



**CONSULTATION REPORT REGARDING
THE CLOSURE OF CROSSROADS
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

22 April 2025

**This Consultation Report has been issued by the Moray Council in
accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act
2010 (as amended)**

**If you have difficulty reading this document please contact
Learning Estates Team on 01343 563374**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared following a consultation on the proposal to discontinue education at Crossroads Primary School, which is currently mothballed and to reassign the current catchment area to Keith Primary School or to reassign the catchment area between Keith and Rothiemay primary schools.
- 1.2 This report has been prepared in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the above proposal. The objective of this report is to:
- Provide a record of the total number and a summary of written and oral responses received during the statutory consultation period;
 - Provide a statement of the Council's response to those written and oral representations;
 - Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of the Council's response to this report;
 - Provide a statement on how the Council reviewed the above proposal following the representations received during the statutory consultation period;
 - Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the proposal document and state how the Council acted on it;
 - State how the Council has obeyed Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above proposals; and
 - Provide officer conclusions and recommendation.

2. The Consultation Process

- 2.1 The requirement for consulting on a relevant proposal relating to schools is set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 17 August 2024 the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee authorised a statutory consultation on a proposal to closure of Crossroads Primary School and rezone its catchment.
- 2.3 The proposal document made clear to consultees that the consultation period would run from 23 September 2024 until 15 November 2024. This more than adequately covered the required minimum of 30 days term time required for consultation.
- 2.4 On 23 September 2024 copies of the proposal document were made available to Parents/Carers, schools staff and the general public via the following link http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_156884.html.
- 2.5 Full copies of the proposal document were made available at Keith Primary School, Rothiemay Primary School, Newmill Primary School, St Thomas's RC Primary School, Keith Nursery, King Memorial Hall. Keith Library and Elgin Central Library.

- 2.6 A copy of the document was also available on request from Moray Council Learning Estates Team.
- 2.7 The proposal document was also published on the Council website: http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_156884.html
- 2.8 Communication regarding the consultation was published on the Council's newsroom on 17 September 2024 when a news release was issued. It was further promoted on social media platforms on 17 September 2024 to notify the public about the Committee's decision and on 23 September 2024 to launch the consultation.
- 2.9 The consultation was also advertised in the Press & Journal on 23 September 2024, the Banffshire Herald on 24 September 2024, and the Northern Scot on 27 September 2024.
- 2.10 An online survey was available throughout the consultation period.
- 2.11 The consultees were also given the option to submit their comments to on the proposal via email to learningestate@moray.gov.uk or posted to Community Support Officer (Learning Estate), Elgin Council Offices. High Street Elgin IV30 1BX
- 2.12 Two face-to-face public meetings were planned during the consultation period. The first meeting, open to all the community, took place at the King Memorial Hall, Grange, Keith, AB55 6SL at 6:30pm on 22 October 2024. The second public meeting, for current and future parents and carers, went ahead at Keith Grammar School, School Road, Keith, AB55 5GS at 7pm on 24 October 2024 but there were no attendees.
- 2.13 A further online meeting was planned for on 23 October 2024 at 7pm. Anyone wishing to attend this meeting were able to express their interest in attending by emailing learningestate@moray.gov.uk. There was no stakeholder interest up to the proposed start time of meeting so it did not go ahead.
- 2.14 Education Scotland received a copy of the proposal document and attended the public meeting.
- 2.15 At the end of the consultation period, Education Scotland were provided with all documentation relating to the consultation. They visited Keith Primary School, Rothiemay Primary School, Newmill Primary School, St Thomas's Primary School and Keith Grammar School and a meeting with the Strathisla Community Council. Following their visit and a review of relevant documentation, Education Scotland issued a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. The report is covered in more detail within **Section 8** of this report.
- 2.16 Adhering to the statutory requirement this consultation report was published on the Moray Council's website on 22 April 2025, in preparation for the Education, Children and Leisure Services Committee on 13 May 2025, and more than the three weeks minimum time required, prior to the Council meeting on 21 May

2025 where it is expected a decision on whether to implement the proposal will be made.

3. The Proposal

3.1 The Proposal document, included as **Appendix A** to this report, was issued to those individuals and bodies listed under 'Distribution' within the Proposal document. The Proposal document was also published on the Council website at: http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_156884.html

3.2 The proposal on which the consultation took place was:

To close Crossroads Primary School, currently mothballed, and re-assign its catchment area to Keith Primary School (Option 1) or reassign its catchment area between Keith Primary School and Rothiemay Primary School (Option2)

3.3 The schools that could be impacted by this proposal are;

- Crossroads Primary School
- Keith Primary School
- Rothiemay Primary School

3.4 The proposal was advanced for the following reasons:

- No children have attended Crossroads Primary School since January 2023 while the school was mothballed. The decision to mothball was taken as the pupil numbers had fallen to 4 at the start of the 2022/23 academic session and implemented on 9 January 2023;
- There were 4 children within the Crossroads catchment that could have enrolled for P1 in August 2023 but only 1 request was made;
- A further 4 pupils were in the catchment area for Crossroads and due to start Primary 1 in August 2024 but all chose to make placing requests to either Keith Primary School or St Thomas RC Primary School;
- Although the number of primary school children in the Crossroads Primary School catchment totals 25 for the 2024/25 session families have chosen to send their children to the following settings:
 - Keith Primary – 17 registered
 - St Thomas RC Primary – 3 registered
 - Rothiemay Primary – 5 registered
- A school roll of fewer than 15 pupils hampers social interaction opportunities for children, who conversely benefit from attending larger schools amongst more children of their own age.

- The Council has explored alternatives in arriving at this proposal, explained further below.
- The current condition of Crossroads Primary School is category C (Poor) overall, with significant areas at Category D (Bad).

3.5 An update report on the Crossroads School was given to the Education, Children and Leisure Services Committee on 7 June 2023. The Committee agreed to the preparation of an options appraisal regarding the future of Crossroads Primary School.

3.6 A follow up report was submitted to the Education, Children and Leisure Services Committee on 17 September 2024 seeking approval to undertake a statutory consultation on the closure of Crossroad Primary School in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

3.7 The Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee agreed to:

- (i) Authorise a statutory consultation with local stakeholders (Parent Councils, parents, pupils, staff and the local community) on the proposal to close Crossroads Primary School; and,
- (ii) To receive a further report on the outcome of the consultation in February 2025.

