

CONSULTATION REPORT

REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION RELATING TO THE PROPOSAL TO PERMANENTLY CLOSE BOTHKENNAR PRIMARY SCHOOL

7 August 2026

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

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1. THE PROPOSAL

Falkirk Council is proposing, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process, that:

- **Provision of a school at Bothkennar Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 22 December 2026, or as soon as possible thereafter;**
- **the pupils of Bothkennar Primary School catchment area to continue and permanently receive their education at Beancross Primary School; and**
- **the delineated catchment area of Beancross Primary School be permanently extended to include the whole delineated catchment area of Bothkennar Primary School.**

The Proposal Paper referred to implementation from August 2026. The statutory consultation and decision-making timetable mean implementation is now proposed from 22 December 2026, or as soon as possible thereafter.

2. REASONS FOR THIS PROPOSAL

The Schools (Consultation) Scotland Act 2010 states that education authorities must identify the reasons for formulating a proposal to close a rural school. This proposal was formulated for the following reasons:

- i. Bothkennar Primary School has been formally mothballed for approaching 7 years with no pupils in attendance since August 2019.
- ii. The catchment demand for places in Bothkennar Primary School continues to be assessed to be low and is not predicted to rise.
- iii. The Council is experiencing a general decline in pupil numbers, making re-opening impractical.
- iv. Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment. The current annual cost of mothballing Bothkennar Primary School is £40,580.
- v. The Local Development Plan does not identify any relevant sites within the catchment area for housing development that would impact on catchment demand for places.

On **26 March 2019**, the Education Executive agreed that Bothkennar Primary School would be mothballed from August 2019 due to falling catchment demand for places.

On **26 January 2021**, the Education, Children and Young People Executive was informed that the school remained mothballed, with no

plans to re-open it beyond August 2021 due to continued low projected demand. At this meeting, it was agreed to progress to a formal statutory consultation on a proposal to permanently close Bothkennar Primary School.

The findings from this statutory consultation were reported to the Education, Children & Young People Committee on **1 June 2021**, which approved the recommendation to close the school permanently and submit the statutory notification to Scottish Ministers, in accordance with the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

On **26 July 2021**, Scottish Ministers reviewed Falkirk Council's proposal and determined that there were grounds for a call-in under section 17(2)(a) of the 2010 Act.

The **School Closures Review Panel** subsequently reviewed the case and, on **24 September 2021**, concluded that Falkirk Council had not fully met its obligations under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

As a result, the closure was not approved, and the Council was required to undertake the following steps before making any updated decision:

- Fully comply with the preliminary requirements set out in section 12A of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, including proper consideration of any reasonable alternatives to closure.
- If closure was still considered the most appropriate course of action, prepare a fresh proposal paper in full compliance with section 13 of the 2010 Act.
- Undertake a fresh statutory consultation process with all relevant consultees.

Education Services initially undertook a preliminary community engagement in line with section 12A of the Act, including public meetings and a community survey.

Following this, a decision was taken to undertake a statutory consultation on a proposal to permanently close Bothkennar Primary School and to permanently extend the catchment area of Beancross Primary School to include the existing catchment area of Bothkennar Primary School.

3. INTRODUCTION

This consultation report has been prepared in accordance with the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

The purpose of this 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 Meeting held on 17th March 2026 at Bothkennar Primary School.
- Provide a statement of Education Services response to those written and oral representations;
- Provide the full text of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) report and a statement of Education Services response to this report;
- State how Education Services reviewed the above proposal with regard to the representations received during the statutory consultation period and the report from HMIE;
- Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Paper and state how Education Services acted upon it;
- Explain the opportunity that may arise to make representation to the Scottish Ministers in connection with Section 15(4) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

4. BACKGROUND

The principal purpose of the 2010 Act is to provide strong, accountable statutory consultation practices and procedures that local authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools. These consultation processes are expected to be robust, open, transparent and fair, and seen to be so. They are also expected to be consistent across Scotland.

The 2010 Act makes special arrangements in relation to rural schools and establishes a presumption against the closure of rural schools. The result of this is that education authorities must have special regard before formalising a proposal to close a rural school and in consulting on and reaching a decision as to whether to implement a rural school closure proposal.

These duties are outlined in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the accompanying Statutory Guidance.

The term "rural" is applied to schools as follows:

- Very Remote rural - areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more
- Remote Rural - areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes but less than or equal to 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more
- Accessible rural - areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and within a drive time of 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more

Bothkennar Primary School is defined as "accessible rural" which means it is within 30 mins drive to a settlement of 10,000 people which is the case with both the settlements of Grangemouth and Falkirk, which are both under 15 minutes' drive from Bothkennar Primary School in Skinflats.

On 19th February 2026 the Council's Executive Committee agreed to commence statutory consultation on a proposal to permanently close

Bothkennar Primary School in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

School roll projections continue to indicate low demand for places within the Bothkennar Primary school catchment. The number of primary-aged children residing within the catchment has been decreasing since 2023/24 with 21 primary-aged children currently resident within the catchment area. Community Health Index (CHI) data supplied by Forth Valley Health Board indicates that fewer than five children residing within the catchment area are expected to enrol in Primary 1 over the next three years and no significant increase in pupil numbers is projected in the foreseeable future.

Table 1: Number of Primary-Aged Children Residing in the Bothkennar Primary School Catchment Area

Session	School Roll	Number of catchment children	Projections
2018/19	5	20	
2019/20	Mothballed	16	
2020/21		18	
2021/22		18	
2022/23		19	
2023/24		27	
2024/25		23	
2025/26		21	
2026/27			19
2027/28			17
2028/29			13
2029/30			9

Source: SEEMIS and NHS CHI Data

Education Services published a Proposal Paper on 20 February 2026 (Appendix 1), 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.

Educational benefits of this proposal are set out in section 8 of the Proposal Paper.

By highlighting the benefits of Beancross Primary School in the Educational Benefits Statement, Education Services is not implying that many of these benefits did not already exist in Bothkennar Primary School before it was mothballed. The benefits are being considered when looking at the proposal in

terms of what can be provided in the rezoned catchment of Beancross Primary School.

5. CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Proposal Paper was published on 20 February 2026 on the Falkirk Council website.

A copy of this document was provided to:

- Parents and carers of all primary and nursery age pupils who reside in the catchment area of each affected school (Bothkennar and Beancross Primary
- Schools), including pupils attending other primary schools in the Old Town/ Glensburgh area
- Beancross Primary School Parent Council
- Pupils at Beancross Primary School
- School staff and trade unions at Beancross Primary School
- Grangemouth (including Skinflats) Community Council
- All other households in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area (so that the views of the overall community can also be considered during the consultation because this is a proposal to close a rural school)

A copy of this document was also available on request, free of charge, from:

- Education Services, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE
- Beancross Primary School, Kenilworth Street, Grangemouth FK3 8QS
- All Hubs and Libraries across Falkirk

The document was also available on request in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English.

A Notice of Consultation was emailed to the consultees listed above (and posted to the “other households in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area”) on 20 February 2026 (Appendix 2). This provided details of how to access the Proposal Paper and Educational Benefits Statement; how to submit responses via Falkirk Council website and in writing; and the date of the public meeting.

The Notice of Consultation, the Proposal Document and the Public Meeting were advertised on the Council's Participate+ platform, in the local newspaper (the Falkirk Herald) and supported by local targeted digital advertisement through Facebook.

The consultation was undertaken between 23 February and 24 April 2026 and extended beyond six calendar weeks to ensure the statutory requirement for 30 school days consultation was met.

The online survey allowed members of the public to review the consultation documents and submit their responses online.

A public meeting took place at Bothkennar Primary School 17 March 2026 at 6.30pm.

The Headteacher of Beancross Primary School engaged with pupils through their class teacher to collate their responses to the proposal.

During the consultation period, an inaccuracy was identified within the Proposal Paper. In accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a Notice of Correction was issued on 19 March 2026. The correction clarified that a reference to “Slamannan Primary School” should have read “Beancross Primary School.”

The correction did not alter the substance of the proposal, its rationale, or the educational benefits set out in the document. A corrected version of the Proposal Paper was subsequently made available through the same channels as the original document to ensure consultees had access to accurate information throughout the remainder of the consultation period.

This Consultation Report contains Falkirk Council’s response to the issues raised regarding the proposal during the consultation exercise. It will be published on Falkirk Council’s website for a period of no less than 3 weeks prior to the final consideration of the proposal at Executive Committee (including Education) on 17 September 2026.

6. PUPIL ENGAGEMENT

Pupils' views are a significant part of the consultation process. There follows a summary of comments made by pupils attending Beancross Primary School, including pupils' residing within the former Bothkennar catchment area.

A survey invited children to comment on how they feel at Beancross Primary School, what they enjoy about school, how they travel, whether they agree with the proposal to close Bothkennar Primary School, and what they believe would be an appropriate future use of the Bothkennar school building.

In total, 99 responses were received from pupils in Primary 5 to Primary 7, Most respondents live in the Grangemouth area (89%), though a smaller number indicated they lived elsewhere (including Skinflats (1%) and other surrounding areas (10%).

In summary:

- Most pupils feel happy and positive about their current school experience.
- Friendships, teachers, and activities are central to pupil wellbeing.
- Views on closing Bothkennar Primary School are mixed, with many supportive or unsure, and a smaller but vocal group opposed.
- There is strong enthusiasm for the building to remain in public use, particularly for sports, community, and youth facilities.
- Pupils demonstrated thoughtful, creative engagement and a clear interest in community wellbeing.

OVERALL FEELINGS ABOUT SCHOOL

82% of pupils are either very happy or happy at Beancross, 13% not sure/in the middle and 5% were not happy or very unhappy.

Positive feelings were frequently associated with:

- Friendships and social interaction
- Supportive teachers
- Enjoyment of clubs, PE, art, and school trips
- Negative or uncertain feelings were less common and generally linked to:
- Missing friends
- Dislike of change
- General uncertainty rather than specific concerns

Overall, the data suggests that most pupils feel settled and positive in their current school environment.

WHAT PUPILS VALUE MOST ABOUT SCHOOL

When asked what they like most about their school, several consistent themes emerged:

Friendships and Social Life - this was the most frequently mentioned factor. Pupils repeatedly highlighted:

- Spending time with friends
- Making new friends
- Feeling included and supported by peers

School Staff - many pupils expressed appreciation for:

- Kind and supportive teachers
- Feeling encouraged to express themselves
- Positive relationships with staff

Learning and Activities - pupils valued a wide range of activities, particularly:

- Physical Education (PE)
- Playgrounds and outdoor spaces
- Clubs (including football, art, Beyblade club, cheerleading, and after-school activities)
- School trips and enriched learning opportunities

These responses suggest that pupils place high importance not only on learning, but also on the wider school experience.

VIEWS ON THE CLOSURE OF BOTHKENNAR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pupil views on the proposal to close Bothkennar Primary School were mixed.

A significant number of pupils indicated “Yes”, agreeing with the proposed closure. Reasons are often implied rather than explicit, but comments suggest:

- Acceptance of attending Beancross Primary School
- Belief that the building could be better used for other community purposes
- Opinion that alternative schools are available

Some pupils explicitly stated that closure was acceptable if the building continued to benefit the community.

A smaller group were opposed to the closure proposal. Stronger language was used occasionally. These comments, while fewer, are important as they reflect a strong emotional attachment for some pupils.

SUGGESTED FUTURE USES FOR THE BOTHKENNAR BUILDING

Pupils were highly engaged when asked what the Bothkennar building could be used for. Responses were creative and community focused. The most common suggestions included:

- Sports and Physical Activity
- Community and Youth Facilities
- Early Years and Family Support
- Other Uses

A smaller number suggested:

- Library
- Café or restaurant
- Health centre
- Mental health or wellbeing facility
- Care home or specialised school provision

See Appendix 3 for the full detail of pupil responses.

7. RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

7.1 Summary of Email Responses

2 email responses were received. Key themes are set out below:

- Perceived imbalance in the report: Concerns that the report favours Beancross Primary School and does not fairly reflect the strengths of Bothkennar Primary School
- Lack of supporting evidence: Respondents questioned the evidential basis for claims regarding attainment and provision.
- Value of smaller school settings: Emphasis on the benefits of smaller schools, including pastoral support, confidence building, and wider pupil participation.
- Challenges to assumptions about school size: Views that smaller schools are not disadvantaged in terms of staffing, curriculum delivery, or teacher capacity.
- Capacity and safety concerns: Concerns raised about whether the receiving school would have sufficient space and meet health and safety requirements.
- Issues with clarity and tone: an error was identified in reference “Slamannan Primary School” where it should have read “Beancross primary school, as well as dissatisfaction with its tone and comparative approach

Email responses can be found in Appendix 8.

7.2 Summary of Oral Representations made at the Public Meeting and Response

The public meeting was attended by one local resident. The resident, who had a background in education, raised the following points:

- Concern about portrayal of the school: The proposal document was perceived as suggesting that Bothkennar Primary School provided an inferior education compared to Beancross, which the resident strongly disputed.
- Value of small schools: Emphasis was placed on the positive role of small schools, which were described as supportive and effective learning environments.
- Acknowledgement of declining enrolment: The resident recognised that falling pupil numbers had affected the school's viability.
- Concerns about the consultation document: The report was described as overly long, complex, and potentially off-putting for parents, while also giving a misleading impression that the school had "failed."
- Identification of an error: A specific proofreading error in the document was highlighted.
- Comments on consultation engagement: The resident suggested that the low level of engagement may reflect the ageing local population.

Overall, the comments focused on ensuring the school's legacy and quality were accurately represented, while acknowledging the practical challenges associated with low pupil numbers.

