

Crossroads Primary School Closure Proposal Public Meeting

Date: 22 October 2024

Time: 18:30

Venue: King Memorial Hall, Grange

In Attendance: Andy Hall Programme Manager Learning Estate; Stewart McLauchlan Quality Improvement Manager; Jane Martin Community Support Officer (Learning Estate); Pragya Rathore Communications and Engagement Officer; Alona Murray HMI Education Scotland; Cllr Colyer and Gatt arrived at the end of the meeting

Attendance: 9 Community Members

Meeting Notes

Andy Hall gave introductions and gave a 12 slide PowerPoint presentation on Crossroads Primary School Closure Proposal.

- Consultation process based around 2010 school act – statutory consultation – process open, robust, transparent and fair
Consultation Survey is open until from Monday 23 September 2024 to Friday 15 November 2024
Outline of consultation process in terms of if there are any alternative reasons to proposal to rezone
Specific requirements for rural school - 3 key impacts: Education Benefits, Community Impact, Impact on travel arrangements
- Background in consultation document
2022/2023 – academic session – roll was down to 4 in January 2023, school was mothballed
Most children (25 in catchment) either already had placing request for KPS or St T – temporary rezoned children remaining in school to Rothiemay PS
Community engagement on the school in May and November last year (2023)
Approval for statutory consultation through ECLSC – 17 September 2024
- Options:
Alternatives to closure
Proposed options
Discounted options
- 2 options – closure and rezone to Keith Primary School or close and split rezone to Keith Primary School and Rothiemay Primary School
- Public Submissions Consultation document – can be accessed via website e-mail addresses, search for Crossroads Primary School Moray Council – link to learning estate page

Discussions

No discussion points at this time from attendees

No questions from attendees at this stage

- Next Steps Consultation concludes on 15 November (Phase 2)
- Education Scotland on submission of consultation and other documentation, they will prepare report on the educational aspects of the proposal (3 weeks)
- HMIE visit – December 2024
- Meeting at all schools
- Prepare and publish consultation report (Phase 4) – up to ECLSC on 18 February (will go live a week before this)
- Decision process (Phase 5) – 28 Feb 2025 ECLSC decision will go to full council on 26 February and notify Scottish Ministers with 6 working days
- Closure decision then sits with Scottish Government – 3 weeks to make initial representation to Ministers and further 5 weeks for Ministers to decide whether or not to issue a call-in notice. During

8-week period the Authority cannot proceed to implement any proposed closure (would be later in 2025)

- School Closure Review Panel – if Ministers call in, can take max 9 to 17 weeks
- Non-closure decision – restriction on closure for 5 years
- Elected members involved throughout and communicated with, based on outcome
- Presentation ended – open for questions

Discussions

<p>If decision is made that school will reopen, what about equipment that has been removed?</p> <p>What about the computer?</p> <p>What happens if decide to reopen?</p>	<p>Mothballing can take a long time and main item is Pagoda. Agreed with Parent Council and parents moving to Rothiemay – looking to move to Rothiemay for children moved to Rothiemay. If school reopens, that would be returned.</p> <p>Anything perishable, has been cleared/removed – amplifier has gone to Keith Grammar on an asset register and if school reopens, will be returned.</p> <p>Nothing removed unless agreed. Andy visited CPS 4 weeks ago and check on wind/watertight.</p> <p>Computers – due to conditions/temperature – older buildings do get damp and cold, on an asset register, some to Rothiemay, some at HQ and also will be returned if needed.</p> <p>Tablets would be returned where required.</p>
<p>Parent Council has paid a lot of money over the years for that equipment too?</p>	<p>Rothiemay and remaining in school. Pagoda moved to RPS – other schools did not want further items.</p>
<p>How much would it cost to reopen the school?</p>	<p>Over £200,000 over next 5 years to meet B condition/suitability standard</p>
<p>Would it have cost more to remain open?</p>	<p>Still costs linked to running/maintenance. Around £130,000 of revenue being saved currently that can be reinvested in Learning Estate</p>
<p>Pulled the heart out of Grange – was a social centre and little social events that school Parent Council provided for farming families who don't have opportunities to go in/out of Keith, Elgin, Inverness etc – little things that count – children from smaller schools have better manners, more respect – bigger schools don't even mix</p>	<p>Operational decision is taken when school roll drops to 15 – peer interaction is an issue and not a decision taken independently</p> <p>When roll drops, parents will take children out of school and when children move on from Primary to Secondary</p> <p>4/5 of parents already sending children to Keith Primary School – parents attracted to this</p>
<p>What sort of impact is the new housing estate on Keith Primary/size</p>	<p>Seeing falling birth rate in Moray, no issues with school rolls (any) – a number of schools operating below capacity</p>
<p>Catchment</p>	<p>Will depend on consultation and next steps</p>
<p>Costs – all about saving costs – teacher redeployed from that school and changes will depend -</p>	<p>Linked to processes and staffing/change in roll and parents opting to put their children to other schools (parental choice)</p>
<p>Suggested that Crossroads was not used by other groups – e.g. Yoga, Knitting – use of building always refused</p>	<p>Very few Primary Schools have any school lets – linked to costs – were paying around £70,000 per year across schools and Council reviewed and only larger venues used (more of a let/lease to use). About cost of operating facilities – issues in past, keys available to community and issues around insurance and risk assessment, H&S, risk – across all Primary Schools</p>