Due to insufficient time and resource the Moray Learning Estate team were unable to complete the consultation analysis and draft the Consultation Report to support Committee meeting in February 2025 and will instead be sending the Consultation Report to Education, Children's and Leisure Services on 13 May 2025.

4. Educational Benefits Statement

4.1 In 2009, the Scottish Government set out its Vision for the Future School Estate in Scotland, in 'Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future'.

4.2 In September 2019, this was updated with Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy 'Connecting People, Places and Learning' which was developed by Scottish Government and COSLA. This contains ten guiding principles. Local Authorities are required to take account of these principles in planning changes to their school estate, namely:

- Learning environments should support and facilitate excellent joined up learning and teaching to meet the needs of all learners;
- Learning environments should support the wellbeing of all learners, meet varying needs to support inclusion and support transition for all learners;
- The learning estate should be well-managed and maintained, making the best of existing resources, maximising occupancy and representing and delivering best value;

- The condition and suitability of learning environments should support and enhance their function;
- Learning environments should serve the wider community and where appropriate be integrated with the delivery of other public services in line with the place principle;
- Learning environments should be greener, more sustainable, allow safe and accessible routes for walking, cycling and wheeling and be digitally enabled;
- Outdoor learning and the use of outdoor learning environments should be maximised;
- Good consultation about learning environments, direct engagement with learners and communities about their needs and experiences, and an involvement in decision making processes should lead to better outcomes for all;
- Collaboration across the learning estate, and collaboration with partners in localities, should support maximising its full potential;
- Investment in Scotland's learning estate should contribute towards improving learning outcomes and support sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

4.3 In May 2016, Moray Council approved the 'Schools for the Future': A policy for Sustainable Schools' in order to monitor schools provision in Moray and ensure provision continues to meet the needs of learners, parents and the community and enable the Council to meet its requirements to ensure best value, as per the Local Government Scotland Act 2003. This policy contributes to the aim of ensuring all children and young people in Moray have equality of opportunity in terms of access to educational provision and facilities.

4.4 Within this policy, Moray Council set criteria and indicators in determining optimum quality education experience which include provision of accommodation as reported to Children and Young People's Services Committee for:

- The range of curricular and wider school activities available for children to enable them to achieve in a range of activities for personal and wider achievement (e.g. physical education, music, art, drama);
- The ability of the school to cater for children with Additional Support Needs;
- The school's ability to provide access to a suitably broad and balanced curriculum;
- The quality of the physical environment for learning and teaching
 - Condition - minimum standard B
 - Suitability - minimum standard B
- No more than two composite year groups in a single classroom at primary school level.

- A minimum of four teachers at a primary school. This recognises both the needs of pupils and the demands on teachers; and.
 - Ideally, at least seven classrooms (one for each year group).
- 4.5 Key statutory requirements are further subsumed including delivery of 2 hours minimum Physical Education as part of National standards, compliance with statutory legislation in relation to school accommodation and Additional Support Needs, UNCRC and overall extent of on-site accommodation and facilities (including required general purpose spaces, play and social spaces, staff rest areas and outdoor spaces).
- 4.6 Moray's vision and strategic direction for all involved in Moray Education as set out in our Education Strategic Plan and Priorities – *improving outcomes for all Moray's children and young people* – is underpinned by the core entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence in order to ensure all children and young people maximise development in the four capacities: Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Effective Contributors and Responsible Citizens. This stems from Early Learning and Childcare, across the Broad General Education and through into the Senior Phase, working across our system to ensure our learners progress to positive and sustained post-school destinations. Underpinned by our Council values of Fair, Ambitious, Improving and Responsive *we are ambitious to achieve excellence together* in benefit of all Moray's children and young people.
- 4.7 In order to deliver on our Education strategic vision and priorities, all Moray schools thus work towards:
- **Curriculum:** With ongoing national reform, reviews and wider national consultation ongoing, we recognise the importance of further developing our curriculum across the BGE and into Senior Phase, in order to improve curriculum breadth and opportunities for all children and young people in Moray.
 - **Learning, teaching and assessment:** High quality learning, teaching and assessment are fundamental for ensuring learners' experiences are matched to their talents, interests and needs in preparation for life and work. This includes planning high quality learning experiences across the four contexts for learning, extending skills, acquiring knowledge and developing in the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence.
 - **Reviewing Additional Support Needs:** Supporting our learners to progress throughout their learning journeys is essential in order for them to achieve, enabling progression to positive and appropriate post-school destinations and pathways. Ensuring universal and targeted supports and interventions are in place based on clear identification of need ensures we continue to nurture and support our children and young people.
 - **Strengthening leadership & empowerment:** Through leadership and empowerment across our system, we will accelerate progress with our strategic priorities 1-3, supported by professional learning, development experiences and opportunities. Building capacity across our system, we will

strengthen leadership at all levels and realise a sustainable service model as we look to the Education service of the future.

As we look to the next three years, 2025-2028, renewed focus across Education will be on the following areas from session 2025/2026:

- Strengthening our leadership of change
- Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion for all learners
- Building a learner-centred and responsive curriculum
- Developing consistency in high quality learning, teaching and assessment

4.8 As further educational context, *Curriculum for Excellence* guides us to achieve transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum from 3 to 18 firmly focused on the needs of the child and young person and designed to enable them to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. All children and young people are entitled to experience:

- a coherent curriculum from 3 to 18;
- a broad general education, including well planned experiences and outcomes across all the curriculum areas. This should include understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it and understanding of the environment;
- a senior phase which provides opportunities for study for qualifications and other planned opportunities for developing the four capacities;
- opportunities for developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work;
- opportunities to achieve to the highest levels they can through appropriate personal support and challenge; and,
- opportunities to move into positive and sustained destinations beyond school;

4.9 Educational benefits are considered below for pupils in respect of options previously outlined in this proposal document.

4.10 In December 2020, Moray Council approved the approach to the Moray Learning Estate Strategy, setting out the vision of providing a sustainable education service aiming for excellence. As well as improving condition and suitability as noted in 10.4 above, among wider outcomes this strategy aims to ensure our learning estate enriches the learner journey and supports curricular delivery noting the quality of learning environment as having a direct impact on learning and achievement of children and young people.

