think (Member of Public) has her hand up next if that is right. And then I will get (Headteacher) who is the Head teacher at Drymen, it might be interesting for you to hear a bit about Drymen Primary School. He can tell us about the roll, how the pupils have settled and some of the things the school are involved in. That might be interesting too.</p> <p>So (Member of Public) first of all.</p>
Member of Public	No I have not got my hand up.
Chairperson (CMD)	Okay. (Headteacher) can I bring you in next to tell us a bit about the school?
Head teacher (PR)	<p>Yes (Chairperson). It is lovely to be here and to see some familiar faces and to meet new people as well.</p> <p>Just coming back to a point that was made earlier on and similar to what (Chairperson) said it was a question to do with the roll at Buchanan changing and I don't have accurate records and I wasn't the Head teacher at the time. But in discussions with the previous Headteacher and indeed some families, including some families who still have children at Drymen Primary who were pupils at Buchanan up until it was mothballed, the factor of having a wider peer group in particular what (Chairperson) said about having a number of children in the same year group was something that came through in some of the discussions.</p> <p>Although Drymen is not a big school we are over 100 children so typically each primary there are at least 15 other children of that age. And with some of the discussions that we have had with families and children that were at the school that seems to be quite important for them as it would be for adults too, to find friends that have similar interests and so on.</p>

	<p>So our school, currently at Drymen we have 116 children and this year that is spread over 6 classes. I'm Head of Buchanan Primary and also Croftamie Nursery and we have a leadership team of a Principal Teacher and an Acting Principal Teacher that is funded through our Pupil Equity Fund to focus on literacy within the school.</p> <p>I can absolutely recognise some of the comments that were made about Buchanan and the eco work that it did and the work within the community. I think that legacy from the previous Headteacher is hopefully continued. This year we had our 7th Eco Flag and we are trying to do a lot of community work, not just within Drymen but further afield. That has been one of the advantages of Covid for the last 12 months although it has been really difficult it has provided lots of incentives for outdoor learning and sustainability. We have community groups at the school and one community group was recently working with the National Park to improve a local path in Drymen towards Buchanan. So the children were out working with their tools and just seeing the positive impact that they can have.</p> <p>We have I think 18 children, maybe 16, (Officer) can correct me, that get transported to the school on the mini bus or the taxi and it is not particularly far.</p> <p>Our vision and our ethos moving forward is to make the most of the area that we have around the school and in relation to community involvement.</p> <p>In terms about the points that were made earlier about the school roll as I said it is 116. We have had a few placing requests from other smaller schools but it has not been a significant amount and as (Officer) said the roll is obviously monitored closely in terms of developments nearby that might have an impact on the school but we are sitting comfortably at 116 at the moment.</p> <p>So I am happy to answer any questions.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	(Officer) you are going to come in there. Thank you (Headteacher).
Officer (KR)	<p>Yes something came to my mind while (Headteacher) was speaking and that was that I mentioned briefly about the consultations we have had with children. We are still to have the ones with Croftamie Nursery but we have had the ones with Drymen Primary and Balfron High. And (Headteacher) it was really nice to hear the children and young people's ideas about their community, wasn't it?</p> <p>And interestingly, some of their ideas mirrored the suggestions that have come up at this evening's meeting and some of our other consultations. They were particularly interested in the building and one of the children said "It is such a pretty building, I hope something good can come of it." or words to that effect. So they were particularly interested in what would happen to the building. We didn't pre-empt anything, (Officer) explained that we are still in the consultation phase, but it was very interesting to listen to what they had to say.</p>