The Public Meeting Minutes can be found in Appendix 4 along with the presentation slides in Appendix 5.

7.3 Summary of representation made through the online survey

3 people responded to the survey. 2 respondents were residents living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area and 1 response was received by a parent/carer of a pupil living in the catchment area. The online survey responses can be found in Appendix 6.

Table 2: Total number of responses by type of respondent

	Number	%
A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area	2	67%
Parent/Carer of pupils living in the catchment of Bothkennar Primary School	1	33%
Total	3	100%

7.4 Number of Respondents in favour of the proposal, or not

Respondents were asked if they agreed with the proposal. 2 (67%) respondents were in favour of the proposal and 1 (33%) was not.

Table 3: Do you agree with the proposal?

	No	Yes	Total
A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area		2	2
Parent/Carer of pupils living in the catchment of Bothkennar Primary School	1		1
Total	1	2	3

7.5 Summary of online comments received in favour of the proposal, or not

The 2 individual responses to the online survey in favour of the proposal were focused on:

- 1) low number of children living locally
- 2) preference to Carronshore Primary School as the catchment school
- 3) efficient use of council assets and financial responsibility.

“There are not many children living in the area.”, (A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)

“Council assets not being used should be closed to save money.”, (A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)

One respondent was not in favour of the proposal. The response was from a parent in the area who indicated they would prefer Carronshore as the catchment area.

“Carronshore primary school is closer. Why would this not be the catchment area?”, (Parent/Carer of pupils living in the catchment of Bothkennar Primary School)

7.6 Summary of responses about the reasonable alternatives considered

Respondents expressed support for opening nursery provision, using the building for alternative use and support for a housing development if the building becomes surplus to requirements.

“Option 1 and 3 are good” [option 1 refers to open a nursery in Bothkennar Primary School and Option 3 is reallocate available capacity in Bothkennar Primary School for other purposes]
(A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)

“Housing.”

(Parent/Carer of pupils living in the catchment of Bothkennar Primary School)

“The large school site could be used for housing if the building is no longer being used or fit for purpose. If the building still has remaining years in its operation lifespan these should be utilised in whatever way possible. The nursery option would be a good idea as nursery waiting lists are very long at the moment.”

(A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)

7.7 Summary of responses about the community impact

Responses indicated mixed views on the community impact if the proposal were to proceed. Several respondents felt there would be little change, as the school has been closed for some time and no longer actively serves the local area, although some expressed regret that children can no longer walk to a local school and are required to travel elsewhere.

A concern was raised about the potential negative effects of increased travel on children and families. Comments highlighted that a permanently closed and unoccupied building could have adverse impacts on the community, including the risk of anti-social behaviour, suggesting that any closure should be accompanied by plans for appropriate future use of the site.

“It would make no difference to the community as we have got used to the school being closed. It is a shame kids from the area can’t walk to school and are bussed out of the area.”, (A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)

“Travel to other schools will negatively affect children and parents given Carronshore is the closest primary and most children from Skinflats also attend clubs in Carronshore so friendships have been formed. Moving children to other schools would have a negative impact.” (Parent/Carer of pupils living in the catchment of Bothkennar Primary School)

“If the school were to be permanently shut it would not affect the community as it currently doesn’t serve the community. However if it was left unoccupied post closure the negative effects on the community would be from anti-social behaviour from youths and may also make the drug taking around Skinflats more prolific.”, (A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)

Respondents were asked if they had any further comments on the proposal. One responded suggested the site be sold for housing:

“The land should be sold for housing as the site is large enough to occupy a similar undertaking to that of the former nursery school site situated next to the Grangemouth Sports Complex.”, (A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)

Overall, consultation responses reflected a range of views regarding the future of Bothkennar Primary School. While respondents acknowledged the value of the former school and its role within the community, there was also recognition that pupil numbers remain very low and that existing educational arrangements have become established following mothballing in 2019. These representations have been fully considered by Education Services and are reflected in Sections 8 to 11 of this report.

8. EDUCATION SERVICES RESPONSE TO THE MAIN ISSUES RAISED

Questions and statements received through the representations made during the consultation period fell into the following main themes:

- (a) Perceived balance of the proposal
- (b) Evidence base for statements
- (c) Value of smaller school settings
- (d) Capacity and health and safety
- (e) Travel and community considerations
- (f) Consultation process and document clarity
- (g) Future use of the School Building

(a) Perceived Balance of the Proposal

Issue Raised: Concerns were raised that the proposal document favoured Beancross Primary School and did not fully reflect the strengths of Bothkennar Primary School.

Response: Education services recognises the strength of feeling expressed regarding the legacy of Bothkennar Primary School and acknowledges the concern the proposal paper should fairly reflect the positive educational experiences provided by the school prior to mothballing. Education Services has carefully considered this representation, which was raised through a number of consultation channels, when reviewing the proposal document and the educational case supporting the proposal.

The proposal document recognises that Bothkennar Primary School provided a positive and supportive learning environment and does not seek to diminish the quality of education delivered there. Education Services acknowledges that many former pupils, staff and members of the community have positive experiences of Bothkennar Primary School and recognises the valuable education that was provided there prior to mothballing.

Under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Council is required to present a clear assessment of the educational benefits of the proposal. This includes demonstrating that appropriate provision would be available at the receiving school and that pupils would not experience detriment. As a result, sections of the document focus on the receiving school and its capacity to provide a broad range of educational opportunities.

This statutory requirement can result in a comparative presentation of information; however, this is intended to evidence the proposal rather than to suggest that one school setting is inherently superior to another.

(b) Evidence Base for Statements

Statement: A respondent questioned the evidential basis for statements relating to attainment, provision and the implications of school size.

Response: Education Services acknowledges that a consultee sought further clarification regarding some of the evidence used within the proposal paper, particularly in relation to attainment and the educational implications of school size. These comments have been considered as part of the review process.

The proposal paper draws on a range of information, including school-level data, local authority benchmarking, and established approaches to curriculum delivery and staffing. These comments have been considered alongside the written representations received during the statutory consultation period and the wider review of the proposal.

It is recognised that attainment data relating to Bothkennar Primary School cannot be published due to the very small number of pupils previously enrolled. This reflects statistical suppression and confidentiality requirements rather than an indication of performance.

References to attainment within the proposal relate to Beancross Primary School, where cohort sizes allow for the publication and analysis of data. The proposal also recognises the quality of provision previously delivered at Bothkennar Primary School.

Education Services is satisfied that the information presented reflects the evidence available at the time and aligns with statutory guidance.

(c) Value of Smaller School Settings

Issue Raised: Feedback highlighted the benefits of smaller school environments, including strong pastoral support, confidence building and wider opportunities for pupil participation.

Response: Education Services acknowledges the views expressed regarding the benefits of smaller school settings, including the close relationships that can develop between staff and pupils, the personalised support available to children, and the opportunities for pupils to undertake a wide range of responsibilities within the school community. These views were raised consistently by a respondent who engaged through a number of consultation channels and have been carefully considered as part of the review of the proposal.

Education Services recognises that small schools can provide positive educational experiences and that Bothkennar Primary School was valued by

those who attended it. The proposal does not seek to diminish the quality of education previously delivered at the school. Rather, it considers the educational arrangements currently in place following mothballing and the opportunities available to pupils attending Beancross Primary School.

As detailed within the Educational Benefits Statement, pupils attending Beancross Primary School benefit from access to a wider peer group, broader opportunities for collaborative learning and a wider range of curricular and extracurricular experiences. Having considered the representations received, Education Services remains satisfied that the proposal represents the most appropriate response to the reasons for bringing it forward.

(d) Capacity and Health and Safety

Issue Raised: A concern was raised regarding whether the receiving school has sufficient capacity and continues to meet health and safety requirements.

Response: Education Services recognises that parents and community members wish to be assured that Beancross Primary School can continue to accommodate pupils from the Bothkennar catchment area safely and effectively. These matters were considered during the development of the proposal and were raised again during the consultation process.

The proposal paper confirms that Beancross Primary School has sufficient capacity to accommodate pupils from the Bothkennar catchment area, with the school currently operating below full capacity and projected rolls expected to remain sustainable.

All school environments operate in line with health and safety requirements, and these standards would continue to be met. School capacity and occupancy are regularly monitored by the Council, and any future pressures would be addressed through established planning processes.

Education Services is satisfied that Beancross Primary School has sufficient capacity to accommodate pupils from the Bothkennar catchment area and that these matters do not alter the rationale for the proposal.

(e) Travel and Community Considerations

Issue Raised: A response noted potential implications of increased travel for children and families, alongside the proximity of alternative schools, including Carronshore Primary School.

Response: These matters were carefully considered during the preliminary community engagement undertaken under section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and again throughout the statutory consultation process. In reviewing the proposal, Education Services has had regard to the likely effects on the local community and the travelling arrangements associated with the proposal.

The proposal identifies Beancross Primary School as the receiving school, reflecting the current catchment arrangements that have been in place since the school was mothballed in 2019. The distance between Bothkennar and Beancross Primary School is approximately 2.7 miles, with an average travel time of around 10 minutes, which is considered to be reasonable and comparable with travel distances experienced by pupils across the authority. School transport is provided in line with Council policy and would continue should the proposal be implemented.

Carronshore Primary School is located within a different secondary catchment area and forms part of the Larbert High School cluster. In contrast, Bothkennar Primary School and Beancross Primary School are both aligned with the Grangemouth High School cluster. The proposal therefore maintains continuity within the existing cluster arrangements, including established transition pathways to secondary education.

As noted within Section 7.7, views on travel and community impact were mixed, with some respondents indicating that current arrangements are already established following the mothballing of the school, while others expressed concerns regarding increased travel and existing social connections.

Having considered these matters, Education Services remains satisfied that the current travel arrangements are reasonable and proportionate. The school has been mothballed since 2019, pupils have attended Beancross Primary School successfully throughout this period, and the travel arrangements do not outweigh the educational and operational reasons supporting the proposal.

(f) Consultation Process and Document Clarity

Issue Raised: Feedback indicated that the consultation document was considered lengthy and complex in parts, with some areas noted as lacking clarity, including queries regarding the evidential basis of statements and the overall tone.

Response: Education Services welcomes the feedback received regarding the presentation, format and accessibility of the proposal paper. Education Services recognises that consultation documents prepared under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 can be lengthy and technical due to statutory requirements, and acknowledges the comments made regarding clarity and readability.

The requirement to set out the educational benefits of the proposal and provide a full assessment of options can result in a detailed and, at times, technical document. The comparative nature of some sections reflects the need to demonstrate that the proposal is educationally justified.

Comments regarding the evidential basis of statements and the comparative presentation of information are addressed in Sections (a) and (b) above.

Education Services notes the feedback received in relation to clarity and presentation, and this will be considered in the preparation of future consultation documents.

(g) Future Use of the School Building

Issue Raised: Respondents expressed interest in the future use of the building should closure proceed, including housing, nursery provision and other community-focused uses.

Response: Education Services welcomes the range of constructive suggestions received regarding the future use of the building and recognises the strong desire within the community to see the property continue to benefit residents.

Should the proposal be approved, the property would become surplus to the operational requirements of Education Services and would be considered through the Council's established asset management processes. Assuming the property becomes surplus to the Council's wider operational requirements, it would be eligible for consideration through the Council's Community Asset Transfer process before any alternative options are progressed.

Should the proposal be approved and the property become surplus to operational requirements, consultation responses regarding the future use of the building will be shared with the relevant Council services responsible for asset management and Community Asset Transfer processes.

9. HMIE REPORT

In line with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was provided by HMIE Inspector's on the educational aspects of the Proposal to close Bothkennar Primary School. This report is attached as Appendix 7.

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

- attendance at the public meeting held on 17th March 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 Beancross Primary School and Grangemouth High School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

The HMIE Inspectors report is attached in full at Appendix 7.

- (a) HM Inspectors agree that the Council has demonstrated clear educational benefits associated with the proposal. Children are benefiting from

learning in a larger school environment at Beancross Primary School, including access to a wider range of experiences, opportunities for collaboration within larger peer groups, and increased leadership opportunities. HM Inspectors consider there to be sufficient educational merit in the proposal to close Bothkennar Primary School.

- (b) HM Inspectors note that stakeholders who engaged with the inspection process were generally supportive of the proposal and recognised the benefits of the current arrangements. Children attending Beancross Primary School reported positive experiences, and staff are confident that pupils' needs are being met effectively. Almost all members of the local community accept the rationale for the school closure, although there remains interest in the future use of the school building.
- (c) HM Inspectors highlight that Bothkennar Primary School has experienced a sustained decline in pupil numbers and has been mothballed since 2019. There is no evidence to suggest that the catchment population will increase in a way that would support the long-term viability of the school. HM Inspectors agree that the Council has appropriately considered reasonable alternatives to closure and that these would not provide educational benefit.

Education Services notes that the findings of HMIE Inspectors are consistent with the educational benefits identified within the Proposal Paper.

9.1 Falkirk Council's Response to HMIE Inspector's Report

Falkirk Council welcomes the report from HMIE and accepts its findings. The authority response to the findings obtained within the HMIE Report is as follows:

- (a) HM Inspectors agree that the Council has demonstrated clear educational benefits associated with the proposal. Children are benefiting from learning in a larger school environment at Beancross Primary School, including access to a wider range of experiences, opportunities for collaboration within larger peer groups, and increased leadership opportunities. HM Inspectors consider there to be sufficient educational merit in the proposal to close Bothkennar Primary School.*

Response: Education Services welcomes the recognition by HMIE Inspectors that there are clear educational benefits associated with the proposal. Education Services agrees that pupils are benefiting from the wider range of learning experiences, increased opportunities for collaboration with larger peer groups, and enhanced leadership opportunities available at Beancross Primary School. These benefits support improved social development, broader curricular access and better preparation for transition to secondary education. Education Services therefore remains of the view that the educational case for permanent closure is justified.