4.11 Ensuring all young people develop in the four Curriculum for Excellence capacities through the learner entitlements in 10.8 above would prove more challenging if Crossroads Primary School were to reopen with a reduced number

of pupils across the Primary age range. This will also place additional pressures on staff, for example in planning for a wide range of needs, year groups and abilities, in developing the curriculum, delivery of learning, teaching and assessment, and managing educational change. As a result, multi-stage composite class arrangements can prove challenging to recruit teachers compared with larger schools where classes have single or few stage composite arrangements. Opportunities for teaching staff to engage in regular and frequent moderation activities, allowing them to plan appropriate learning opportunities and make valid assessment decisions are enhanced in schools with more than 4 teaching staff, or even better, where stage partners are available.

- 4.12 Pupils attending other primary schools within the Keith Associated Schools Group regularly work in pairs and groups on shared learning tasks and cooperative learning activities. A school size low in pupil numbers, for example in a school of 10 or fewer children, based on potential future intake if Crossroads Primary School re-opened, would mean that groups would be curtailed in size restricting group and paired activities, with little to no flexibility in change or rotation of participants in pairings or groupings. Pupils could be spread multi-stage across P1 to P7, and while benefitting cross-stage working, this may result in reduced peer challenge in learning or potential for sibling pairing/groups. The variety of skills, knowledge and wider experiences brought to the groups would be further restricted by roll size and may result in gender imbalances and inequity in provision of a full programme of wider school activities.
- 4.13 In larger schools, staff regularly engage in joint projects (between stages and between teachers of the same stage) and staff professional and collegiate development activities. Children have regular opportunities to self and peer assess in these schools as well as work in stage and cross stage pairings and groups.
- 4.14 ICT has the potential to overcome some of the challenges for staff and young people in collaborative working as an integral part of the learning process, however there are ongoing issues with connectivity in rural areas, and access to sufficient ICT across Moray
- 4.15 In Rothiemay and Keith Primary Schools, children have regular opportunities to work in cooperative learning groups, on paired and in group activities with two and thirteen classes formed in each school respectively. This further supports discussions and debate with a range of viewpoints and background of learners contributing to such activities. Class organisation within each school offers a blend of individual, group and class learning and teaching over the session. Children at Rothiemay Primary have access to single-stage wellbeing check-ins during the morning to allow them to share worries and concerns with their peers and relevant staff. Those at Keith Primary have an active-start each morning, this allows for peer and group consolidation of learning, collaborative activities, teacher check-in on wellbeing and the application of learning, ICT and others skills.
- 4.16 The reopening of Crossroads Primary School would prove more restrictive for children to develop skills for learning, life and work with fewer or no opportunities

to work with others of a similar age and stage, which is not possible in a school with a very low number of pupils, for example in a school of 10 or fewer children based on potential future intake. Pupils may miss opportunities to develop wider skills for life in particular with limited immersion and interaction with a wide range of peers - levels of attendance and participation may also impact further on this.

- 4.17 Keith Primary has capitalised on its easier access to local groups and employers to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the world of work and volunteering. Over the past year or so, SSEN have run workshops in school for youngsters to explore robotics, Chivas has worked with groups of pupils on the diversity of roles available in the food and drinks industry in Moray. Loganair has visited the school to talk about skills and careers in the airline industry and to develop team-working skills.
- 4.18 Collaboration with the wider staff in order to ensure a coherent and progressive curriculum can prove more difficult in a school with low roll-size. A progressive curriculum differentiated to meet the needs of each child with a focus on engaging and active learning experiences is in place in Rothiemay, with opportunities for personalisation and choice across the four contexts for learning. Rich contexts for learning include extensive use of the outdoor areas at school and in the wider community. Many of these activities are built on pupil-voice through the school council and young people with leadership roles. At Keith Primary, the staff have worked together to develop a curriculum that makes best use of their 21st Century facilities – with learning taking place outdoors, in the classroom and in the dedicated breakout spaces – which all link together seamlessly. This starts from the moment they come in the doors with the use of Active Start Time. Crossroads, although in a rural setting, has more limited access to sustainable high quality outdoor learning space than Keith and Rothiemay Primary Schools.
- 4.19 Interdisciplinary learning is one of the key contexts for learning at both Keith and Rothiemay Primaries. At Rothiemay Primary pupil voice is used to plan a rolling programme of group tasks, in the lower to middle stages class this is often focussed on developing interpersonal and problem-solving skills though outdoor learning – which has been supported through partnership with Tesco and the Parent Council. Pupils in the upper stages class worked with volunteers as the Spey Bay Whale & Dolphin Centre as part of an interdisciplinary project on marine life - which also includes links to DYW/Career Education. At Keith Primary School, the daily Active Start Time is used to bring together learning across subjects, apply it in new contexts and consolidate learning before identifying areas to focus on in the future.
- 4.20 Strong partnerships across the Keith Associated Schools Group exists with previous joint working on moderation, numeracy, health and wellbeing policy and wider curriculum development. Most recently work has focused on Maths and Numeracy, with agreed moderated assessments being in place across the ASG. The close proximity of Keith primary to Keith Grammar has allowed for very close working between staff at these two schools - with teachers from the high school visiting and taking classes at the primary in order to better understand the approaches being taken to meet the needs of all learners in numeracy and mathematics.

- 4.21 Keith Primary has very strong links with Active Schools, enabling further opportunities for children to engage in sporting and physical activities in groups and teams. This supports their health and wellbeing as well as development of wider skills, while developing individual talents and interests through these wider opportunities. Children achieve success through local and national competitions, activities and events through active and enjoyable participation.
- 4.22 Larger schools provide greater opportunities for pupil leadership and involvement in the ethos and wider life of the school as well as provision of a wider range of clubs and extra-curricular activities. At Rothiemay Primary School, House Captains, Vice-Captains and representatives are elected each year to lead houses, pupil voice activities and inter-house challenges including sporting events, and contribute to whole school change initiatives. Community groups can access Keith Primary through the school let process.
- 4.23 There are formal connections between Keith Nursery and Keith Primary, as they share the same building, and between Rothiemay and its partner nursery which support the transition of children into P1 at both schools.
- 4.24 The range of interactions offered by all schools and the leadership and wider skills development opportunities presented strengthen capacity to work with others as part of a team, problem solve, make decisions and increase confidence in learners. As part of a peer group of a sufficient size, social interaction will enable further development of skills for learning life and work and build self-efficacy and esteem. A school size low in pupil numbers, for example in a school of 10 or fewer children based on potential future intake severely restricts opportunities for team sports, meaningful pupil leadership opportunities, clubs and other active recreational activities.
- 4.25 ASN provision at Crossroads primary was very limited prior to mothballing, due to the very small number of pupils at the school.
- 4.26 Keith Primary School has the Primary Enhanced Provision base for children with Additional Support Needs for the Associated Schools Group. This gives young people who need this level of support the opportunity to attend for part of the time, also attending mainstream classes. The school has a purpose built and fully equipped additional support needs facility which includes a multi-sensory room, a soft-play room, a life-skills room, as well as classrooms, a laundry, and disabled shower facility. It provides specialist support for identified young people and support on group and one-to-one basis. Multi-agency links are in place with key partners including Health, Social Work and 3rd sector. The facilities are managed by a PT ASN as part of a wider Support for Learning teaching team (4.0FTE) and receives appropriate PSA time allocation based on moderation of pupil support needs – this allows for extensive collaboration with class teachers and regular intervention where required. At Rothiemay Primary School, class teachers support all children where required with support assistant input for targeted need. The school also has 2 days of dedicated ASN teacher time along with PSA/CA hours with allocation based on need.