Suggest that smaller schools don't gain anything by having a Parent Council – small number of children in schools who have siblings, older sibling at Grammar – not as much interest or funds go to Parent Council. Cash Book – last 16 years – raised over £35,000 and used for opportunities, experiences, travel?	<p>Majority of parents in Crossroads catchment (out with this consultation) chose to send their children to Keith Primary School</p> <p>All consultations taken into account</p> <p>No plans to close Rothiemay Primary School – was due to SG census and roll that class number/teachers reduced</p>
Money it will cost to reopen the school – concern that the school is now an eyesore and playground/weeds – not nice to look at and even if it closes, is there something to be done with it?	<p>Wider learning estate has 30 schools below standard</p> <p>Not unique the school is showing its age/needs investment</p> <p>Moray Council has neglected school estate due to other financial pressures – will not go away</p> <p>With respect to outside – not being maintained and lands and parks at Council have been instructed to tidy grounds – should be being addressed now (being assured this is being done)</p> <p>Defibrillator – kept on side of building, not taken away, power source retained</p>
Rothiemay census brought up	<p>The decision to adjust class numbers aligns with national and local authority guidelines following Census Day set nationally each September. This data is used every year to ensure equity across Moray schools by allocating staffing according to pupil rolls.</p> <p>Rothiemay is one of several schools impacted by the latest census figures, resulting in these adjustments.</p>
Telephone box removed	Concerned it was removed acknowledged and noted but not the Council who did this (BT)
Concern around toilet block/dampness	Lowest setting of heating – no damp noticed, will keep an eye, janitor goes in once a fortnight (KGS) to check the school and checks for this to see there is no evidence of damp
If school does close, what is the process	<p>No presumption of closure – a number of options put forward at public meetings last year too</p> <p>Opportunities for asset transfer etc covered last year</p>
If was to close, how long before a decision made with building	<p>If building were to close, ceases to be a school</p> <p>Asset Management team then takes on – legal process and likely 6-12 months before anything happened</p> <p>Will maintain as wind and watertight due to building value</p>
Would the council be better moving things in playground	<p>Local schools and play team have been approached and did not want – will review taking e.g. Goalposts in to the building</p> <p>All usable equipment taken away by Rothiemay – concern that if we start disposing of things, then concerns raised (as with if they remain where they are) at this stage</p>
Observation – meeting last year, similar meeting and not minutes	Obligated to send postal letters to all – all sent on same day from the mail room

Engagement session Concern that parents left e-mail addresses at last session – sometimes mail taking a couple of weeks. An e-mail before other people would have been asked for	
Feel annoying that general public are being told before parents	Confirmed that mail all sent out at same time to everyone
How many pupils in catchment just now that could go to Crossroads	26 – school catchment (21 go to Keith) Majority of those parents choose to go to Keith School roll effectively 5 – children currently zoned to Rothiemay
Concern that people allowed to build houses in Grange	House building – uncertain at change in roll Parental Choice as to where parents put their children Majority of parents in Crossroads have and continue to put their children to other schools (mainly Keith Primary School) Not removing Parental Choice – school roll falling and down to 5 (parental choice)
Always the threat of closure – if threat, won't send child deliberately there?	Noted
One parent – child was in a class from P1-P7 at CPS previously – not best experience	Explained that roll had dropped to 5 – same issues around Education Benefits (one parent's child was in P1-P7 and not a good experience, out doing learning support some pupils 1:1 etc) – same as if school were operating with e.g. 5 pupils as before
If pupils currently going to Keith Primary just now, do they get transport (from Crossroads)?	No transport provided to Keith Primary from Crossroads catchment Depending on catchment zone, children would be entitled to catchment Those still going to Rothiemay (who were at Crossroads as mothballed) would still
Big houses for sale – more children coming in?	Can't plan on what might happen – need to look at current situation Looking at costs and cost savings – 21 children if school rezoned would be entitled to school transport
21 parents fault school is shutting	Choosing to put their children to Keith Primary School
4 miles from Newmill – 10 miles from Rothiemay – why some areas not zoned to Newmill	Parents suggesting Newmill as option Currently, no pupils attending Newmill and was no previous desire to attend – not put forward as option
Maps – pains that our children – supporting the local school and appreciate it needs mothballed – feel forced to choose different school and people who closed the school (didn't	Parent raised concern that in future if rezoning happens parents who send their child(ren) to Keith through parental choice and having no involvement with Crossroads have led to closure – parent felt it unfair that they would potentially receive free travel in future to Keith Primary

put their children to Crossroads but put to Keith and had to transport) are now going to get free transport. Chose to put children previously to Keith – reasons why mothballed and now getting school transport handed on a plate (extra 21 pupils to transport)	
Will transport pick up at pupil doors – will depend on outcome and transport would review this	Parental choice – not England, we allow parents to send children to school of choice if there are spaces in the school. Catchment zones and transport provision -
Parents understand they are minority – sadness about situation	Acknowledged/noted

No presumption of closure – scrutinise the Education Benefits statement and inform final report to Committee – with respect to rural schools

16 pupils go to Keith Primary School, 3 go to St Thomas who are currently in zone (Jane confirmed from an e-mail she had/figures on laptop she accessed)

Andy closed meeting **7.40 pm** and asked for anyone to ask further questions, respond to consultation, any further comments