(b) HM Inspectors note that stakeholders who engaged with the inspection process were in favour of closing Bothkennar Primary School and recognised the benefits of the current arrangements. Children attending Beancross Primary School reported positive experiences, and staff are confident that pupils' needs are being met effectively. Almost all members of the local community accept the rationale for the school closure, although there remains interest in the future use of the school building.

Response: Education Services notes that stakeholders who engaged directly with HMIE were supportive of the proposal and recognised the benefits of the current arrangements. Education Services also notes that consultation responses reflected a range of views, including support for the proposal and concerns regarding catchment arrangements and future use of the building. Education Services notes that children reported positive experiences at Beancross Primary School and that staff are confident that pupils' needs are being met effectively. Whilst acknowledging the continuing interest within the community regarding the future use of the Bothkennar Primary School building, Education Services remains satisfied that the current educational arrangements are working well and are supported by those stakeholders who engaged with the consultation and inspection processes

(c) HM Inspectors highlight that Bothkennar Primary School has experienced a sustained decline in pupil numbers and has been mothballed since 2019. There is no evidence to suggest that the catchment population will increase in a way that would support the long-term viability of the school. HM Inspectors agree that the Council has appropriately considered reasonable alternatives to closure and that these would not provide educational benefit.

Response: Education Services acknowledges HMIE Inspectors' conclusion that the sustained decline in pupil numbers and the extended period of mothballing demonstrate that Bothkennar Primary School is no longer viable as an operational school. Whilst recognising the value that the school previously held for pupils, families and the wider community, Education Services notes that there is no evidence to indicate that future catchment demand would increase to a sustainable level. Having considered the consultation responses and the findings of HMIE Inspectors, Education Services remains satisfied that permanent closure represents the most appropriate and sustainable response. Education Services also agrees that all reasonable alternatives to closure have been fully considered and that none would provide comparable educational benefits or improved sustainability.

10. RURAL SCHOOLS – COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

Following receipt of HMIE Inspectors report, education officers carried out a further review of the proposal having regard to representations received during the consultation period.

Education Services has reviewed the proposal and each of the reasonable alternatives to it as set out in the Proposal Paper which identified 4 main options:

- Option 1 – Re-open Bothkennar Primary School.
- Option 2 – Re-open Bothkennar Primary School with Increased occupancy through rezoning and extending the catchment area
- Option 3 – Re-open Bothkennar Primary School with available capacity used for early years provision or for other purposes.
- Option 4 – Continue with the mothballing of Bothkennar Primary School.

These options have been further reviewed and assessed below considering consultation responses.

In reviewing each option, Education Services has considered the written and oral representations received during the statutory consultation, together with the findings of HMIE Inspectors report. The following sections explain whether any evidence arising from the consultation has altered the Council's assessment of the reasonable alternatives previously considered.

Option 1 – Re-open Bothkennar Primary School

Re-opening the school would restore local provision; however, very low projected pupil numbers, high operating costs, and the availability of nearby provision at Beancross Primary School mean that this option is not considered reasonable or sustainable.

Re-opening would provide a focal point for the community and could increase the attractiveness of the area to families. However, evidence shows limited demand for places, and previous consultation highlighted that educational and social benefits are greater in a larger school setting.

Re-opening would reduce travel requirements for local pupils and enable active travel (walking/cycling) for some. However, families currently choosing Beancross may lose access to free transport, and staff would still need to travel to the rural location.

Consultation responses recognised the value of a small rural school and the positive educational experiences previously provided at Bothkennar Primary School. However, consultees also acknowledged the very low pupil numbers and the challenges this created for the long-term viability of the school. No additional evidence was presented during the consultation to demonstrate that re-opening the school would provide a sustainable educational or financial solution.

In summary, Education Services is of the view that no additional evidence was presented during the consultation to demonstrate that re-opening the school would provide a sustainable educational or financial solution.

Option 2 - Re-open Bothkennar Primary School with Increased occupancy through rezoning and extending the catchment area.

This option would involve extending the catchment area (e.g. to include Glensburgh/Old Town) to increase pupil numbers. While theoretically viable, preliminary engagement identified no support from affected communities, and such a proposal would be disruptive and uncertain in its outcomes. Overall, it is not considered a realistic or deliverable alternative.

Re-opening the school through rezoning could provide a local school for additional communities and potentially strengthen sustainability in Skinflats. However, it would significantly alter existing school arrangements for families in other areas and may face resistance. Engagement showed no support for this change, limiting its practical feasibility.

For pupils within the extended catchment, travel distances could reduce, with potential for active travel for some. However, families choosing to remain at Beancross would lose entitlement to free transport, and existing bus services would likely be withdrawn.

No consultation responses provided evidence that extending the catchment area would be a realistic or deliverable alternative. In particular, the preliminary engagement with families who would be affected by rezoning generated no responses in support of this option. Education Services therefore concludes that the consultation has not identified any new evidence which changes the assessment of this option.

Option 3 - Re-open Bothkennar Primary School with available capacity used for early years provision or for other purposes.

This option would involve re-opening the school to provide early years (nursery) provision. However, evidence indicates very low pre-school numbers in the catchment (fewer than 5 children), alongside the availability of established nursery provision in nearby Grangemouth. Significant capital investment would also be required to adapt the building to meet current standards. As such, this option is not considered viable or sustainable.

While re-opening the building for nursery provision could increase community use and provide a local facility, there is no established demand for such provision locally. Historically, early years provision has been accessed in Grangemouth, and there is no expectation within the community for provision to return to Bothkennar.

Travel patterns would remain largely unchanged for most families, as nursery-age children have historically travelled to Grangemouth. Any benefit would be limited to a very small number of families who could access provision locally.

During the consultation, some respondents expressed support for nursery provision as a possible future use of the building.

In Summary, Education Services has considered these representations and concludes that no additional evidence was presented to demonstrate sufficient demand to support a sustainable nursery provision or to alter the assessment that this option would not be educationally or financially viable.

Option 4 – Continue with the mothballing of Bothkennar Primary School.

This option would continue the current mothballed status of the school. However, the school has already been mothballed since 2019, with no recovery in pupil numbers and no evidence that demand will increase. Statutory guidance indicates mothballing should be temporary; therefore, continued mothballing is not considered appropriate.

There was no support identified during engagement for continued mothballing, with some considering it wasteful and detrimental to community morale. The building would continue to have limited use and would not provide an active community asset.

There would be no change to existing travel arrangements. Pupils would continue to travel to Beancross Primary School with transport already in place.

Consultation responses did not identify continued mothballing as a preferred long-term solution. Whilst respondents wished to see the building retained for community benefit, continued mothballing was not a sustainable long-term option.

Education Services therefore considers that no evidence has emerged which changes the assessment that continued mothballing would not represent an appropriate or sustainable response.

11. REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH SECTIONS 11A, 12, 12 A AND 13 OF THE SCHOOL (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 WHEN CARRYING OUT THE REVIEW

When reviewing the proposal, Education Services confirms that it is satisfied that implementation of the proposal is the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal identified by the authority under section 12A (2) (a).

Education Services, in the Consultation Proposal Document (Appendix 1), clearly identified the reasons for formulating the proposal. It also detailed the alternatives that were considered prior to formulating the proposal. Education Services has identified that the representations made during the consultation

period have not provided any options which are reasonable alternatives to the closure of Bothkennar Primary School.

Education Services has reviewed the Educational Benefits Statement that was prepared (see Section 9 of the Proposal Paper at Appendix 1). The review has concluded that the educational benefits; and effects as identified therein are still valid, and that there are positive educational benefits that have arisen from the mothballing of Bothkennar Primary School, and that these will continue should education provision at Bothkennar Primary School be permanently discontinued.

The consultation feedback received has not led Education Services to reconsider the Educational Benefits Statement. It is recognised, however, that by highlighting the benefits of Beancross Primary School, Education Services is not implying that similar positive features did not previously exist at Bothkennar Primary School. These benefits are considered in the context of the current proposal and the educational provision that would be delivered at Beancross Primary School for pupils from the Bothkennar catchment area, noting that Bothkennar Primary School has been mothballed since 2019 and is no longer operating as a school.

In carrying out this review, Education Services has had regard to the preliminary requirements under section 12A, including consideration of reasonable alternatives to closure; has reviewed all consultation representations in accordance with sections 11A and 13; and has given special regard to the factors set out in section 12 relating to community impact, school travel and rural sustainability.

Education Services has considered whether the consultation responses provide evidence that any reasonable alternatives would better address the reasons for formulating the proposal. In undertaking this review, Education Services has also considered whether any new evidence has emerged during the consultation period which would reasonably lead to the authority to formulate the proposal differently. Education Services is satisfied that no such evidence has emerged and that the proposal continues to represent the most appropriate response to the reasons identified under section 12A(2) (a).

Education Services remains of the view that implementation of the closure proposal is the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal. In line with the principles outlined in the proposal paper, the permanent closure of Bothkennar Primary School and associated rezoning of the catchment area to Beancross Primary School represents the only viable way to provide sustainable primary education for the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area.

Education Services is satisfied that the matters identified by the School Closure Review Panel in September 2021 have now been addressed through the preliminary engagement process, consideration of reasonable alternatives and the fresh statutory consultation undertaken in accordance with sections 12A and 13 of the 2010 Act.

Education Services has special regard to the following factors mentioned in section 12 (3).

- (b) the likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal (if implemented)
- (c) the likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the proposal (if implemented).

Education Services has considered section 12 (4), 'the effect on the community is to be assessed by reference (in particular) to –

- (a) 'the sustainability of the community'

Education Services has considered all representations relating to the likely effect on the local community.

Education Services notes that pupils resident within the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area have attended Beancross Primary School since 2019 and therefore the proposal formalises long-established educational arrangements rather than removing an operational educational facility from the community. Having considered the consultation responses, pupil roll data, existing educational arrangements and the factors set out in Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Education Services remains satisfied that permanent closure represents the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal.

While respondents expressed concern regarding the continuing loss of local amenities and the importance of the school to the identity of Bothkennar, these concerns have been carefully considered by Education Services. Education Services remains satisfied that permanent closure will not have a significant adverse effect on the sustainability of the community. Education Services also notes that pupils resident within the Bothkennar catchment area have attended Beancross Primary School since the school was mothballed in 2019. The proposal therefore formalises long established educational arrangements rather than removing an operational school from the community. Having considered the consultation responses, pupil roll data, existing educational arrangements and the factors set out in Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Education Services remains satisfied that permanent closure represents the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal

Education Services also notes that the consultation responses did not identify any evidence that the current educational arrangements have adversely affected the sustainability of the community since mothballing was implemented in 2019. The community has adapted to the existing arrangements, pupils have successfully attended Beancross Primary School throughout this period, and no alternative proposal emerged during the consultation that would provide a more sustainable long-term solution.

- (b) 'the availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community'.

Bothkennar Primary School is not currently used by the community and has been mothballed as a school since 2019. It has remained in use as an operational building by the Education Service. Should this no longer be required, the permanent closure of Bothkennar Primary School would mean that the school building becomes surplus to the requirements of Education Services. If subsequently declared surplus to the requirements of the Council, it would be managed in accordance with the Council's Asset Management procedures. This includes the opportunity for eligible community organisations to express an interest the Community Asset Transfer Process.

During the preliminary community engagement undertaken prior to the statutory consultation, a respondent suggested that the school building could provide a more suitable community facility than the previous community hall. However, no representations were received during the statutory consultation from any community organisation expressing an interest in acquiring or operating the building. Education Services notes that a number of consultees expressed views regarding potential future uses of the site, including housing, nursery provision and other community-related uses. These matters would be considered separately through the Council's asset management processes should the property become surplus to requirements.

Education Services has considered section 12 (5), for the purpose of subsection 3 (c)

- (a) the effect caused by such travelling arrangements includes (in particular) –
- (i) that on the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities,
 - (ii) any environmental impact,
- (b) the travelling arrangements are those to and from the school of (and for) the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities.

Education Services has considered the transport arrangement for pupils attending Beancross Primary School in place of Bothkennar Primary School. Since the school was mothballed in 2019, eligible pupils have received free home-to-school transport to Beancross Primary School in accordance with Council policy. The arrangements have operated successfully throughout this period, and no evidence has emerged to suggest that pupils from the Bothkennar catchment area have experienced educational disadvantage because of the travel arrangements.

A small extension to the route covered by the existing school bus from the Old Town/Glensburgh area of Grangemouth was required. Whilst this resulted in a small increase in the carbon footprint for the Council due to a slightly longer journey (circa $\frac{3}{4}$ mile), Education Services is content this distance, and the

travel times involved, are within the range which currently exist for other pupils across Falkirk.

The transport costs associated with pupils travelling from the Bothkennar catchment area to Beancross Primary School are reflected within the financial information contained in the proposal document in Appendix 1.

Education Services has carefully considered all representations received during the statutory consultation period. Education Services has reviewed the proposal considering the report from HMIE and is satisfied that the findings support the educational case for the proposal. The report identifies clear educational benefits associated with current arrangements and does not identify any educational matters which would warrant reconsideration of the proposal. The consultation identified a range of views regarding the value of a small rural school, community identity, travel arrangements, the future use of the building and neighbouring property matters. These issues have been fully considered and are reflected throughout this report.