- 4.27 All schools within Keith Associated Schools Group benefit from their location in an area of outstanding natural beauty with access to extensive countryside. The nationally significant River Isla flows through Keith and Rothiemay is at the confluence of the Rivers Isla and Deveron – both of these provide opportunities for outdoor learning as well as access to partnership working with the Bogie, Isal and Deveron River Trust. The trust employs a biologist who has visited both schools to work with youngsters. As a town school, Keith Primary School is in close proximity to Keith Grammar School as the local secondary school, with access to a range of external areas including a playing field, outdoor garden area and hard-standing playground/parking area. The campus currently houses a local authority and partner nursery. Also sharing the campus is the swimming pool, community sport facilities and a second, larger multi-use games area.
- 4.28 Rothiemay Primary School enjoys large grounds with hardstanding areas, outdoor classroom/shelter, a large playing field, trim trail, quiet garden, a range of play equipment and seating areas as well as a small area of woodland on site. The school is close by the River Deveron which has large areas of accessible riverbank that can be utilised for nature walks – and is a core component of the school's values – which spell out 'RIVER'. Groups of children are actively involved in gardening projects at various points in the curriculum. During snowy weather, the local community park nearby has a hill next to the school is used as a sledge run as well as a play-area, tennis court and football field for when the sun shines. Keith Primary School has an area of hardstanding adjacent to each classroom with direct access from the room. Outdoor areas are resourced with age-appropriate materials to stimulate learning. The wider grounds include further areas of hardstanding and a multi-use games area (MUGA). These areas are zoned, some separated by high fencing to allow the older/stronger pupils to play football, basketball etc without impacting on the younger ones. These team sports and game-based activities can be maximised with the number of pupils on the roll of both schools enabling such activities. A larger staffing complement and parent body further increases the likelihood of interested adults leading a broader range of activities (for example both Rothiemay and Keith primaries have had parent support to run jogging clubs). Keith Primary has access to a large area of playing fields belonging to the adjacent high school, as well as a small area of woodland on site. Staff in school make use of the Keith Community Minibus, which is based on-site to facilitate trips to the local area – for example local beaches.
- 4.29 The Scottish Government's policy on Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach is aimed at ensuring that every child in Scotland has the opportunity to learn a modern language from P1 onwards (known as L2). Additionally, each child, irrespective of ability should have the right to learn a second modern language from P5 onwards (known as L3). Opportunity to learn a second modern language is strengthened through pupil peer support in learning a first or second language with opportunity for stage appropriate paired and group activities, including rotation of participants where needed to extend language acquisition through listening and talking, reading and writing based activities. In a larger school, staff peer support for languages teaching and building staff confidence in delivery to specific stages is strengthened where stage partner planning is supported as well as in delivery of appropriately challenging stage appropriate group and paired learning activities. This may not be possible or

more complex to plan for, where there are very low pupil numbers within specific stages (for example in P5-P7) in a smaller multi-stage composite school and class environment where the school size means that there are low pupil numbers to support activities as outlined above.

- 4.30 Rothiemay Primary benefits from a very small amount of Pupil Equity Funding and uses this creatively to support identified children, with interventions reaching further than those where impact is directed. Keith primary has a much larger allocation, which it uses to run a whole school resource (The Oak Room). This is staffed by PEF-funded support staff undertaking Literacy interventions and Numeracy interventions as well as work to improve confidence and social skills as part of identified pupils' Health & Wellbeing development. Staff within this provision have successfully supported young people in gaining Hi 5 awards. Keith Primary uses its profiling information to focus the application of PEF funds on supporting pupils to seek out new opportunities and challenges. This might be by directing and supporting youngsters to opportunities that already exist or offering new ones – recent examples include Mixed Martial Arts training, swimming and visiting local beaches.
- 4.31 Keith and Rothiemay Primary Schools both have Parent Councils (both use alternative names) formed who meet regularly throughout the year. Both Parent Councils represent the views and interests of parents and pupils and support school improvement. There is a very strong sense of community in both schools, enhanced by the fact that a number of teaching staff and almost all support staff, live within the community. Sustainable partnerships with parents and the wider community further enrich the curriculum and children are supported to take an active part in the school and wider community.
- 4.32 At both Keith and Rothiemay, active and supportive Parent Councils fundraise for school trips and activities and also contribute to providing resources – for example outdoor learning equipment. As well as direct fundraising, they have successfully applied for funding through third parties (like local supermarkets and businesses). At Keith Primary parents have been active in supporting the school's work on DYW. If Crossroads were to re-open then there would be potential for a Parent Council to operate. However, with a small pupil cohort there would be a limited number of families able to participate – particularly where sibling groups may feature – resulting in greater reliance on a few individuals to support the school in this way.
- 4.33 Keith and Rothiemay Primary Schools are central establishments within their respective communities. Keith primary has with strong links to other organisations including local churches, local businesses and pre-school providers. Rothiemay Primary is the only Moray Council building in use within the village of Rothiemay. Along with the Church, Village Hall, Community Playing Fields & Pavilion and Hotel it is the focus for almost all community activities.
- 4.34 Section 3 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 requires local authorities to endeavour to raise standards and secure improvement in the quality of school education provided in our schools for all learners. It is Moray Council's view that the pupils from the Crossroads catchment derive educational

benefits from their current attendance at other larger neighbouring schools. Formalising the current arrangements would provide a number of such benefits, judged against both the Moray and National criteria set out above.