Chairperson (CMD)	<p>Thank you (Officer) and thank you (Headteacher). I think you will have all gathered – Drymen is a really exciting place for our children in Stirling to learn. So well done for all your hard work (Headteacher) and your whole team.</p> <p>Okay. Any other questions to (Headteacher) and then I am going to come to (Member of Public).</p> <p>(Member of Public) can we hand over to you? Thank you.</p> <p>Just pop your mic off again, thank you. Do you want to say anything again? No? Okay thank you for that.</p> <p>Does anyone else have anything they want to ask about? Okay if there is anyone else who wants to talk, just pop your hand up.</p> <p>In a moment I'm going to ask (Interim Head of Education) to close the meeting. But I do want to re-iterate we are currently in the consultation process. This isn't the end of the consultation and there are still a few weeks to go and some of our Officers have a few more meetings to do. (Officer) mentioned that with the Croftamie Nursery children, for example.</p> <p>But you can contribute to the consultation and if you go into the chat (Officer) will put in the Engage details, the telephone number and the educ-comments details. They are on the top of the chat but (Officer), maybe pop them in there nearest the bottom.</p> <p>So people can still contribute to the consultation they can e-mail us, (and we have had some emails to educ-comments); go on the Engage website and contribute via that, we have also popped the telephone number up if anybody wants to call and we would be happy to speak with anybody on the telephone. So people can continue to contribute and please do speak to people in the community and if they have got a view or something they want to say or ask, do encourage them to go on to Engage, or to e-mail, or to phone and contribute and we will facilitate that contribution in the best way that we can.</p> <p>So, unless there is any other questions or comments, (Interim Head of Education) I will hand over to you and I know that I have probably pre-empted some of what you were going to say.</p>
Interim Head of Education (BM)	It is fine you have saved me some time.
Chairperson (CMD)	Sorry (Interim Chief Education Officer, I think (Member of Public) has just popped in.
Member of Public	Yes, it is just a really brief point. I think it is just to recognise there is a member of the Wellbeing Group who is not here and she done a significant clear up of the building. Because the building had been left in an unfit state externally and all of the children's equipment was left –

	<p>for example there was chess pieces left around and all of the sort of stuff like that. But I just wanted to acknowledge that some of the community have been down and completed a clear up of the school premises. It is a small point but I would take the note for that to be recognised because it shows how much people care about it. So thank you for indulging me in that point.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>Thank you for making us aware of that and thank you to those who have done it. I will add that some of us sitting around the screen have been up to do some tidying up as well, both inside and outside. But Tracey will have a focus around that.</p> <p>Okay (Interim Head of Education).</p>
Interim Head of Education (BM)	<p>No, don't worry and if anyone wants to speak before I am finished please do continue to let us know. And I suppose it is just to reassure you that the reason for recording the meeting is because every single view or comment that you have shared will be faithfully transcribed and will be part of the message. A couple of you have said that you want it noted and you want it to be part of the story - and all of your comments will be.</p> <p>We have talked quite widely this evening about the community and it is absolutely lovely to hear what a strength of community spirit there is and also the potential optimism if we come to the decision (as we are re-iterating) that the school is not using the building and the potential is there for further discussions from all of the ideas you have been sharing and talking about.</p> <p>So yes, thank you so much for that and thank you for attending this evening and taking part in the conversations in such a well informed and interesting way and giving us a sense of the community that you all live in. And for me it really does re-iterate something that (Head teacher) was clearly explaining to the importance of each and every one of our schools within their community no matter how wide that community is and where it extends to.</p> <p>Okay, so thank you to you (particularly to you as community members) but also to our colleagues from across the wider teams in the council, from finance to assets who have attended the meeting to support us today and to the School, Learning and Education Team who have planned extremely well-considered public events virtually as they have done and their readiness to hear other voices before we are finished with the consultation. And thank you too to our Education Scotland colleagues who have come to observe and will be doing the hard work of writing a report for us too.</p> <p>So unless we have got any final comments from anybody, that's us and we are ready to close the meeting.</p>
Chairperson (CMD)	<p>I'll stay on if anybody wants to chat individually. Thank you everyone.</p>

Written Representations received from 15 September 2021 until 10 November 2021

Written representations received via Stirling ENGAGE

1	<p>Buchanan Primary School Closure</p> <p>As it becomes apparent that Buchanan Primary School closure will be permanent there exists, within the community, anxiety as to the future of a building and its grounds that has been a core of people's lives here for many decades.</p> <p>Many I have spoken to wish for an open space for anyone living within Buchanan to meet, connect and become creative in a new process of thinking about a sustainable future for our community.</p> <p>Buchanan finds itself surrounded by tourism and commercial interest within a national park. Our aging community, in the absence of a local shop, pub or school gates suffers from a lack of places where they would naturally meet and connect. As a result, some members of our community are increasingly feeling marginalized. We are losing our sense of community, neighbourhood and ability to flourish.</p> <p>With the permission of Stirling Council, a small group of us are currently making use of the gardens of our former local school in a first move to bring people together. Growing vegetables, flowers and new ideas we are seeking further opportunities for our small community to thrive and exploring possibilities to harness the potential within our community</p> <p>(Photograph of Wellbeing Garden included)</p>
2	<p>This community project has already proven its worth. It's brought us all together and provided a connection that the closure of the school and Covid destroyed. Permission to use the space came late for planting but we still achieved flowers and vegetables and herbs. Coffee mornings with crafts such as paint a stone were so easy to put together and much enjoyed by young and not so young. The potential for this building and grounds to be our core once more is very exciting.</p>
3	<p>Buchanan School</p> <p>Closing our Buchanan Primary School, we here who live on this road, from Drymen right on up to Rowardennan where the road stops, all (<i>well, most of us</i>) know each other very well. This is a community, Our Community.</p> <p>The school has been for generations a place for meeting at the school gate, for news and catch-ups and we all miss that, it would be nice to grow and develop that again in conjunction with the Memorial Hall and the Church.</p> <p>The fabric of our community is breaking up, we have lost so many facilities, our wee School, our Bank, our Post Office and recently our Minister (due to retirement).</p>