Having reviewed the proposal considering these representations and the report from HMIE Inspectors, Education Services is satisfied that no new evidence has emerged that would alter the reasons for formulating the proposal or demonstrate that a reasonable alternative would better meet those reasons. In undertaking this review, Education Services has also considered whether any new evidence emerged during the consultation period that would reasonably have led the authority to formulate the proposal differently. Education Services is satisfied that no such evidence has emerged.

Education Services considers that, in reflecting on the written and oral representations made and in reviewing the proposal considering those representations, in light of the report from HMIE and in terms of section 12, 12A and 13, it is appropriate to implement the proposal.

In view of the above Education Services recommends that approval be given to the proposal that:

- **provision of a school at Bothkennar Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 22 December 2026, or as soon as possible thereafter;**
- **pupils who reside in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area to continue and permanently receive their education at Beancross Primary School; and**
- **the delineated catchment area of Beancross Primary School be permanently extended to include the whole delineated catchment area of Bothkennar Primary School.**

12. ALLEGED OMISSIONS OR INACCURACIES

Section 10(3) of the 2010 Act places a requirement on Falkirk Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission in the Proposal Paper which has either been identified by Education Services or raised by consultees. This provision also requires Education Services 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.

During the statutory consultation period, one inaccuracy in the Proposal Paper was identified. This related to an incorrect reference to “Slamannan Primary School” within the financial section of the document, which should have read “Beancross Primary School.”

In accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Council reviewed this inaccuracy and determined that it did not materially affect the substance of the proposal, its rationale, or the educational benefits set out within the document.

A formal Notice of Correction was issued on 19 March 2026 to consultees to ensure all consultees were made aware of the amendment.

A corrected version of the Proposal Paper was subsequently made available through all standard distribution channels, including the Council’s website, Participate Plus platform, local libraries and hubs, and Beancross Primary School.

13. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS OF THIS REPORT

In accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, this Consultation Report will be published for a period of at least three weeks, from 7 August 2026 to 31 August 2026, before Falkirk Council reaches a final decision on the proposal on 17 September 2026.

During this period, interested parties may consider the contents of the Consultation Report and may submit comments on its accuracy or any omissions from the report for the consideration of Elected Members prior to the Council reaching a final decision on the proposal.

The Council will take account of the information contained within this Consultation Report, together with any comments received on the report during the publication period, when determining whether to implement the proposal.

Comments on this Consultation Report should be submitted to educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk by 10 am on Monday 31 August 2026

14. OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS

If Falkirk Council decides to implement the proposal, in whole or in part, the decision in so far as it relates to the closure of Bothkennar Primary School will be notified to the Scottish Ministers. The Council will notify the Scottish Ministers of the decision and provide them with a copy of the Consultation Proposal Document, this Consultation Report and the notice published under section 11A (3) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, within 6 days of the decision becoming final.

Falkirk Council would also be required to publish a notice on its website of the decision to implement the proposal and why it has been satisfied that closure is the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal.

The Scottish Ministers will have an 8-week period from the date of the Council's decision to decide if they will call-in any closure decision made by Falkirk Council. This 8-week timeframe would consist of an initial 3 weeks from the date of decision, during which representation can be made to the Ministers, and a further 5 weeks for the Scottish Ministers to decide whether to issue a call-in notice. During this period Falkirk Council will not proceed to implement any closure decision.



THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT

Proposal Paper

That, subject to the outcome of this proposal:

- Provision of a school at Bothkennar Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from August 2026, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- That the pupils of Bothkennar Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Beancross Primary School, from August 2026 or as soon as possible thereafter;
- That the delineated catchment area of Beancross Primary School be permanently extended to include the whole delineated catchment area of Bothkennar Primary School from August 2026.

This document has been issued by Falkirk Council for proposal in terms of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

1. REASONS FOR FORMULATING THIS PROPOSAL

The Schools (Consultation) Scotland Act 2010 states that education authorities must identify the reasons for formulating a proposal to close a rural school. This proposal was formulated for the following reasons:

- i. Bothkennar Primary School has been formally mothballed for approaching 7 years with no pupils in attendance since August 2019.
- ii. The catchment demand for places in Bothkennar Primary School continues to be assessed to be low and is not predicted to rise.
- iii. The Council is experiencing declining pupil numbers, making re-opening impractical.
- iv. Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment. The current annual cost of mothballing Bothkennar Primary School is £40,580.
- v. The Local Development Plan does not identify any relevant sites within the catchment area for housing development that would impact on catchment demand for places.

On **26 March 2019**, the Education Executive agreed that Bothkennar Primary School would be mothballed from August 2019 due to falling catchment demand for places.

On **26 January 2021**, the Education, Children and Young People Executive was informed that the school remained mothballed, with no plans to re-open it beyond August 2021 due to continued low projected demand. At this meeting, it was agreed to progress to a formal statutory consultation on a proposal to permanently close Bothkennar Primary School.

The findings from this statutory consultation were reported to the Education, Children & Young People Committee on **1 June 2021**, which approved the recommendation to close the school permanently and submit the statutory notification to Scottish Ministers, in accordance with the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

On **26 July 2021**, Scottish Ministers reviewed Falkirk Council's proposal and determined that there were grounds for a call-in under section 17(2)(a) of the 2010 Act.

The **School Closures Review Panel** subsequently reviewed the case and, on **24 September 2021**, concluded that Falkirk Council had not fully met its obligations under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. As a result, the closure was not approved, and the Council was required to undertake the following steps before making any updated decision:

- Fully comply with the preliminary requirements set out in section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, including proper consideration of any reasonable alternatives to closure.
- If closure was still considered the most appropriate course of action, prepare a fresh proposal paper in full compliance with section 13 of the 2010 Act.
- Undertake a fresh statutory consultation process with all relevant consultees.

Education Services have recently undertaken preliminary community engagement in line with section 12A of the Act, including public meetings and a community survey.

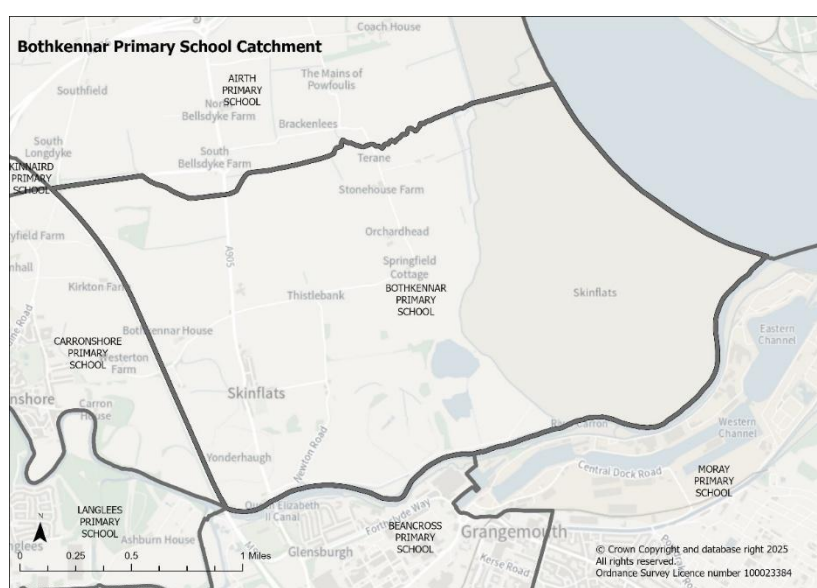
A decision has now been taken to undertake a statutory consultation on a proposal to permanently close Bothkennar Primary School and to permanently extend the catchment area of Beancross Primary School to include the existing catchment area of Bothkennar primary school.

2. BOTHKENNAR PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THE LOCAL AREA

Bothkennar Primary is a non-denominational, rural school situated in the village of Skinflats, 1.5 miles north-west of Grangemouth, 1.1 miles east of Carronshore and 2.3 miles north-east of Falkirk.

Settlement Profiles provide basic information for the towns and villages in the Falkirk Council area. The latest Settlement Profile for Skinflats is available [here](#).

The school has a capacity of 50 pupils and the last recorded school roll in 2018/19 was 4 pupils. The building is approximately 60 years old. The catchment area comprises the village itself and the surrounding farms and isolated dwellings (see map below).



It borders the catchment areas of Airth Primary School, Carronshore Primary School, Moray Primary School and Beancross Primary School. The distance between Bothkennar Primary School and Beancross Primary School is 2.7 miles.

The [Scottish Government Rural School List](#) Scottish Government Rural School List classifies Bothkennar Primary School as an accessible rural school, defined as an area with a population of less than 3,000 people and within a 30-minute drive to a settlement of 10,000 or more.

The [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 makes special arrangements in relation to rural schools and establishes a presumption against closure of rural schools. The result of this is education authorities must have special regard to several factors before formalising a proposal to close a rural school and in consulting on and reaching a decision whether to implement a rural school closure proposal.

These duties are outlined in [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the accompanying [Statutory Guidance](#).

As Bothkennar Primary School is a rural school, when formulating this proposal, the Council is required to:

- i. Identify the reasons for formulating the proposal; and
- ii. Consider whether there are any reasonable alternatives to the proposal as a response to those reasons.

In addition, in the proposal the Council must also give special regard to:

- i. The likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal (if implemented), and
- ii. The likely effect caused by any different traveling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the proposal (if implemented).

The school structure, when last open in June 2019, had 4 pupils in one composite class across stages Primary 2 to Primary 5.

The school has a capacity of 50 pupils and the last recorded school roll in school session 2018/19 was 4 pupils.

Throughout Scotland, core facts are gathered and published on school buildings. The definition and assessment categorisations are set by the Scottish Government. When last open in 2019, the condition and suitability ratings for Bothkennar Primary School were:

- Condition – **B**, Satisfactory - Performing adequately but showing minor deterioration.
- Suitability – **A**, Good – Performing well and operating

effectively (the school buildings and grounds support the delivery of services to children and communities)

The school has been kept windproof, watertight and secure and has been occupied since 2019, its overall condition as a school has deteriorated.

3. STEPS TAKEN TO ADDRESS THE REASON FOR THIS PROPOSAL

The original mothballing of the school in 2019 followed a consultation with the local/school community. It was decided that the school should be mothballed due to extremely low pupil numbers, but pupil demand would be monitored annually to determine whether the school became viable for re-opening.

Following a review of the mothballing in 2021, a decision was taken to proceed to a statutory consultation on a proposal to permanently close the school. Following this consultation, the Education, Children and Young People Executive agreed to a permanent closure, however Scottish Ministers referred the decision to the Schools Closure Review Panel who did not approve the closure decision because the Council had not fully complied with the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, including proper consideration of any reasonable alternatives to closure.

Following this decision, there have been a further 4 years where the school has remained mothballed and opportunity for pupil numbers to recover. This has not happened, and as outlined above, primary and pre-school numbers in the local area have shown a marked decline.

Following the annual review of mothballing in 2025, it was decided to carry out a preliminary engagement with the community to discuss the reasonable alternatives to closure and consider whether to come forward with a proposal to permanently close the school.

Before bringing this proposal to a statutory consultation, a preliminary engagement was undertaken with the Bothkennar Primary School catchment community. Letters were sent out by post to all addresses in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area. In addition letters were sent by email to all parent/carers of primary aged pupils in the same area.

These letters outlined the reasons why the closure proposal is being considered and invited views on:

- a) The likely effect on the local community if the school were to close permanently.
- b) The likely effect of differing travelling arrangements for children and families in the Bothkennar catchment.
- c) The likely effect on children's education if the school were to be closed permanently.

The letter also asked the community to consider each of the following and suggest any other viable options.

- a) Re-open Bothkennar Primary School.
- b) Re-open Bothkennar Primary School with increased occupancy through rezoning and extending the catchment area.
- c) Permanent Closure.
- d) Continued mothballing of Bothkennar Primary School.

Consultees were invited to complete an online response form on Participate Plus or write directly to Education Services with a response. They were also invited to a public meeting held at Bothkennar Primary School on 23 September 2025. The informal consultation period was from 12 September to 10 October 2025.

Each option was appraised, taking account of the community feedback; financial assessment; pupil roll implications; assessment of rural factors and due regard to community impact and travel arrangements; and educational benefits.

There were 6 responses to the survey, 1 email response and 5 members of the community attended the public meeting at Bothkennar Primary School. Further preliminary engagement was arranged in January 2026 to assess the views of parents of primary and nursery age pupils in the Glensburgh/Old Town area of Grangemouth about the possibility of re-opening Bothkennar Primary School, with a larger catchment area, that included the area that they live in. This would involve changing their children's primary school catchment area from Beancross Primary School to Bothkennar Primary School.

Parents/carers were given the opportunity to contribute to the engagement process both electronically and in person at a meeting held at Bothkennar Primary School on Thursday 15 January. No responses were received through digital channels, and nobody attended the meeting.

4. REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

In arriving at the proposal set out within this Proposal Paper, the Council has considered alternative options for the future of Bothkennar Primary School:

- Option 1 – Re-open Bothkennar Primary School.
- Option 2 – Re-open Bothkennar Primary School with Increased occupancy through rezoning and extending the catchment area.
- Option 3 – Re-open Bothkennar Primary School with available capacity used for early years provision or for other purposes.
- Option 4 – Continue with the mothballing of Bothkennar Primary School.

In considering the options below, account was taken of the fact there is a presumption against closure of a rural school. As part of the options appraisal, the “rural school factors” specified the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) have been given special regard.

These are the likely:

- Education benefits
- Effect on the local community.
- Effect on travel arrangements.

5. ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Option 1 – Re-open Bothkennar Primary School

Summary - The low projected uptake, cost of returning Bothkennar Primary School to operational use, and availability of nearby alternative provision in Grangemouth means this is not considered to be a reasonable alternative option.