- 4.35 As all pupils from the Crossroads Primary School catchment currently attend Keith Primary School, Rothiemay primary School or St Thomas' Primary School depending on current zoning arrangements or parental choice, no adverse effects for those pupils are expected to arise from the permanent closure of Crossroads Primary School.

5 Public Engagement

Public Meetings

- 5.1 Parents/carers and the wider community and stakeholder groups were invited to discuss the proposal at one of the two public meetings planned, or at a planned third online meeting which were scheduled to be held during the consultation period.
- 5.2 The first meeting, open to all the community, took place at the King Memorial Hall, Grange, Keith at 6:30pm on 22 October 2024. It was attended by 9 members of the community, 2 local councillors and representative of Education Scotland. The record of the meeting is attached as **Appendix B**.
- 5.3 The second meeting, for current and future parents and carers, took place at Keith Grammar School, School Road, Keith at 7pm on 24 October 2024. There were no attendees at this second meeting.
- 5.4 A further online meeting was planned for 23 October 2024 at 7pm but there was no stakeholder interest in attending.
- 5.5 During the meeting on 22 October 2024 there were questions and comments regarding:
- The past investment in the school by the Parent Council in ICT and outdoor equipment and furniture
 - Costs of reopening the school following mothballing
 - Process should the school close
 - Communication with parent/carers during the pre-consultation engagement
 - Access to Council-provided transport for Crossroads catchment children already attending Keith Primary School
 - Impact on Rothiemay school roll
 - No option proposed to rezone to Newmill Primary School

Discussion with Pupils

- 5.7 As part of the consultation process, survey questions were shared with Head Teachers at Rothiemay, Keith, Newmill and St Thomas's primary schools to

allow them to discuss the proposal regarding the closure of Crossroads Primary School with their respective pupils.

- 5.8 Keith Primary School has 13 children from the Crossroads Primary School catchment on its current school roll, Rothiemay has 5 children from Crossroads Primary School catchment and St Thomas's has 3 children from the Crossroads Primary School catchment.
- 5.9 A full breakdown of the pupil responses is at **Appendix C**. Within the responses a number of children expressed support in Crossroads Primary School re-opening but almost all of these expressed their preference would be to remain at their current school if it did.

Consultation Proposal Survey

- 5.10 During the consultation period parents/carers, stakeholders and community members were invited to take part in an online survey to express their opinion on the proposal. The survey provided a summary of the proposal regarding the closure of Crossroads Primary School. Participants were also given the opportunity to leave comments regarding the proposal.
- 5.11 A total of 50 people completed the survey (46 online and 4 paper copy) and a collation of their direct responses is provided at **Appendix D**. An analysis of the online survey is at **Appendix E**. The analysis of the responses highlighted that 40% (20) of responders resided within the Crossroads Primary School catchment, 38% (19) of responders from Rothiemay Primary School catchment and 22% (11) of responders from Keith Primary School catchment. The high-level outcome from the online survey was that 24 responders supported the closure of the school, 19 disagreed and 7 did not respond to the specific closure question.
- 5.12 Of the 30 parents/carers that completed the online survey, 13 supported the proposal and 13 disagreed and 4 did not respond to that question. Within this group 15 identified as from the Crossroads catchment and 6 supported the closure, 6 did not and 3 did not respond.
- 5.13 Of the 43 respondents who responded to the question "which option do you prefer for the proposed catchment" in the school were to close, the most popular option was Option 2, to close Crossroads Primary School and split the current catchment between Keith and Rothiemay. This was supported by 29 (68%) of the 43 participants who responded and 10 (33%) did not support it. Four people did not indicate a preference.

Staff Engagement

- 5.20 As Crossroads Primary School has been mothballed since 9 January 2023, teaching staff that were employed at the school have been employed at other establishments. Staff at Rothiemay Primary School and Keith Primary School were given the opportunity to discuss the proposal with Education Scotland but none chose to do so.

6 **Written Responses**

- 6.1 During the consultation period between 23 September 2024 until 15 November 2024 representations were invited from statutory consultees and interested parties.
- 6.2 The only written communications were completed paper copies of the online survey made available to the community and these are accounted for in the survey analysis in Para 5.11.

7 **Moray Council Response to Written (Survey) and Oral Representations**

- 7.1 The comments received during the consultation period fall into several themes. These have been carefully considered and the Council responses to these are provided below.

The whole process from mothballing to statutory consultation was not well managed

- 7.2 A comment was received that the consultation process was not handled well “they had absolutely no confidence in the council” managing it
- 7.3 Moray Council do not agree with the assertion that the consultation process was not managed effectively. Several public engagement events were completed prior to the Education, Children’s and Leisure Services Committee report seeking approval to undertake a statutory consultation regarding the closure of Crossroads Primary School in accordance with the School (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.
- 7.4 At these pre-consultation meetings the next steps in the mothballing and future proposals consultation process were discussed and members of the community were able to ask questions and contribute. In addition to these public meetings, suggestion boxes were positioned around the catchment to allow any interested party to comment on the future of the school. This engagement information was made available within the consultation proposal document at **Appendix A**.
- 7.5 This consultation process has followed the process set out in the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 in engaging with all interested parties and providing every opportunity for community engagement. This Consultation Report is now made available to all interested parties to review prior to a Council decision on the future of Crossroads Primary School planned for 21 May 2025. Legislation allows for any person to make representations to Scottish Ministers within three weeks of the Council taking their final decision to implement a closure proposal. The detail on the how to do this is at Para 12.5.

Moray Council made no effort to ‘market’ the school to prospective new parents and carers in the area

- 7.6 A few comments were received that stated Moray Council could have made more effort to promote Crossroads Primary School and encouraged in catchment families to send their children to their catchment area school.

- 7.7 Advocating for options that allow families to choose between small and larger educational environments based on their children's needs was a common theme throughout engagement and consultation on Crossroads Primary School and wider Keith Associated School Group discussions. It is not appropriate for the Council to advocate a child goes to one school as against another, although a place will always be made available for a child at their in catchment school and they may also be entitled to free school transport. Council policy supports the principle of parental choice in school selection and allows parent/carers to submit placing requests for children to attend a school out of their address school catchment area. Provided the placing request meets the placement policy requirements the Council will support the request.
- 7.8 A number of parents stated that Keith PS was the preferred learning location for many parents/carers who travelling to work in Keith or further afield and this is one of the factors that influence parent decisions to send their children, as their expense, to an out of catchment school.