	As a community we are very keen to stem the flood of all these losses. To meet up, for the wellbeing of our own folk here in Buchanan to meet, talk, and do stuff together.
4	<p>Community Benefit</p> <p>The proposed closure of the school could allow for the building to be repurposed into a building of multipurpose for the community</p>
5	I believe there is a clause somewhere regarding that Buchanan Primary School should always be used as a place of learning can you research and confirm this is true or false. If this is true why not use the school as a nursery school rather than sell to parties unknown as we already have 4 party houses next door to the school which we were not informed about and anything else causing unnecessary noise would be too much for our small village which has elderly residents in it.
6	<p>Potential asset for the community.</p> <p>Looking forward to the opportunity to participate in the consultation - if the school is to be closed, the building could be fantastic resource for the local community. There are many projects and ideas that, if given the opportunity to develop, would breathe a new lease of life into the building and provide great value and opportunity for members of the community.</p>
7	I feel Buchanan school should be reopened as a nursery school and bring the young life back into the village
8	<p>Buchanan Memorial Hall View</p> <p>Buchanan Memorial Hall began serving the local community in 1927, when the Hall was created as a war memorial by the vicar of the local Church. The Church has had free use of the Hall ever since.</p> <p>The Hall is managed by a committee of representatives of the organizations that use the Hall on a regular basis. In 2017 the Hall became a Charity with the main purpose of providing appropriate recreational facilities for local residents and organizations to carry out activities on a regular basis. To achieve this purpose the Hall's committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employs a booking system to regulate the use of the Hall and its facilities by all interested parties 2. Applies for funding to forward the use of the Hall by residents and organisations 3. Liaises with Stirling Council to ensure the upkeep of the Hall 4. Decides arrangements as necessary to allow the continued use of the hall by local residents and organisations <p>The Hall does not agree with the closure of the Buchanan Primary School and recognizes that for the local community to thrive it needs families that will put down roots, contribute to the local economy as well as the community by raising their families here. Without a school, the community cannot attract new families and move forward.</p>

	<p>The Hall also recognizes that the school building is an asset to the local community, and fundamentally sees the school building as part of the Hall's own development. The two buildings are fundamentally a 'joined' space. As the Hall moves from its redevelopment as a charity to generating additional income via new business models in these troubled economic times, the school building could provide the needed facilities and space to meet the challenges of new business models particularly professional catering facilities. The environment of the Hall would be greatly affected if the school building was removed by an organization outside the community that intended to redevelop the site.</p> <p>While the Hall Committee agrees that for the growth and development of the local community the Buchanan Primary School is reopened, the school building remaining an asset in the community is crucial for that continued growth and development.</p>
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Written representations received via email