ASSESSMENT ON RURAL FACTORS

Effect on the local community

The reopening of the school would enable the premises to be used by the community which is not currently possible. The presence of a school may make the area a more attractive place to live, therefore encourage families with school aged children or pre-school aged children to move to the area.

If the school were to reopen as an educational establishment there would be an economic impact the expenditure needed to bring the facility back into use, staffing, and ongoing maintenance. However, the reopening of the school may attract more families, and this may have a positive effect on the wider economy of the community.

Effect on travel arrangements

The travel distance from Skinflats to Beancross Primary School is 2.5 miles. Travel time is approximately 8 minutes (Source: Google Maps).

The travel arrangements have been in place since August 2019 whereby pupils from Skinflats are provided with school bus transport to Beancross Primary School. There are currently 8 catchment children from Bothkennar attending Beancross Primary School, and these pupils are transported to school by bus. Travel time is 10 minutes each way and currently costs £5,200 per annum.

If Bothkennar Primary School was to reopen there could be a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of pupils who are able to walk or cycle to school.

Further to this, the pupils currently attending Beancross Primary School from the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area would lose their entitlement to transport in line with the Falkirk Council School Transport Policy. This would have an impact on those families particularly if their preference was to remain at Beancross Primary School.

Staff would travel to the school by cars as it is unlikely they will live locally.

Effect on education benefits

The Educational benefits associated with Bothkennar pupils accessing Beancross Primary School, balanced against them attending the much smaller Bothkennar Primary School are detailed in the Education Benefits Statement in section 7. This concludes that there would not be a net education benefit for pupils if Bothkennar Primary School were to re-open.

Option 2 - Re-open Bothkennar Primary School with increased occupancy through rezoning and extending the catchment area.

Summary – There is one reasonable option for increasing the catchment area of Bothkennar Primary School: extending the original catchment area to include the Grangemouth Old Town/Glensburgh area. In theory, the combined pupil numbers would make the likely pupil roll at Bothkennar Primary School more viable and provide this locality with a school that is within walking distance. However, this would be workable if the current pattern of placing request demand to other schools (including denominational schools) continue unchanged. In addition, such a proposal would be disruptive to families living in the Old Town/Glensburgh area and preliminary engagement with this community did not identify any support for such a proposal. This proposal could not be combined with early years provision due to capacity constraints. Having considered this alternative to permanent closure, together with the risks and the Educational Benefits for pupils attending the larger school, Beancross Primary, permanent closure is still Education Services preferred option.

ASSESSMENT ON RURAL FACTORS

Effect on the local community

As for option 1 for the community of Skinflats and surrounding area, as defined by the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area. The community of Glensburgh/Old Town in Grangemouth would require to be rezoned to this catchment area. It would change current arrangements for primary school enrolments and the preliminary engagement with this community did not identify any support (or otherwise) for this proposal. Such a proposal would require a separate statutory consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 before any decision could be taken.

Effect on travel arrangements

As for Option 1 for the pupils in the current catchment area. If it were extended to include the Glensburgh/Old Town area, then this would provide a more local primary school for those pupils within safe and easy walking

distance. However, under the Falkirk Council Transport Policy, those pupils would lose their entitlement to free school transport if they chose to remain at Beancross Primary School. The current school bus provided for these pupils would be withdrawn if the catchment for this area changed.

Effect on education benefits

As for option 1 regarding Bothkennar catchment pupils, there would be no net education benefit expected. This would also be the case for pupils rezoned from the Glensburgh/Old Town area – there would be no anticipated net education benefit expected if they are moved from the much larger Beancross Primary School to Bothkennar Primary School.

Option 3 Re-open Bothkennar Primary School with available capacity used for early years provision or other purposes.

Summary – The location of Bothkennar Primary School, the space availability within the school and the nearby early years provision in Grangemouth means this is not considered a reasonable option.

ASSESSMENT ON RURAL FACTORS

Effect on the local community

The addition of Early Years provision would neither be viable or practical in this small building. Major capital investment would be needed to carry out the necessary alterations, and this could not be justified based on current preschool numbers in the community (less than 5 according to data provided by Forth Valley Health Board). Even when Bothkennar Primary School was open pre-mothballing, early years provision for the village was based in Grangemouth, 2.5 miles away, so there is no community expectation that it should be provided more locally.

Effect on travel arrangements

Option 1 details this with regard to the re-opening of the Primary school. Regarding early years provision, this was not available in Skinflats pre-mothballing and pre-school children were taken to Grangemouth by their parents to access this.

Effect on education benefits

As for option 1 regarding primary pupils. The pre-school numbers are so small (currently less than 5) that early year's provision is not viable in Skinflats. If it was considered, there would be no net education benefit to the handful of pupils attending compared with the larger provision that can be offered in Beancross Primary School and other early years provisions in Grangemouth.

Option 4 - Continue with the mothballing of Bothkennar Primary School

Summary - Mothballing the school in anticipation of increased pupil numbers is not considered a reasonable alternative. The school has now been

mothballed for 6 years and the primary age population in the Bothkennar catchment area has not increased significantly in that time. There is no evidence that numbers will recover to ensure a sustainable demand for places at the school. The Statutory Guidance for the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended, in relation to mothballing states “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.”

ASSESSMENT ON RURAL FACTORS

Effect on the local community

During the preliminary engagement with the community, there was no support for continuing to mothball the school.

Effect on travel arrangements

Bothkennar Primary School catchment pupils would continue to be provided with transport to Beancross Primary School. There would be no change here.

Effect on education benefits

The education benefits from continued mothballing do not differ from those attributed to permanent closure. This is fully explored in the Education Benefits Statement in Section 7.

CONCLUSION FROM THE OPTIONS ASSESSED

Assessment of the 4 options considered, taking special regard to the rural school considerations, demonstrates that the permanent closure of Bothkennar Primary School, with the pupils instead attending Beancross Primary School, is the only reasonable alternative in response to the unsustainable school roll and represents the best value for educational purposes. The following sections now consider that option in more depth.

6. BEANCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Beancross Primary School in Grangemouth is located south-east of the current catchment area for Bothkennar Primary School, approximately 2.7 miles between the two schools.

Beancross Primary School is part of the catchment for Grangemouth High School. Denominational primary pupils attend Sacred Heart Primary School and are secondary educated at St. Mungo's High School.

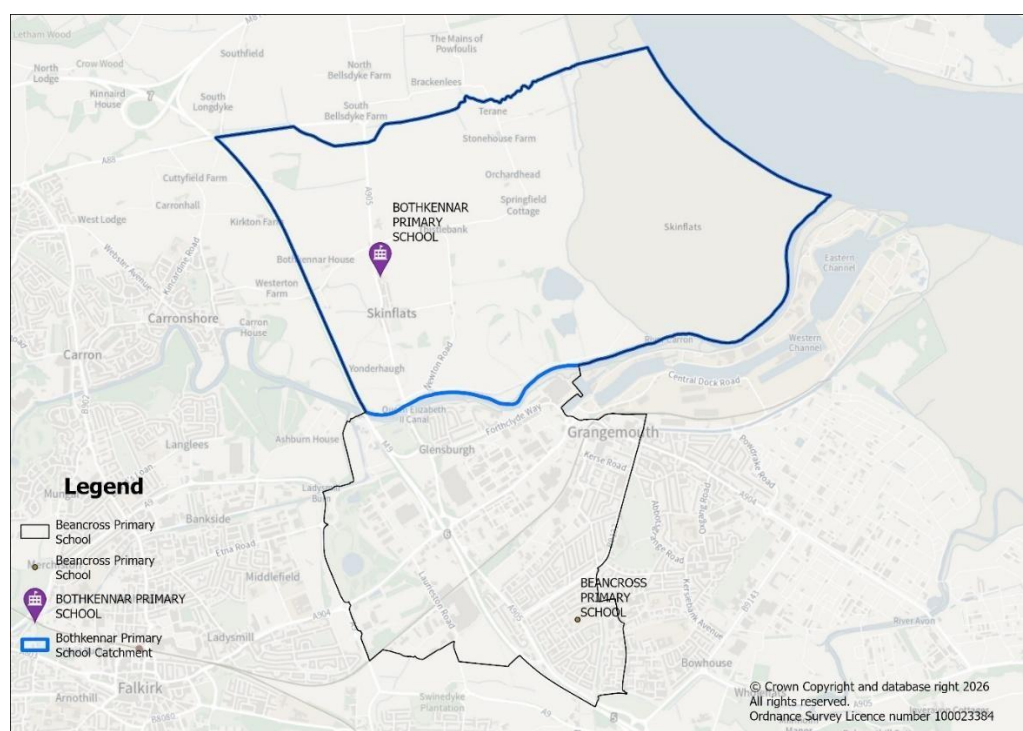
Before Bothkennar Primary School was mothballed, Beancross Primary School already had a shared management arrangement with Bothkennar Primary School which meant both schools were managed by a single Headteacher.

Beancross Primary School provides non-denominational primary education to Primary 1 – 7 pupils.

There is a nursery provision at Beancross Primary School which can accommodate a maximum of 64 children when fully staffed.

The catchment area for Beancross Primary School adjoins the catchment areas for Bothkennar, Bowhouse, Moray, other and other Primary Schools. The map below shows the Beancross and Bothkennar Primary School catchment areas.

Map of Bothkennar and Beancross Primary School Catchments



Beancross Primary School has an operational capacity for 434 primary pupils. The pupil roll is currently 362 pupils (2025/26 school census) and the occupancy based on this is 83%.

The school structure currently operates with 15 primary classes.

Throughout Scotland, core facts are gathered and published on school buildings. The definition and assessment categorisations are set by the Scottish Government. The current condition and suitability ratings for Beancross Primary School are:

- Condition – **B**, Satisfactory - Performing adequately but showing minor deterioration.
- Suitability – **B**, Satisfactory - Performing well but with minor problems.

7. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

This educational benefits statement is written from the perspective of benefits, should the proposal for permanent closure be implemented. This statement is focussed on the educational benefits for pupils attending Beancross Primary School.

Assessment of likely educational benefits on pupils

Falkirk Council has a responsibility to ensure that education for school pupils is delivered in a quality school environment that sustains and improves their experiences and outcomes. The educational benefits associated with this proposal relate to:

- Learning and teaching.
- Meeting learners needs.
- Broadening the range of opportunities.
- The environment for learning including curriculum.

Whilst recognising the high quality of education provision that was offered at Bothkennar Primary School, the Council considers that the small, multi-stage cohort, taught by a single teacher, would benefit more from the wider range and breadth of learning experiences available to them at Beancross Primary School.

The multi-stage, single class environment means that there is a high probability of pupils not having peers at the same year stage, and this can remain the case for their entire primary education. Such a composition means that these pupils do not benefit routinely from learning in collaborative groups with age and stage peers. Pupils may be taught by the same teacher throughout their primary career and whilst this can provide consistency, it can limit their opportunity to develop relationships and confidence with a wide range of adults prior to transitioning to a secondary school which requires interactions and relationship building with a far wider range of adults. At Beancross Primary School children benefit more from working with a wider range of their peer group. This allows them to build and develop stronger and wider peer relationships with the group of children, including those with whom they will transition to the local secondary school.

Bothkennar School operated under a shared headship arrangement with Beancross Primary School. Therefore, transition for pupils during the period of mothballing has been seamless and consistent. The Head Teacher of Beancross Primary School and the wider management team are now dedicated to one school, within one building at all times. This supports consistent application of curriculum delivery and other policies aimed to support high quality educational experiences or pupils.

Notably, the educational benefits arising from the proposal for pupils transferring from a smaller school such as Bothkennar Primary School to a

larger school such as Beancross Primary School are assessed by the Education Service to include i-iv below:

Learning and Teaching

The curriculum includes a broad range of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, to help every child and young person to develop knowledge, skills and attributes for success in learning, life and work. Learning is planned across a wide range of contexts, allowing children to learn independently, alongside peers and as part of a whole class experience where relevant. Whilst recognising the increased opportunities for individualised learning in a small class or school setting, opportunities are more limited across all contexts, building the necessary skills and experiences, and prior to mothballing, pupils learning experiences were already enhanced by working within Bothkennar and Beancross Primary School buildings. This was planned to ensure that the experiences of all pupils were not diminished by the small peer group and learning environment available. In Beancross Primary School, children are encouraged to be eager and active participants who are engaged, resilient and highly motivated during their learning. Children know that their views are sought, valued and acted upon. Although this can be said for all schools, including small schools like Bothkennar, due to the greater number of staff and pupils in Beancross Primary School, learners' experiences are broader and can be adapted to support interests of cohorts and groups more readily. In a small school, pupils may have individual interests, varied due to the small numbers at similar ages or stages, making it more difficult to plan learning and contextual learning that may engage and motivate all in a meaningful way. Arising from the benefit of having a higher number of staff who possess a range of expertise amongst them, pupils have access to wider range of skillsets and areas of expertise. In Beancross Primary School children are encouraged to be part of a wider social context in which they can build relationships with different groups and individuals, develop social skills, meet challenges and exercise responsibilities as members of a social group. They can interact and socialise with groups of children, take part in team activities and move with a wide range of peers to secondary school. Whilst attending Bothkennar, these opportunities for pupils were limited and whilst pupils were provided with opportunities to exercise responsibilities and engage with other to develop social skills, these were enhanced by attendance at Beancross Primary School to interact with pupils of the same age and stage and to engage in whole school activities that developed these skills in a progressive way.