Proposal to close the school is financially driven

- 7.9 A number of survey and verbal comments received during both the engagement statutory consultation stated that Moray Council were seeking to close Crossroads Primary School for financial reasons.
- 7.10 Other respondents noted the financial implications of keeping Crossroads Primary School open, citing low student numbers and high operational costs as key reasons for supporting its closure. They argued that reallocating students to larger schools would be more cost-effective.
- 7.11 Although the Council acknowledge that there would be financial savings realised from closing Crossroads Primary, we do not agree that this has influenced the report recommendations which are only based the educational benefit rationale set out in Section 4 of this report.

Impact on Rothiemay Primary School

- 7.12 Concerns were raised about the future of Rothiemay Primary School, with some suggesting that merging catchment areas could jeopardize its viability as well, especially given recent reductions in class sizes.
- 7.13 The opinions of the adjacent Rothiemay community as well as the Crossroads community have been considered in the recommendations of this proposal and are not considered detrimental to the future of Rothiemay Primary School.

Longer travel times to schools

- 7.14 A number of responders highlighted the logistical challenges posed by longer travel times to larger schools, with some children facing extended days due to transportation arrangements.

- 7.15 Children who have been temporarily rezoned to Rothiemay Primary School during the mothballing of Crossroads Primary School have seen a slight increase in their travel time of between 10-15 minutes. There may be disruption to travel in winter due to challenging condition of rural roads, however, this is an issue whether children attend Crossroads or Rothiemay primary schools now.
- 7.16 The majority of children in the Crossroads Primary School catchment area already travel to Keith or St Thomas RC primary schools so for the majority of current primary school pupils will only be impacted by the additional time if the option for free school transport is taken up.

Concerns about children's mental health

- 7.17 Several comments opined on the mental health benefits for children attending smaller schools, suggesting that not all children adapt well to larger educational settings, which can lead to anxiety and stress.
- 7.18 All schools in Moray are committed to ensuring children and young people are supported in terms of their health and wellbeing, inclusion, equity and diversity in order that they may thrive and succeed in individual schools as framed through Our Moray Standard – Supporting All Learners strategy. All schools and staff also access mandatory training in order to support all learners across Moray Schools including child protection, getting it right for every child, staged intervention/universal and targeted supports for pupils, trauma informed practice, relational approaches/solution-orientated practice, supporting neurodiversity and inclusive classrooms (CIRCLE). All approaches adopted across schools are built upon the principles of inclusion and nurture, with Moray schools aiming for all children and young people to be and feel present, participating, achieving and supported in school.
- 7.19 As a smaller rural school with roll of 47 pupils, Rothiemay Primary School's vision is 'nurturing aspiration for learning, relationships and life' where core values of responsibility, inclusion, values, empathy and respect underpin all that the school do in order to support all pupils. The wellbeing indicators are central to school life and staff have a range of qualifications and experience in identifying and supporting children with a wide variety of needs. The small staff team work together in order to support all children, accessing external supports from multi-agency partners and wider services where appropriate or required, in line with agreed Moray approaches.
- 7.20 Keith Primary School as a larger Primary School (334 pupils) are proud of their community ethos and very much believe that a happy child is a successful one, committed to providing a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment for children to learn, where all are valued and nurtured in an inclusive environment with equal opportunities. Core values of aspirational, respectful, resilient, inclusive and nurturing underpin the school's vision where a larger team of staff (teaching and support staff) ensure all pupils are supported in both their learning and wellbeing.

- 7.21 A dedicated Learning Support team also work closely with teaching and support staff and wider agencies at Keith Primary School in order for targeted supports (learning and wellbeing) to be provided in a timely way. The Head Teacher at Keith Primary School supported by two Depute Head Teachers and a Principal Teacher of Support for Learning, form the Senior Leadership Team overseeing all pupil learning and support needs, accessing wider services (e.g. multi-agency partners, counselling) where appropriate following Child Planning meetings and Team Around the Child discussions as would be the case in all schools where individual pupils require further support. As the school has an Enhanced Provision, it is further able to provide support for individual pupils or small groups in a caring and inclusive environment within The Beeches which emulates a small school setting.
- 7.22 All schools in Moray work closely with a wide range of multi-agency partners including educational psychology, health, social work and wider services (e.g. Speech and Language Therapy, English as an Additional Language, CAHMS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). Where targeted supports are required for individual pupils - which may include wider mental health and wellbeing concerns linked to anxiety or stress – these will be supported and put in place as noted above, aligned to Moray Schools’ nurturing approaches and irrespective of school context or size but based on individual pupil need. All schools support children and young people at key points of transition, whether moving between stages, nursery to Primary, Primary to Secondary or between schools in order for continuity in learning and in terms of health and wellbeing support. Schools also review individual pupil cases where specific needs are identified and may initiate single or multi-agency Child Planning supported by a team around the child concerned as required in line with Moray’s Staged Intervention model.

Status of Parent Council funded school assets

- 7.23 Several comments received requested information on what is the status of school of items that had been purchased by the parent council.
- 7.24 A number of assets were removed for safe keeping or for use elsewhere while Crossroads Primary School was mothballed. This included the ICT equipment and the outdoor pergola (at no cost to the school or Council) which were relocated to Rothiemay so they could still be used by pupils from the Crossroads catchment. Other items have also been temporarily relocated to Rothiemay and other schools and an asset record has been kept during mothballing
- 7.25 Should the decision be to close the school in the future, a managed process of re-distribution or donation to other schools and community groups will be implemented, with the priority on benefiting the Crossroads and adjacent communities.

Community support for a school is/was ignored

- 7.26 There were several comments that opined that the community support for the school was ignored by the Council during mothballing, public engagement and consultation. There was support for the closure due to financial realities

although they expressed sadness over losing a school that has been a central part of the community for generations, indicating a deep emotional connection to Crossroads Primary

- 7.27 The support for the school by a small but dedicated group within the community is acknowledged. If there was a viable school roll at Crossroads Primary School (and current policy is that operational viability is reviewed if a school roll falls below 15) then re-opening the school would be a serious consideration. However, there is no desire for more parents/carers within catchment, other than those whose children were at the school at the time of mothballing to move their children Crossroads Primary School were it to reopen. A school cannot reopen if it has too small a pupil roll, no matter if there is a community desire for it to do so.