1	<p>I would also like to express my concern that should the closure of the school be decided as permanent the school building and grounds remain a community facility.</p> <p>I would also like to know how contributions and views can be posted on your Engage Stirling website. I have enquired previously about this but not received a response.</p>
2	<p>I am a member of Buchanan Community and am writing about my concern for the lack of accessibility for many community members to participate at tomorrow's consultation which is to be held online (via the clunky and user-unfriendly Microsoft teams) rather than in person at our community hall.</p> <p>I and many members would appreciate for you to revisit the current meeting plan which is not in line with current Covid-19 restrictions which would indeed allow a live meeting of adults.</p>
3	<p>I am in support of closing the school- I think it makes financial sense and the proximity of the Drymen primary coupled with the dropping birth rates means that I think it makes sense overall. We have the opportunity, if the school closes, to use the space that the school occupies to provide a space for intergenerational mixing. The problem with having a primary school as the only 'hub' of a community as small as ours means it is only a space for those with children, which creates potential to exclude single people, couples without/unable to have children and older members of the community who don't have children/don't have children at the school, or families that move to the area with secondary school age children.</p> <p>I am strongly in favour of using the school space to support intergenerational mixing - in the very least following the model started by the well-being group and with the potential for other avenues if there is community support.</p> <p>I am strongly in opposition to the school being sold with the potential for holiday homes however I appreciate that we have little control over that. I'd much prefer a space - outdoor and indoor - where the community can meet. The hall committee have organised nice lunches and events in non Covid times but there is space for both the hall and another initiative- the hall has a</p>

	<p>lovely traditional way of working but there is also room for different initiatives alongside the hall- they can sit beside each other without impacting on each other.</p> <p>I hope for a quick action on this- the school is getting more and more tired and it's only a matter of time before structural issues occur without any intervention which becomes an eye sore in the village- and it is strongly acknowledged that the environment around us strongly shapes our wellbeing so I'm keen for action to keep our village looking attractive and welcoming.</p> <p>Best of luck with the consultation- you have so many strong opinions to take into consideration! But you did a great job at the consultation- well done to you all and thank you for taking the time and effort to prepare so well.</p>
4	<p>Further to the informative and exceptionally well-managed (virtual) Public Meeting on 19 October, which was professionally supported by Ms Carolyn McDaid and the team who facilitated the meeting. I would like to respond to this meeting with a written note of my position on the proposal.</p> <p>The Council team who set out the proposal, implications and alternative arrangements for the closure of Buchanan Primary School were very clear and concise on the evening. I can say that after full reflection I am supportive of the closure. My support is based upon the building not being put up for immediate sale by the Council at the point of the potential closure in June 2022.</p> <p>I can see the clear financial benefit in the full and permanent closure of the mothballed facility and it makes absolute sense given birth rate drop in the catchment area alongside the continuing capacity available in Drymen Primary School.</p> <p>I have cited that my support is conditional, and as one of my neighbours in Balmaha said at the Public Meeting, we cannot allow further dilution of the community due to more properties/buildings being approved as new commercial properties or change of use of existing houses to commercial-use premises or Buy To Lets. The proportion of properties in Balmaha and Buchanan villages that are held by my hospitality/tourism related business has left the community voiceless and without a heart. The Council Planning Department and the National Park Authority has allowed this situation to develop over a number of years. I bought my property from a family who had lived in the area for 11 years and had seen many changes, all of which had resulted in them seeking a community life closer to a major town/city. Beyond moving in I found no place in the community, as have those who have moved into the Buchanan villages after that point in 2019. Yes, the matter of the global pandemic has been a major limiter on building relationships but prior to this it is evident the community is closed, particularly in Balmaha.</p> <p>We have a small but perfectly formed community of approx. 10 "outsiders" in the Buchanan villages now. We are striving to build an inclusive community for all with social media pages, WhatsApp groups, distributing small amounts of home-baking to those interested along with other surplus goods such as backyard hens eggs (with the usual disclaimer on cooking fully!). However that community spirit will take a long time to break into the psyche of long-standing villagers.</p>