The differing physical learning environments offered at Beancross encourages high levels of achievement across a range of disciplines and provides opportunities for pupils to apply their learning in a wide range of contexts, which is essential for achievement of curriculum levels. Over the last five years, Beancross Primary School has consistently delivered positive attainment outcomes for pupils and compares well with authority average and neighbourhood group average.

At Beancross Primary School, children embrace school values and regularly participate in a wide range of personal achievement opportunities. There is a sense of community and belonging within year groups, which is recognised and celebrated at regular assemblies and class celebrations. Whilst a sense of community is strong and relationships are easily developed and nurtured within a small school setting, opportunities are limited to develop these across similar ages and stages and pupils at the earliest and latest stages of primary school rely on each other for the opportunity to engage and interact with others.

Like all schools, Beancross Primary School is aspirational for the children and deliver various opportunities which allows pupils to demonstrate the four capacities and to develop skills for life. Children are regularly involved in leading and organising various family and community events linked to their learning experiences:

- Active learner groups promote UNCRC through events, assemblies, and community links.
- Digital Leaders pupils use digital technologies to plan and organise events, and, to gather and share stakeholder views.
- House groups and Pupil Leadership Team as part of the school's House System.
- Buddies and playground leaders organise shared activities, promoting inclusion.
- Pupil-led Sports Council supports events such as the annual Sports Ball and the 'Beanie Cup'.

Meeting learners needs

Beancross Primary School provides a nurturing environment for all pupils based on a rights-respecting ethos, rooted in the UNCRC principles and core educational values of: Ambition, Motivation, Nurture, Respect. Through the GIRFEC model, the school maintains a relentless focus on removing barriers and ensuring every child can make the best possible progress in their learning and achievement.

Through the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) practice model, meeting the needs of every child continues to be a priority. Teachers carefully plan and assess to ensure each child has the opportunity to reach their potential. Pupil tracking combines professional dialogue, classroom observations, learning discussions, assessments, and pupil work.

Across the school, attainment has steadily improved over the last three years with most children achieving expected levels in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy at P1, P4 and P7. The school level trend data shows this compares well to the Neighbourhood Group and Authority measures.

The approach at Beancross to the delivery of enhanced learning support ensures that children who need more focused help feel included, supported and successful in school. The nurturing spaces in the school are used flexibly

to support a wide range of pupils' individual needs. The adoption of research-based programmes, such as Decider Skills and Seasons for Growth, provides children with practical strategies to understand and manage their emotions, cope with change, and build resilience. Through a rigorous approach to professional learning for staff and engagement in Local Authority training, Beancross Primary School work with their wider school staff team to target particular needs of children and cohorts across the school, supporting their inclusive approach to learning and engagement. This approach to building expertise across the team can be difficult for a small school due to the small number of staff and time available to engage in professional learning.

Beancross Primary School offers a wide and diverse programme of extracurricular activities that support pupils to develop positive attitudes to their physical health. The school has achieved the School Sport Award. Prior to the closure of Bothkennar Primary School, pupils were supported to engage in activities being delivered at Beancross Primary due to the limited opportunities that were provided, both due to the facilities and staff available.

Children's voices also inform the setting of improvement priorities, regularly shaping wellbeing indicator reflections and targeted support. Children's views are important and are sought and valued to identify priorities. Wellbeing indicator reflections are reviewed regularly for positive Health and Wellbeing choices and supports are in place to address needs where identified. This is something that was developed across both Bothkennar and Beancross Primary, continuing to evolve at Beancross Primary in order to respond to pupil needs.

Beancross Primary School has planned meetings and discussions with parents. These discussions between home and school improve parental engagement whilst focussing on next steps for learning. Where appropriate, interventions are put in place, while working effectively with other agencies and parents to ensure the needs of each child are met.

Broadening the range of opportunities

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) promotes the development of knowledge, skills and attributes that children need to be successful, confident, responsible and effective in their learning, their life, and, in their future.

The development of a broad range of skills is central to children's happiness and success. These skills should be developed across all curriculum areas and are embedded into the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes, requiring teachers to plan opportunities to develop them in a variety of ways, including engagement in active learning, interdisciplinary tasks and to experience learning in practical contexts.

A critical part of all of this is learning in collaborative and cooperative situations with peers and age and stage appropriate groups. Opportunities provided in a larger school context can deliver this in a more natural and

progressive way, contributing to the acquisition of skills and knowledge to prepare pupils for transition across the primary stages, into secondary school and post school.

Children at Beancross Primary School are offered a range of active, planned experiences which help them develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing both now and in the future. This is in line with their entitlement to a broad general education.

Across Beancross Primary School children engage well with learning and contribute effectively to age and stage appropriate lessons. Staff promote positive relationships at all levels, the impact of this being that children enjoy good relationships with their peers. They also have opportunities to support each other in their learning through cooperative and collaborative peer experiences.

There is a well-structured transition between Beancross Primary School and Grangemouth High School, underpinned by a shared cluster vision, values, and aims. This strong partnership affords staff from both schools working together at key points in the school year to ensure a consistent approach to learning. The transition programme extends significantly beyond standard induction days, across the school year, with groups of peers. As these interactions take place well before the formal transition visits, learners become well acquainted with the secondary school staff and the building, supporting them to feel confident, secure, and ready for the next stage of their education. Prior to the mothballing of Bothkennar Primary School, pupils became part of the Primary 7 cohort of pupils at Beancross Primary School, recognising the advantages this opportunity provided for the transition to secondary school, working with a wider range of staff and peers in a variety of learning environments.

Across Beancross Primary School children engage well with learning and contribute effectively to age and stage appropriate lessons. Staff promote positive relationships at all levels, the impact of this being that children enjoy good relationships with their peers. They also have opportunities to support each other in their learning through cooperative and collaborative peer experiences.

Environment for learning including curriculum

Beancross Primary School is well-equipped and supported. The building is well maintained, and its attractive setting provides a welcoming environment for children. Pupils benefit from specialist areas including a fully equipped library, a music room, and a stage with sound and lighting.

The facilities of Beancross include an expansive outdoor space enhanced with fixed play structures as well as dedicated football and basketball playing areas. The school holds the Cycle Friendly Scotland Aware, and provides bike storage to support active travel.

There is a strong focus on meeting individual needs through the Additional Support for Learning Hub and Enhanced Support Learning Hubs known as The Treehouse, The Den, and The Nest.

Beancross Primary School includes an on-site nursery class provision for up to 64 children aged between 3 and 4 years old, bringing advantages to children across the school. The nursery is fully integrated into the life of the school and the wider learning journey. Operating under a shared vision, values, and aims, staff across the nursery and Early Level plan and work together to ensure high-quality experiences. This collaborative approach supports a seamless transition to Primary 1 at Beancross.

Assessment of likely educational benefits on any children who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school.

Existing and future pupils:

Children who may live in this catchment area in the future will benefit from the broad range of educational opportunities which are presented through this proposal, as detailed in i-iv above.

There would be positive educational benefits associated with this proposal.

There are increased opportunities for delivering the totality of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies. Whilst the benefits of learning in a small school environment are recognised, there is a greater requirement to significantly differentiate learning in order to meet the needs of all pupils, ensuring that experiences are age and stage appropriate, providing appropriate support and challenge for all.

The proposal extends the peer group for all pupils, present and future.

Pupils who would otherwise have attended Bothkennar Primary School have more shared experiences and opportunity for friendships. This will enhance their confidence and make the transition to secondary easier. Larger year groups make the delivery of specialist services more viable and provide enhanced opportunities for educational excursions and community engagement to enhance the curriculum offer.

Assessment of likely educational benefits on the pupils of any other schools in the Council area:

The cost per pupil of operating Bothkennar Primary School is relatively high compared with other Falkirk Primary Schools due to the low number of pupils attending. The reduction in school operating costs which would be achieved by the closure of Bothkennar Primary School means that this is a saving to the Council. There are no other significant impacts from this proposal on other pupils in the authority or who attend other schools, in either a positive or a negative way.

Consideration of how to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the implementation of this proposal:

The main adverse effect from this proposal would be the length of the journey to school for children who live in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area. Funded school transport would be provided for pupils should this proposal be implemented. However, this extended journey time is still within reasonable journey time for home to school transport.

Summary of educational benefits statement:

In summary, there are a range of educational benefits for pupils if this proposal was to be implemented, as summarised in the paragraphs above.

Falkirk Council proposes closing Bothkennar Primary School and transferring pupils to Beancross Primary School to enhance educational experiences. The move offers significant benefits across four key areas: learning and teaching, meeting learners' needs, broadening opportunities, and improving the learning environment. Beancross Primary School provides a wider peer group, diverse curriculum, specialist staff expertise, and strong transition links to secondary education. Pupils gain access to enriched social interactions, extracurricular activities, and flexible nurturing spaces. The school's facilities, including outdoor play areas, specialist hubs, and integrated nursery provision, further strengthen learning continuity. While the main adverse effect is longer travel time, funded transport mitigates this.

Overall, the proposal ensures improved attainment, broader experiences, and stronger community engagement, delivering a more inclusive and aspirational education for current and future pupils.

8. Detailed Analysis of The Proposal

This section provides a more detailed assessment of the proposal which is considered to be the only reasonable response to the unsustainable school roll. It considers the "rural school factors" of community impact and impact on travel arrangements, as well as the Educational Benefits Statement above.

SPECIAL REGARD TO THE LIKELY EFFECT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Community Impact – Loss of the school

The previous statutory consultation on the proposal to permanently close the school in 2021 saw responses from the Community Council, 1 pre-school parent, 2 pupils and 2 staff at the affected schools, 1 other local residents and 1 other member of the public. All those who responded supported the proposal apart from the 1 other member of the public who did not. Further preliminary engagement was undertaken with the community in October 2025 to further explore the proposal before it was brought forward to a statutory consultation. The key findings from this were:

- There was a general feeling expressed in responses to the survey and at the public meeting that current pupil numbers did not make re-opening the school viable, and that this would only be possible if the catchment was extended to increase pupil numbers.
- Nevertheless, 2 survey responses and a conversation at the public meeting and a number of those that responded expressed regret at the loss of the school and the community focus it had provided for so many years, as well as potentially encouraging families to move into the village.
- Two respondents commented that families had adjusted to the change since mothballing and there would be minimal ongoing impact if the school remains closed.
- The distance to Beancross PS was viewed as inconvenient and there was some feeling that Carronshore PS would be a better catchment alternative.
- The continued mothballing was not supported and seen by some as wasteful and detrimental to community morale.
- There was broad support for repurposing the building for community use or for an alternative educational purpose.

In conclusion, whilst many of those responding to the survey and attending the public meeting expressed regret at losing the local village school, there was a general acceptance expressed that little had changed re: pupil numbers, so viability remained a problem.

The option of increasing the catchment area to potentially include Glensburgh/Old Town area was thought worth investigating by some, and this was further explored with those families likely to be affected living in the Glensburgh/Old Town. Letters were sent out to everyone living in this area, but no responses were received, and nobody attended the public meeting arranged to discuss this.

There was no interest in continued mothballing of the school, but some felt that alternative community use should be considered.

The number of pupils living in the catchment area of Bothkennar Primary School has not changed significantly since 2019 when it was 20 (it is currently 21) and is not expected to increase significantly in the near future. When there were 20 primary aged pupils living in the catchment area, only 4 were attending the school.

There are no concerns over the capacity at Beancross Primary School which is currently at 83% occupancy even with pupils attending from the Bothkennar catchment area, and the roll is projected to fall in the next 5 years.

The Council believes that the sustainability of Skinflats village community will not be affected. Pupils will attend a school only 2.7 miles away from their village.

Prior to mothballing, Bothkennar Primary School and Beancross Primary School had been jointly managed for several years allowing a strong integration of the educational approach in both schools. As such, pupils at Bothkennar were already part of a larger, sustainable school community through the leadership team already shared with Beancross Primary School, and this has only been solidified since the mothballing of Bothkennar Primary School. There are no indications that this has affected the sustainability of the village community.

Finally, the wider community of which Skinflats village is a part, will benefit from the development of a more sustainable school estate, with continuing reduced revenue costs. The longevity of the remaining schools will be improved, providing stability to the area.

There will be no impact on the use of shops, services and facilities in this wider community by residents of the Skinflats community because of the permanent closure of Bothkennar Primary School.

Community Impact – Use of the Building

Bothkennar Primary School is the only Council Facility currently situated in Skinflats.

Prior to mothballing in 2019, the local community made no real use of the school building for community activities. Therefore, if the proposal is accepted, no impact is anticipated that would adversely affect the sustainability of the Skinflats village community. All children would continue to live in the Skinflats village community and will attend a school only 2.5 miles away.

The Skinflats community requires to travel to access most services due to a lack of amenities with the village.

What will happen to the school building?

If the building becomes empty, and is deemed surplus to Education Services operational requirements, the Council's Asset Management Team would then consider what future options there are for the property, which could include potential sale. However, it is important that all community views are considered prior to this happening, and we would welcome your views on possible future uses for this building, should the school close permanently.

9. LIKELY EFFECT CAUSED BY DIFFERENT TRAVELLING ARRANGEMENTS

As Bothkennar Primary School is a rural school, special regard is paid to the rural school factors. These were considered throughout the assessment of the options in section 6.

The travel distance from Bothkennar Primary School to Beancross Primary Schools is 2.7 miles with an approximate travel time of 9 minutes by car (Google maps). There are suitable walking routes for pupils from the village

to Bothkennar Primary School, but pupils living in farms and isolated dwellings beyond the village would be offered to school transport due to the lack of safe and available walking routes in the country lanes around the Bothkennar catchment area.