8 Education Scotland Report

- 8.1 In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal. The full report is attached as **Appendix F**.

- 8.2 The report from Education Scotland was prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIs) in accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010. The purpose of the Education Scotland report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration on Moray Council's proposal to close Crossroads Primary School.

- 8.3 HMIs considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people 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.

- 8.4 In preparing their report, HMIs undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 22 October 2024 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

- visits to the sites of Crossroads Primary School, Keith Primary School, Rothiemay Primary School, St Thomas RC Primary School, Keith Grammar School, including discussion with relevant consultees, and a meeting with Strathisla Community Council.
- 8.5 Education Scotland also took account, in the event that the proposal was implemented and there was a rural school closures, what the Council's consideration was for any reasonable alternatives to closure of Crossroads Primary School and the likely effect on the local community.
- 8.6 Education Scotland noted that if the proposal to close Crossroads Primary School was agreed that the majority of stakeholders they spoke to would wish to see the current catchment split between Rothiemay and Keith primary schools. This would support the roll at Rothiemay Primary School.
- 8.7 Education reported that for several stakeholders access to school transport was an important consideration in regards to how the Crossroads catchment may be divided up.
- 8.8 Education Scotland reported that a number of parents/carers indicated the importance of parent choice and for children to being able to attend their nearest school.
- 8.9 Education Scotland are of the view that there are sound reasons for Moray Council to consider the long-term viability of Crossroads Primary School. Inspectors agreed that the proposal by Moray Council would result in educational benefits for children in the Crossroads Primary School catchment area.
- 8.10 The report highlighted that children currently benefit from working with larger peer groups aligned to their age and stage.
- 8.11 The report concluded that the predicted school roll in the wider area makes it unlikely that all four primary schools affected by this report could be sustained.
- 8.12 Education Scotland noted that most stakeholders who spoke to them supported Option 2, the rezoning of the catchment area between Rothiemay and Keith primary schools.
- 8.13 Education Scotland noted that the mothballing and proposed closure of Crossroads Primary School is seen as a loss to many in the community but those in the community they spoke to acknowledged that it was probably the best option given the small numbers of families who had indicated in interest in sending their child to the school in the event it would reopen and recognised that the Council should make best use of its resources. They highlighted that if the proposal to close the school goes ahead, the community felt that the school site should not be left to deteriorate but quickly be made available for other purposed such as housing or business use.
- 8.14 Education Scotland noted some slightly increased travel times (10-15mins) for those children who are temporarily rezoned to Rothiemay Primary School as a

consequence of mothballing Crossroads Primary School. They noted that the majority of primary school children in the catchment were already travelling to schools in Keith so their travel are not impacted by either the mothballing or option to close Crossroads Primary School.

8.15 The Council welcomes the Education Scotland report and accepts its findings. In response to the findings within the report, Moray Councils response is as follows:

- The Council welcomed that Education Scotland were in broad agreement with the educational benefits in closing Crossroads Primary school as set out in the consultation documentation and this report and considered that Moray Council had made a reasonable case to permanently close Crossroads Primary School.
- The Council accepts the view of Education Scotland that a school roll of fewer than 15 pupils is not, in of itself, a significant impediment to the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence and have omitted that from the list of reasons for advancing the proposal to close Crossroads Primary School.

9 **Alleged Omissions or Inaccuracies and Additional Information**

9.1 Section (10)(3) of the 2010 Act also places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracies or omission within the proposal document which has either been raised by the consultees or identified by the Council itself.

9.2 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.

9.3 Officers are required to publish its response to representations made during the consultation period within its final Consultation Report.

9.4 There were no areas identified by consultees as being inaccurate or omitted from the proposal document during the consultation period.

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

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

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

- (i) written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period,
- (ii) oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting,

(iii) HMIs report

- 10.2 The feedback from the consultation, and all the questions and comments raised, considered in detail by officers. Data and factual information was checked where required and advice and input was sought from other Council Services where needed to consider the issues raised. This ensured that the Council met the requirements to review the proposal under section 9(1) of the 2010 Act.
- 10.3 Officers of the Education Service and Education Resources and Community Service have listened to the points made at the public meeting and have considered equally carefully the written representations received.
- 10.4 The Education Service's position (as the Education Authority) is set out in Section 4 of this report.
- 10.5 The educational benefits were reviewed in respect of the Education Scotland report and representations made. Factors included in the Education Scotland report or representations made requiring any aspect of the educational benefits were considered.
- 10.6 There were no aspects included in the representations made which provided a different conclusion in relation to the rural school factors.

11 Compliance with Sections 11A to 13 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

- 11.1 Crossroads Primary School is a remote rural school, therefore the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires the Authority to have special regard to the following factors:
- (a) the likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal,
 - (b) the likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the proposal.

Likely Effect on the local community

- 11.2 Crossroads Primary School has mothballed since January 2023. The Council acknowledges that Crossroads Primary School was a sustainable learning community in 2020 with the school roll forecast data indicating it would average around 15 pupils for at least the next 7 years. However, over the next 2 years, with an increasing number of out of area placing requests, the annual school roll forecast indicated that the future roll would not exceed 10 pupils and with the actual school roll falling to 4 at the start of the 2022/23 academic session the mothballing decision was taken.
- 11.3 During the engagement and consultancy process surrounding the future of Crossroads Primary School full endeavours have been made to ensure all residents within the catchment area have been communicated and consulted with to ensure that the impact on the community is understood by officers.

- 11.4 Prior to launching the statutory element of the consultation, opportunities were made available to all members of the community to either suggest ways to make the school viable again or alternative uses for the building that would benefit the community.
- 11.5 There were no suggestions from the engagement and consultation that could be seen as ways of ensuring a viable future school.
- 11.6 Alternative uses for the building and land proposed during engagement and consultation will be shared with Council Estates Management officer and Community Support Unit team to consider as future options for the school buildings and land in the event of school closure.
- 11.7 Title deeds have recently been received for the land and buildings that encompass the Crossroads PS estate. The title contains reversionary rights in favour of the Earl of Fife or his successors (the original owner). The deeds state that if the land, including the school buildings, are no longer used for educational purposes, the successors of the Trustees of the Earl of Fife can require the land to be returned to them in exchange for payment of the current value of the school buildings. Any proposal for alternative use will not be possible without the Council first checking if the current Earl of Fife wishes to exercise his reversionary rights. If those rights are exercised the Council will seek to engage with the 'owner' on options for community use or economic growth benefits for the site.