	<p>To me, the Buchanan Primary School building should be retained by the Education Department and potentially utilised in collaboration with the Integrated Health & Social Care Partnership. Plans to transform the rural care provisions in southwest Stirling were approved with the closure of Strathendrick Care Home in June of this year. However the Primary School facility presents an ideal way to connect those in need of health and social care support. By re-purposing the school for a multitude of purposes, primarily to the benefit of our ageing communities would bring back the beating heart of the most rural villages in the Buchanan estate, and bring us closer to other rural villages.</p> <p>With some vision and (potentially crowd-sourcing fundraising) a day centre could bring the community to life. Through various public sector award ceremonies you may be aware of the day centre; (name of centre given). The day centre provides an essential support to young and old to address isolation of living alone, bring much needed services such as a hairdresser, optician, and podiatrist to the centre to ensure preventative health issues are identified early. The younger attendees at the centre encourage animals for petting experiences, kittens, lap dogs and even miniature ponies have been brought to the centre! There are simple arts and crafts sessions (making Christmas cards, Easter bonnets, etc.) and entertainment from watching movies together, through to live music to get toes tapping.</p> <p>There could be a day and night use for part of building, which I am sure could be run by the enthusiastic community in some form of social enterprise / CIC. With ring-fenced access facilities such as adult education room(s) could be hired to the benefit of the community in the evenings. We locally have reiki masters, yoga instructors, art tutors, language teachers and music tutors. These facilities for hire, alongside the playing fields for adult / over-40's football or even community-led transformation of the playing field to welfare and relaxation garden. Possibly some of the large and prosperous businesses in the local area would sponsor rooms, facilities and services to the community to balance the effect their footprint has on community life. With the prospect of over 100 new-build developments both in Balmaha and Drymen providing a community-centred service would be highly regarded by the community.</p> <p>I would be delighted to help in the quest for making best use of the building to the advantage of the community as a whole. If there is anything I can do to assist in the lead-up or beyond the decision phase I would be happy to assist. As I said above, as new-comers we are aiming to breathe more community spirit into the villages and connect with those that have spent the majority of their lives in and around this beautiful part of Stirlingshire. If we can help broker discussions, put forward ideas or initiate crowd-funding ideas from all of the tourists and walkers which make good use of the paths and hills around our homes we are more than happy to assist.</p> <p>I do hope your proposal for the closure of the Primary School is not only an economical one for the Education Department, but an outcome which can help breathe new life into a rural, very traditional community and let them see that some change can be for the better.</p>
5	<p>Yes I had access to the meeting but unfortunately, couldn't participate as my audio/video failed. Had I been able to introduce myself I would have said I lived in Milton of Buchanan, attended BPS in the 50's, my father and his</p>

	<p>siblings also attended BPS and my daughter attended in the early 90's. As (Member of Public) said, around 1993 when a lot of families moved into the area, a new classroom was added to accommodate the children who had come in to the area and greatly increased the school roll.</p> <p>I appreciate that the projected numbers re births are valid but the movements in households are less predictable. Not long after BPS closed there were families moved in to Milton of Buchanan and were greatly disappointed that the school was closed as it was within walking distance.</p> <p>However, It was a good meeting and very informative. I'm looking forward to the next steps</p>
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Representations received at 'Drop in' Session, 1 November 2021

1	<p>I would love to see the school open again for educational purposes. I think it is wrong of the council to consider extending Drymen Primary School when there is a perfectly good school lying empty, only two and half miles away. I also feel that the council are too late with their consultation. If this had been done earlier, it might have prevented children leaving to go to other local schools. It would be hard for parents to remove children from their current school to return to the local primary school in Milton of Buchanan. As a member of the community, I have concerns about the future use of the building.</p>
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Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Stirling Council to permanently close Buchanan Primary school and add its catchment area to the delineated catchment area of Drymen Primary School, December 2021.



Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HM Inspectors of Education addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Stirling Council to permanently discontinue education provision at Buchanan Primary School with effect from 24 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter; permanently change the catchment area so that pupils of Buchanan Primary School receive their education at Drymen Primary School, from 25 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter; and permanently extend the delineated catchment area of Drymen Primary School to include the delineated catchment area of Buchanan Primary School from 25 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter.

November 2021

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) (“the 2010 Act”). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Stirling Council’s proposal to permanently discontinue education provision at Buchanan Primary School with effect from 24 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter; permanently change the catchment area so that pupils of Buchanan Primary School receive their education at Drymen Primary School, from 25 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter; and permanently extend the delineated catchment area of Drymen Primary School to include the delineated catchment area of Buchanan Primary School from 25 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors’ consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors’ overall view of the proposal. *Upon receipt of this report, the 2010 Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council’s final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council’s response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers and the special provisions that apply to proposals to close a rural school.*

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the schools; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council’s reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the virtual public meetings held on 19 October 2021 in connection with the council’s proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- a virtual visit to the site of Drymen Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