Pupils in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area attending Beancross Primary School receive free school transport to and from school and will continue to do so should the proposal be accepted. If Bothkennar Primary School was permanently closed, all children living in the Bothkennar catchment area will be transported by the Council to Beancross Primary School. This would take 10 minutes by taxi/school bus each way. This duration of journey is not uncommon for pupils travelling on school transport and taking this proposal forward would not adversely affect the current pupils concerned or future pupils. This arrangement has been in place since August 2019 when the mothballing took effect.

Travelling for primary school education is not uncommon in Falkirk because of the geography of the area.

There are currently 8 primary pupils attending Beancross Primary School from the Bothkennar Primary School catchment and they are provided with school bus transport also serving the nearby Old Town (Glensburgh) area of Grangemouth. This currently adds approximately £5,200/year to the overall cost of providing this school bus due to the additional mileage incurred.

Staff working in Falkirk schools regularly travel throughout the area to and from work. The distance of 2.7 miles is a relatively short distance to travel between schools. It is therefore considered that there is very limited impact on staff travelling arrangements whether the school were to re-open or be permanently closed. There is unlikely to be any environmental impact arising from the arrangements staff make to get to school.

There are no other users of the school premises or facilities that would be affected in relation to transport arrangements.

The community already requires travelling to access other services such as a GP and Dental Surgeries, shops and Post Offices in Grangemouth, Falkirk or other areas.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Falkirk Council does not consider that there will be any significant adverse environmental effects because of this proposal. There will be a small environmental impact of continuing to transport the Bothkennar catchment pupils to Beancross Primary School and extending their daily travel to school by about 2.5 miles each way.

If the proposal is approved, and the building became surplus to requirements, it will have a positive impact on the Council's energy and climate change ambitions, as less energy will be required across the learning estate, than if the school were to re-open.

11. EFFECTS ON STAFF AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Where necessary, any aspect of the implementation of this proposal that impacts on staff will result in consultation with the relevant trade unions and the individuals concerned. Given the school has been mothballed since 2019, any initial overstaffing transferring to Beancross Primary School will have been resolved by realigning our staffing resource across the service through our annual staffing exercise.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The full financial considerations are detailed in Appendix 1.

This information gives details on the estimated cost if Bothkennar Primary School were still an occupied and operational establishment, the figures are based on financial year 2018/19 as this was the last full year the school was fully occupied.

As Bothkennar Primary School is currently mothballed, the cost for the mothballing is £40,580 per year. Should the school be reopened, occupied and operational, the running costs per year are estimated at £229,299 (based on 2018/19 costs inflated to 2025/26 equivalent).

The cost per pupil of operating Bothkennar Primary School should it reopen is £57,325 based on the school roll of 4 (census roll academic year 2018/19).

This is high compared with £7,447 (source Local Government benchmarking Framework (LGBF) 2024-25) for Falkirk Primary Schools due to the low number of pupils attending. The national comparator from the LGBF is £7,615.

Column 2 of Table 1 shows the projected annual running costs of Bothkennar Primary School whilst Column 3 shows the additional impact on Beancross Primary School as the receiving school. The annual recurring savings (or costs) are shown in Column 4.

Beancross Primary School is detailed as the receiving school, due to the current temporary catchment arrangements. Additional transport costs to Beancross Primary School are £5,200 per annum based on the current pupils in attendance, assuming the proposal was implemented.

Table 1, School Costs. There are no figures included for column 3 as the receiving school did not require additional staffing to accommodate the additional pupils from Bothkennar Primary School. During the initial temporary arrangements all staff transferred to Beancross Primary School and any over staffing has been modelled out with staff redeployed as part of the subsequent annual staffing exercises.

Table 1, Building Costs. There are no figures included for column 3 as the receiving school did not require additional resource to accommodate the additional pupils from Bothkennar Primary School.

Table 1, School Operational Costs. The cost of learning materials and catering followed the pupils to the receiving school.

Table 1, Transport Costs. Depending on the outcome and implementation of the proposal there are additional transport costs to Beancross Primary School, these currently total £5,200 per annum based on the current pupils attending Beancross Primary School from the Bothkennar Primary School catchment.

Table 3 details the annual running costs during mothballing of Bothkennar Primary School and these are £40,580 per year. Since mothballing in 2019/20, the school building has remained operational as an office base for the Learning Resource Service and Outdoor Education Service. If the school were to be formally closed, this would allow the Council to also consider selling the school to a third party or transferring ownership to the local community.

Any savings remaining from the proposed option to permanently close Bothkennar Primary School will be allocated towards bridging the Council's budget gap as set out in the Revenue Budget 2025/26 and Financial Strategy. Further information is available on the Council website: [Falkirk Council Budget and Finances for 2025-2026](#) Falkirk Council Budget and Finances for 2025-2026

The annual revenue budget is built reflecting cost drivers such as the number of schools, buildings, staff and pupils. Therefore, if Bothkennar Primary School did not re-open and were to be permanently closed then future years' budgets would not require any allowance for staffing Bothkennar Primary School and there would be reduced property costs (and possibly no costs should the building be declared surplus to the Council's requirements). Any per capita budgets relating to individual pupils would continue to be budgeted against the school that these pupils would attend following the permanent closure of Bothkennar Primary School.

Subject to ongoing operational use and community asset transfer considerations, the existing Bothkennar Primary School building/site could be declared surplus to the requirements of Falkirk Council. This would minimise the financial risks associated with vacant buildings.

A capital receipt would be forthcoming if the building was sold, or income could be generated through a lease.

Combining pupils from both catchment areas in one school maximises use of the learning estate and represents good asset management.

13. CONCLUSION

It is proposed that a statutory consultation exercise takes place on a proposal to permanently close Bothkennar Primary School. As a result, pupils would be permanently zoned to Beancross Primary School with the catchment area of Bothkennar Primary School rezoned to Beancross Primary School.

The number of pupils living in the catchment area of Bothkennar Primary School has remained fairly constant since 2019 from 21 to 20 and is not expected to increase significantly in the near future. When there were 20 primary aged pupils living in the catchment area, only 4 were attending the school.

Beancross Primary School can accommodate all current and projected pupils from the combined catchment areas. A higher occupancy level maximises the use of the learning estate and represents good asset management.

Travel distance from Skinflats to Beancross Primary School is comparable with the distance pupils travel when they transitioned from Bothkennar Primary School to Grangemouth High School.

Members of the Skinflats community are already travelling to access other services such as GP and Dental Surgeries, shops and Post Offices and so it appears to be an accepted part of life within the village community.

The only option which is considered to be a reasonable response to address the issue of unsustainable school roll is to consider permanently closing Bothkennar Primary School. Special regard has been given to the rural school factors and the assessment of these are considered in section 6 and throughout this proposal paper.

It is therefore recommended that the most appropriate response to the issues identified is that a statutory consultation exercise takes place on the proposal to close the school. If the proposal is agreed, pupils from Bothkennar remain at Beancross Primary School. The delineated catchment area of Beancross Primary School would be permanently extended to include the Bothkennar Primary School catchment.

14. RESPONDING TO THE PROPOSAL

This Proposal Paper has been issued as a result of a decision on 19 February 2026 of the Executive (including Education) of Falkirk Council. This is to seek views on the proposals and alternatives set out in this paper. This report is available here:

- www.participateplus.falkirk.gov.uk/

A formal consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 is required for any proposal to permanently close a school. This consultation is fully in accordance with the requirements of this legislation.

A copy of this Proposal Paper is available on the Falkirk Council website:

- www.falkirk.gov.uk/bothkennar-primary-consultation

A link to the electronic version of this document will be provided by letter to:

- Parents and carers of all primary and nursery age pupils living in the catchment area of each affected school (Bothkennar and Beancross Primary Schools)
- Beancross Primary School Parent Council
- School staff and trade unions at Beancross Primary School
- Grangemouth (including Skinflats) Community Council
- All other households in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area (so that the views of the overall community can also be considered during the consultation because this is a proposal to close a rural school)

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Education Services, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE
- Beancross Primary School, Kenilworth Street, Grangemouth FK3 8QS

This document is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply to Education Services, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE by telephone on 01324 506600 or by email educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk

LENGTH OF CONSULTATION PERIOD

The consultation will take place between Monday 23 February and Friday 24 April 2026.

PUBLIC MEETING

There will be 1 public meeting held at Bothkennar Primary School on 17 March 2026 at 6.30pm. This meeting will be an opportunity for interested parties to:

- Hear about the proposal.
- Ask question about the proposal.
- Have their views recorded so that they can be taken into account as part of the consultation process.

A note will be taken at the meeting of questions and views. This note will be published in the consultation report which will be available on the Council website.

HOW TO RESPOND TO THE PROPOSAL

Interested parties are invited to respond on the proposals or any alternative proposals:

- Online: <https://participateplus.falkirk.gov.uk> Participate Plus
- By email: educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk
- In writing: Bothkennar Primary School Closure Consultation
Education Services, Suite 1A,
Falkirk Community Stadium
4 Stadium Way
Falkirk, FK2 9EE

All responses should be provided by Friday 24 April 2026.

CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Pupils will be consulted about the proposal in school and further information about this will be provided to parent/carers.

FOLLOWING THE CONSULTATION

HMIE – When the proposal document is published, a copy will also be sent to HMIE by the education authority. HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations received by the authority from any person during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them.

HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representations made to the Local Authority at the public meeting which will be held and, as available (and so far, as otherwise practicable), a copy of any other relevant documentation.

HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 3 weeks after the authority has sent them all representations and documents mentioned above. For the avoidance of doubt, the 3-week period will not start until after the consultation period has ended. In preparing their report, HMIE may enter the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries of such people they consider appropriate and may make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.

Falkirk Council – the education authority will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE report, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a consultation report. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats. It will be available from the Council website and from Education Services, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE free of charge. Anyone who made written representations to the Authority during the consultation period will also be informed about the report.

The report will include:

- A record of the total number of written representations made to the authority during the consultation period.
- A summary of the written representations.
- A summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting.
- The Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including detail of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled; and
- A statement explaining how the Authority complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received.

The consultation report will be published and available for further consideration for a period of at least 3 weeks.

This report together with any other relevant documentation, will be considered by the Executive (including Education) of Falkirk Council, who will come to a decision about whether to implement the proposal.

NOTE ON CORRECTIONS

If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this proposal document, either by the Council or any person, the Council must investigate and decide what, if any, action is required.

If relevant information has been omitted or there has been an inaccuracy, the Council will then take appropriate action, which may include the issue of a correction notice, the publishing of a corrected Proposal Paper or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period, if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and HMIE will be advised. The Authority must inform the person who made the allegation and what action it has taken.

SCOTTISH MINISTERS CALL IN

If the education authority makes a final decision to implement the closure proposal, it will require to notify the Scottish Ministers of that decision and provide them with a copy of the proposal document and the consultation report. This must be done within 6 working days of that decision.

The education authority must also publish on its website the fact that it has notified Scottish Ministers of its decision and of the period during which consultees can make representation to Ministers. For rural schools, the education authority must also give notice of the reasons why the Council is satisfied that the closure is the most appropriate response to the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. The Scottish Ministers have an 8-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Within the first 3 weeks of that 8-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until

the outcome of the 8-week call-in process is known, the authority cannot proceed to implement the proposal.

If Scottish Ministers decide to call in a closure proposal, they must refer it to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels for determination by a School Closure Review Panel. The authority may not implement the proposal (wholly or partly) unless the Panel has granted consent to it (with or without conditions) and either the period for making an appeal to the Sheriff has expired or, if an appeal has been made, it has either been abandoned or the Sheriff has confirmed the Panel's decision.

The School Closure Review Panel may refuse to consent to the proposal, refuse consent and remit the proposal back to the authority or grant their consent to the proposal subject to conditions or unconditionally.

- Ministers have a power to call in a closure decision, but only where it appears to Ministers that the Council has failed in a significant regard to comply with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act's requirements or, in coming to its decision, has failed to take proper account of a material consideration relevant to the proposal. Ministers have up to 8 weeks from the date of the Council's decision to decide whether or not to issue a callin notice.
- During the first 3 weeks of this period, anyone is able to make representations to Ministers on whether the decision should be called in.
- During the call-in period, the Council may not proceed further, in whole or part, with the proposed closure. Ministers may come to a decision sooner than 8 weeks (but not before the 3 weeks for representations to be made to them has elapsed).
- The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act, as amended, gives Ministers and School Closure Review Panels the right to call on advice from HMIE in relation to a proposal at the call-in or determination stage.

This consultation is being conducted having regard to the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

APPENDIX 1 - FINANCIAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED CLOSURE

TABLE 1 Current Revenue Costs

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Expenditure Category	Costs for full financial year (projected annual based on financial year (2018/19))	Additional financial impact on receiving school [Beancross PS]	Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)
COSTS			
<i>Employee Costs:</i>			
Teaching staff	£136,347	£0	£136,347
Support staff	£28,973	£0	£28,973
Teaching staff training	£0	£0	£0
Support staff training	£0	£0	£0
Supply costs	£0	£0	£0
<i>Building Costs:</i>			
Property insurance	£2,000	£0	£2,000
Non-domestic rates	£11,700	£0	£11,700
Water & sewerage	£1,644	£0	£1,644
Energy costs	£18,675	£0	£18,675
Cleaning	£10,705	£0	£10,705
Repairs & maintenance	£848	£0	£848
Grounds maintenance	£324	£0	£324
Facilities management	£1,800	£0	£1,800
Other	£1,690	£0	£1,690
<i>Operational costs:</i>			
Learning materials	£2,643	£2,643	£0
Catering	£9,841	£9,841	£0
Other (inc. licences)	£1,813	£0	£1,813
<i>Transport costs:</i>			
Home to school	£0	£5,200	-£5,200
Staff travel	£296	£0	£296
COSTS SUB-TOTAL	£229,299	£17,684	£211,615
INCOME			
Sale of meals	£0	£0	£0
Lets	£0	£0	£0
Other	£0	£0	£0
INCOME SUB-TOTAL	£0	£0	£0
TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL	£229,299	£17,684	£211,615

UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR	£57,324.75		
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(4 pupils in 2018/19)

All Costs shown in Tables 1 are based on Financial Year 2018/19 when the school was last open, apart from Home to School transport costs in Column 3 which are based on current costs (2025/26). Inflation has been applied to 2018/19 costs to provide a best estimate of the current costs if the school were not mothballed.