Likely effect caused by different travel arrangements

- 11.6 Children who have been temporarily rezoned to Rothiemay Primary School during the mothballing of Crossroads Primary School have seen a slight increase in their travel time of between 10-15 minutes. There may be disruption to travel in winter due to challenging condition of rural roads but this is an issue whether children attend Crossroads or Rothiemay primary schools now.
- 11.7 The majority of children in the Crossroads Primary School catchment area already travel to Keith or St Thomas RC primary schools so travel time is not impacted by either the mothballing or closure of Crossroads Primary School.
- 11.8 Since January 2023 free transport has been provided to those children in the Crossroads Primary School catchment that were temporarily rezoned Rothiemay Primary School. Prior to, and during mothballing, no transport has been provided to those children in the catchment that were and continue to attend Keith Primary School.
- 11.9 The rezoning proposals in both Options 1 and 2 to this closure proposal would see free transportation now available to both Rothiemay and Keith primary schools within their respective extended catchments. This will immediately benefit most children in the catchment area who already attend Keith Primary School.

12 **Representations to Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

- 12.1 If the Authority makes a final decision to implement the proposal, it will require to notify Scottish Ministers of that decision and provide them with a copy of the proposal document and consultation report. This must be done within six working days of the decision. Scottish Ministers have an eight-week period from the date of the final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal.
- 12.2 Within the first three weeks of that eight-week period, Scottish Ministers will take account any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the eight-week call-in process is known, the Authority cannot proceed to implement the proposal.
- 12.3 If Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal, they must refer the proposal to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels who may refuse to consent to the proposal or grant their consent to the proposal subject to conditions or unconditionally.
- 12.4 It should be noted that the legislations allow for any person to make representations to Scottish Ministers within three weeks of the Council taking their final decision to implement a closure proposal. Moray Council expect the decision on whether or not to implement this closure proposal at its meeting on 21 May 2025. If the decision is taken to implement the closure proposal, any representations to Scottish Ministers, therefore, in this context need to be with the Ministers within three weeks of this date. Therefore, any representations must be made to Scottish Ministers by 12 June 2025.
- 12.5 Anyone wishing to make representation to Scottish Ministers during the three week period referred to above should do so by email to schoolclosure@gov.scot or in writing to:

The Scottish Government
School Infrastructure Unit
2A (South) Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ.

13. **Conclusion**

- 13.1 In review of the oral and written submissions to the formal consultation and survey results, it is clear that there is majority stakeholder support for the proposal to close Crossroads Primary School.
- 13.2 Officers have carefully considered the opportunities, issues and challenges identified by stakeholders during both the informal engagement and formal consultation processes.
- 13.3 The Council now has the following options:
- Adopt the proposal to close the school; or

- Amend the proposal in a minor way;
- Amend the proposal significantly and undertake a further consultation exercise on a new proposal; or
- Withdraw the proposal and maintain the status quo.

Each option is discussed below.

Adopt the Proposal

- 13.4 If the Council chooses to adopt the proposal and close Crossroads Primary School on a permanent basis then one of the two options for Crossroads Primary School, outlined in the proposal document, would need to be chosen.
- 13.5 The favoured option amongst survey participants was Option 2, to close Crossroads Primary School and split the current catchment between Keith and Rothiemay. This option was supported by 29 (67%) of the 43 participants who responded to this question in the survey. The Council position is that this Option would most align with the current parental choices to send their children to either Rothiemay or Keith primary schools.
- 13.6 If the Council adopts the proposal, it would be on the basis that it aligns with the wishes of the majority of current parents/carers in the Crossroads Primary School catchment AND that the educational benefits set out in the proposal document would materialise and a period of uncertainty for the community would come to an end. Children will have access to greater learning opportunities and experiences and increased socialisation through being part of a larger school. Opportunities to participate in peer support, classroom learning, learning groups across stages and between classes and opportunities to engage in lunchtime, after school and team events will be increased. The primary schools of Keith and Rothiemay have the capacity to accommodate additional children. The proposal will assist the Council to deliver 'Best Value' through making more efficient and effective use of its resources.

Amend the proposal in a minor way and adopt

- 13.7 During the consultation period no suggestions were received from stakeholders that would require a minor amendment to the proposal.

Amend the proposal significantly and undertake a further consultation exercise on a new proposal

- 13.8 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires that changes to the school estate are subject to rigorous statutory consultation. Any significant amendments to the proposal would require a full consultation with pupils, parent/carers and the wider community of all affected by the proposed schools.
- 13.9 Allowing for appropriate governance the process can take in the region of nine months to complete.

- 13.10 This is considered to be unreasonable to go through another lengthy statutory process. The uncertainty surrounding the future of the school has impacted on the community and it is hoped that this statutory consultation to close Crossroads Primary School will give clarity to the community and a sense of certainty regarding their children's education.
- 13.11 Having reviewed the Education Scotland report and feedback from consultees, officers concluded that the basis of the original proposal continues to be the most appropriate conclusion for Crossroads Primary School.

Withdraw the proposal and maintain the status quo

- 13.12 This option would be to continue to mothball Crossroads Primary School. Maintaining this status quo would continue the uncertainty for parents/carers, children and the wider community. The school would remain mothballed and the building would continue to draw on Council revenue finances and require additional significant capital investment in the future to be upgraded to Condition B status.
- 13.13 Withdrawing the proposal, the Council would be failing to recognise or respond to the educational and social benefits for Crossroads catchment children. Education Scotland has recognised the proposal has the potential to deliver overall educational benefits for the children within the Crossroads catchment area. Children are currently benefitting from working with larger peer groups closely aligned to their age and stage.

14 Recommendation

- 14.1 The recommendation of officers is that the Council should adopt the proposal to permanently close Crossroads Primary School and re-assign its catchment area between Keith and Rothiemay primary schools. Children would continue to receive free school transport to their catchment school in the case of Rothiemay Primary School and those children in the rezoned Keith Primary School catchment would be entitled to free school transport from the earliest the start of the 2025/26 academic year.**