1.4 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council’s consideration of any reasonable alternatives to closure of Buchanan Primary School, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements of the proposed closure.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Stirling Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The consultation period ran from 15 September 2021 until 10 November 2021. Prior to this, the council had engaged widely in pre-consultation activities. Notice of the consultation and the public meetings were advertised on Stirling Council's Engage web page. Information was regularly shared on Stirling Council's social media platforms. Posters were placed in the local area advertising the public meetings and subsequent drop-in session. The council held meetings with a range of stakeholder groups. Two virtual public meetings were held online on 19 October 2021. In total 19 members of the public attended these with a further four at the drop-in session. Most of the attendees were local residents. Fourteen written representations were received via the council's website, email and by letter. Almost all stakeholders agree with the council's rationale to permanently close Buchanan Primary School. More than a few residents had concerns about the future use of the school building should it close. Most local residents expressed a desire for the building to be developed and maintained as a community resource.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 Buchanan Primary School was mothballed by Stirling Council in January 2018. During the period of mothballing, the catchment area of Drymen Primary School was extended to include the area covered by Buchanan Primary School and most children living in the Buchanan catchment area currently attend Drymen Primary School. Prior to mothballing, Buchanan Primary School operated as a single teacher primary school serving the village of Milton of Buchanan and the surrounding area. The capacity of Buchanan Primary School is 75 pupils. Prior to mothballing, the roll at Buchanan Primary School had fallen steadily over the past five school sessions. At the start of the 2017-18 session, there were five children enrolled at Buchanan Primary School. Between August and October 2017, placing requests for all five children were submitted and accepted for Drymen Primary School.

3.2 The council has set out a strong case in support of its proposal. There are a number of educational benefits for children and staff should the proposal go ahead. Children who spoke with HM Inspectors were positive about the proposal. They enjoy the many opportunities that are available in Drymen Primary School. Children who attend the school have access to a wider peer group. This provides increased opportunities to develop social skills and establish friendships. The availability and use of digital technology at Drymen Primary School, and the rich outdoor learning environment, engage and motivate children to learn. Children have opportunities to lead school improvement initiatives and participate in a range of clubs and activities. This promotes the development of their leadership skills and supports wider achievements.

3.3 Teaching staff at Drymen Primary School actively engage in professional learning and assume leadership roles in a variety of areas. This builds capacity within the staff team, supporting the delivery of a broad and rich curriculum resulting in a wide range of learning opportunities for children. Specialist support and assistance is available within the school, and this is of particular benefit to children with additional learning needs. Staff at Drymen Primary School build and utilise a range of effective partnerships, both within the local community and beyond, to support learning and teaching and contribute to school improvement. The active Parent Council and volunteers play an important role in facilitating activities such as extra-curricular clubs and fundraising events. This community involvement enhances the learning experiences of children at the school.

3.4 The relocation of Croftamie Nursery to Drymen Primary School will help to support smooth transition for children as they move from nursery to school. In addition, the shared campus offers

significant opportunities for staff and children from both establishments to work and improve together, building a strong community of learning.

3.5 Parents who spoke with HM Inspectors were positive about the proposal. They recognise the increased opportunities for children in terms of a wider circle of friends. They express positive views on the wide and rich opportunities children are experiencing at Drymen Primary School. They do not wish Buchanan Primary School to be re-opened. Once Croftamie Nursery is relocated to the same site, transporting children to the shared campus will be more convenient for families.

3.6 HM Inspectors agree with stakeholders and the council with regard to the educational benefits outlined above and in the proposal paper.

3.7 As the proposal will lead to the closure of an accessible rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of the factors to which it should have special regard. The council has clearly identified its reasons for formulating the proposal and considered reasonable alternatives to closure of the school before it consulted on this proposal. In terms of transport, the likely effect on the environment and on children will be very limited. Drymen Primary School is two and a half miles away from Buchanan Primary School. Transport to the school by mini-bus or private vehicle increases the journey time for most pupils by a maximum of ten minutes. Prior to mothballing, Buchanan Primary School building was only used for the purpose of educating primary school aged children during school hours. Public meetings, local events, fetes, surgeries and recreational activities are all held in the Memorial Hall at Milton of Buchanan. The local community are very interested in the future use of the mothballed school should the proposal go ahead. They are concerned that if left unattended the building could fall into disrepair. Local residents would like the building to remain as a community asset and have shared some suggestions with the council as to how the building could be used in the future.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has strong educational benefits for children attending Drymen Primary School. Children are making wider friendships with the increased number of peers. There are greater opportunities to participate in teams, clubs and activities and to develop leadership skills. The broad and rich curriculum is being developed by a larger staff team with growing opportunities, for example, in languages and outdoor learning. Almost all children, staff and parents are positive about the proposal. Should the proposal go ahead and the school building be available for asset transfer, the council should work with stakeholders to explore how this might be used to the benefit of local residents.

**HM Inspectors
November 2021**