Table 2 represents the capital costs associated with bringing the school back into operational use.

TABLE 2 Capital Costs

	School proposed for closure	Receiving school
Capital Life Cycle cost (3 years from 2026/27 to 2028/29)		
Third party contributions to capital costs		

The costs in Table 3 are based on Financial Year 2025/26. This is the current cost for keeping the school mothballed. It shows the annual running cost that can be expected prior to disposal.

TABLE 3: Annual Property costs incurred until disposal.

Property insurance	£2,000
Non-domestic rates	£11,700
Water & sewerage charges	£1,600
Energy costs	£11,000
Cleaning	£10,510
Security costs	£0
Repairs & maintenance	£1,150
Grounds maintenance	£200
Facilities management	£730
Other	£1,690
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL	£40,580

TABLE 4 Non-recurring Revenue costs

TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	£211,615
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See Table 1 for how this is calculated

TABLE 5 Impact on GAE

GAE IMPACT	£12,000
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GAE is the Grant Aided Expenditure for small schools covered by Scottish Government funding that would be lost if the school is closed. This figure is based on the 2018/19 school roll of 5 pupils.

TABLE 6 Non-recurring Revenue costs minus the impact of GAE

NET REVENUE COSTS (INC. IMPACT ON GAE)	£199,615
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Appendix 2: Consultation Notice (Copy)

Enquiries to: **Forward Planning Team**
Email: **educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk**

Date: 20th February 2026

For the attention of:

- Parents and carers of all primary and nursery age pupils living in the catchment areas of Bothkennar and Beancross Primary Schools
- Beancross Primary School Parent Council
- Grangemouth High School Parent Council
- Staff at Beancross Primary School
- Recognised trade unions (UNISON, GMB, UNITE, EIS, SSTA, AHDS, SLS)
- All other households in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area
- Community Planning Partnership Members/Organisations
- Grangemouth (Including Skinflats) Community Council
- Local Elected Members of Falkirk Council
- MSPs for the area
- The constituency MP

Dear Sir/Madam

Statutory Consultation Notice – Proposal to permanently close Bothkennar Primary School and permanently rezone the catchment area to Beancross Primary School

Further to the preliminary engagement carried out with the local community, Falkirk Council Education Services is now commencing a formal statutory consultation on a proposal to permanently close Bothkennar Primary School.

This notice provides a summary of the proposal: it is a requirement for you to be notified of the consultation as a consultee, in accordance with Schedule 2 Section 1 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. A full copy of the Proposal Document is available at: www.falkirk.gov.uk/bothkennar-primary-consultation

Falkirk Council is conducting a public consultation from **Monday 23rd February to Friday 24th April 2026**. During this period, you will be able to make representation to Falkirk Council in respect of the proposal.

It is important that everyone we are consulting tells us what they think about the proposal. Please read this notice and summary and then consider the contents of the proposal document. You can then tell us what you think of the proposal by making written representation and/or by attending the public meeting. This notice and summary tell you how to do that.

We will consult by:

- Providing a Notice of the consultation and a summary of the proposal to the relevant consultees (this is that Notice and summary).
- Publication of the Proposal document
- Placing an advert in the local press advertising the consultation
- Placing information on our website – <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/consultations-and-surveys>
- Putting information on our consultation hub <https://participateplus.falkirk.gov.uk>
- Holding a public meeting to explain the proposal
- Asking all consultees to tell us what they think of the proposal and its impact on them.

A full copy of the proposal document is available:

- On our website at www.falkirk.gov.uk/bothkennar-primary-consultation
- By written request to educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk or Falkirk Council, Education Service, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Grangemouth, FK2 9EE
- In printed form free of charge at Beancross Primary School, Falkirk Council Hubs and Libraries.

The Proposal

Falkirk Council is proposing that:

- That provision of a school at Bothkennar Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from August 2026 or as soon as possible thereafter;
- That primary age pupils in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Beancross Primary School from August 2026 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- That the delineated catchment area of Beancross Primary School be permanently extended to include the whole delineated catchment area of Bothkennar Primary School from August 2026 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Reasons for this Proposal

This is being proposed for the following reasons:

- i. Bothkennar Primary School has been formally mothballed for approaching 7 years with no pupils in attendance since August 2019.
- ii. The catchment demand for places in Bothkennar Primary School continues to be assessed to be low and is not predicted to rise.
- iii. The Council is experiencing declining pupil numbers, making re-opening impractical.

- iv. Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment. The current annual cost of mothballing Bothkennar Primary School is £40,580.
- v. The Local Development Plan does not identify any relevant sites within the catchment area for housing development that would impact on catchment demand for places.

Falkirk Council, as an Education Authority is required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (Section 1 of the Education Act 1980); and to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education in schools that are managed by them (Section 3 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000). This is reflected in the Falkirk Council Plan 2022-2027 priority: "Promoting opportunities and educational attainment and reducing inequalities"

Alternatives to the Proposal

A range of possible alternative options to permanent closure are set out in the proposal paper. These are:

- Re-open Bothkennar Primary School.
- Re-open Bothkennar Primary School with increased occupancy through rezoning and extending the catchment area.
- Re-open Bothkennar Primary School with available capacity used for early years provision or for other purposes.
- Continue with the mothballing of Bothkennar Primary School.

After assessment of these options, the Council does not consider that those alternatives included in the proposal document are reasonable alternatives to the closure of Bothkennar Primary School. You can make written representations on the proposal and on the alternatives that are included within the proposal paper. If you consider there are other alternatives to the proposal you can include those in your representations on the proposal.

A **public meeting** has been arranged:

Bothkennar Primary School, Main Street, Skinflats, Falkirk, FK2 8NU on Tuesday 17th March 2026 at 18:30

This meeting is open to all interested parties. At the meeting, council officers will give a presentation of the proposal, answer questions on it and record the oral representations of anyone who attends.

Representations to the Proposal

This consultation notice and the Proposal Document advise how you can make representation to this consultation process. You are invited to have your say on this proposal. The Council is seeking your views on:

- The likely effect on the local community if the school were to be closed permanently;

- The likely effect of different travelling arrangements for children and families in the Bothkennar catchment;
- The likely effect on children's education if the school were to be closed permanently
- The alternatives to the proposal considered; and
- Suggestions of other alternatives.

You can attend the public meeting and/or you can make written representations.

- On-line: <https://participateplus.falkirk.gov.uk>
- By email to: educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk.
- By Letter to: Bothkennar Primary School Consultation, Falkirk Council Education Services, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE

Respondents should state the capacity in which they are expressing their views and agree to their statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report (all other personal information will be redacted).

Falkirk Council is seeking your views on the proposal during the consultation period, it does not assume that the proposal will go ahead. All points raised during the consultation period will be included in the final Consultation Report before being presented to Elected Members where a decision will be taken as to the outcome of this process.

What to do now

- Please read the full proposal document
- You are invited to attend the public meeting which will be held at Bothkennar Primary School, Main Street, Skinflats, Falkirk, FK2 8NU on Tuesday 17th March 2026 at 18:30
- All responses must be made online, or in writing by Friday 24th April 2026

After the consultation period

When the proposal document is published, a copy will also be sent to HMIE by the Education Authority. HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations received by the Authority from any person during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representations made to the Local Authority at the public meeting which will be held and, as available (and so far, as otherwise practicable), a copy of any other relevant documentation.

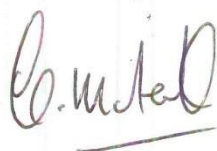
HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 3 weeks after the Authority has sent them all representations and documents mentioned above. For the avoidance of doubt, the 3-week period will not start until after the consultation period has ended. In preparing their report, HMIE may enter the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries of such people they

consider appropriate and may make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.

Falkirk Council – the Education Authority will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a Consultation Report. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats. It will be available from the Council website and from Education Services, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE free of charge. Anyone who made written representations to the Authority during the consultation period will also be informed about the report.

The consultation report will be published and available for further consideration for a period of at least 3 weeks. This report together with any other relevant documentation, will be considered by the Executive (Education) of Falkirk Council in September 2026, who will come to a decision about whether to implement the proposal.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. McNeill', with a horizontal line underneath.

Kenny McNeill
Strategic Service Manager (Education)

Appendix 3 Responses from Pupils

Question: What do you like about Beancross Primary School?

1. "The playground ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
2. "I like p.e.", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
3. "The teacher are very very nice and Teacher A ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
4. "I like doing art on Tuesday with my friends ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
5. "The playground and Teachers", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
6. "Golden Tlme and school trips", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
7. "Home time golden time ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
8. "Golden time.", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
9. "P.E", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
10. "I like school trips .", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
11. "The after school clubs", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
12. "P.E And school trips.", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
13. "PE,playground and golden time, school trips", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
14. "I like music and the clubs that we have.", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
15. "I like seeing all my friends and art", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
16. "The PE", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
17. "The food and the trips.", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
18. "Playground ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
19. "I like the playground", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
20. "Playground ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
21. "PE And Trips And Golden Time", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
22. "I like art", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
23. "Art and teacher's and golden time ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
24. "Playground ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
25. "Out side and my friends", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
26. "PE the food and golden time", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)

27. "the trimtrail", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
28. "Football", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
29. "Lunch", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
30. "Chilling with my friends", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
31. "Football", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
32. "My teacher ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
33. "Play structure", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
34. "I like that there is a football pitch.", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
35. "it great I meet my best friends and it really helps me learn: i like school
", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
36. "The teachers.", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
37. "Play structures", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
38. "Art class", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
39. "I like that my friends are always so helpful to me ,always making me
positive and the teachers are so nice.", (*Beancross Primary School
Pupil*)
40. "PE, Science and eating ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
41. "Friends...And learning", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
42. "Being able to make friends ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
43. "I don't know ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
44. "I get to see my friends and learn", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
45. "Friends people", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
46. "To be here with my friends ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
47. "Seeing my bros", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
48. "Coming to see my friends ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
49. "Coming to see my friends and iPads and art", (*Beancross Primary
School Pupil*)
50. "Play with friends ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
51. "I like seeing my friends", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
52. "My friends ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
53. "Some of the people there ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
54. "Nothing ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
55. "I like that the teachers are nice and your able to see your friends ",
(*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)

56. "Friends, play football, PE,after school clubs", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
57. " My friend our schools trips", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
58. "Football with friends ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
59. "Coming to see my friends and also to do art and pe twice a week (art once)", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
60. "Math my friends and learning fun new topics ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
61. "I like how most of the teachers are very kind and considerate along with the school pupils they are treated nicely", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
62. "My friend the teachers ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
63. "The play structure & the classrooms ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
64. "The services and the amount of play that you get", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
65. "Friends ,playing ,my teacher", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
66. "My teachers my friends how some people like me", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
67. "The clubs the teachers other pupils ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
68. "We get choices, learning is actually fun, we get school trips, Teachers make us feel comfortable ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
69. "some teachers and Pe ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
70. "There are nice ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
71. "I like how everyone has the ability (and is encouraged) to express themselves and Pursue their passions ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
72. "Art P.E", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
73. "I like maths", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
74. "My teacher, some of the lunches and the grass", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
75. "I like the diversity of the school, i also like the club ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
76. "Everything ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)

77. "Teachers, the trim trails, friends", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
78. "The opportunity to go to different school trips", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
79. "I get to play football with my friends", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
80. "I like to play in the playground because it is safe", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
81. "Football ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
82. "I like how people are friendly.", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
83. "I enjoy my friends, my teacher and the education I get.", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
84. "YES!!!", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
85. "I like big playground ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
86. "Football ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
87. "My friends ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
88. "Seeing my Friends and playing football with them. ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
89. "Football ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
90. "The teachers and the students ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
91. "The teachers ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
92. "The teachers ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
93. "The play structures", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
94. "The school offers many different roles as you get older there some off the different roles are being a play ground friend pupil leadership team and many more", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
95. "I like Art and pe", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
96. "How big the school is ", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
97. "Football maths literacy", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
98. "I like how there's multiple different things you can do in the playground and they also like to hear our opinions.", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)

What would be a good use for the Bothkennar school building?

99. "Shop", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)
100. "Shop", (*Beancross Primary School Pupil*)

101. "Sport centre ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
102. "Food bank ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
103. "A Playgroup", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
104. "community sports centre", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
105. "Police station ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
106. "Charity", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
107. "Play area for kids", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
108. "A play group. ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
109. "Play area", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
110. "Sports chenter", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
111. "Sports place", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
112. "Charity.", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
113. "Library, food bank or cafe ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
114. "restaurant", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
115. "Sports ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
116. "Swimming centre ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
117. "Play area for kids", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
118. "Sport Center", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
119. "Sports", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
120. "Sport center", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
121. "Play area for kids", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
122. "Sport center ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
123. "Cafe or gymnastics ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
124. "Sports place", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
125. "A gaming room for free or a swimming pool for free pls", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
126. "Clubs", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
127. "Soft play", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
128. "Place for young people to hang out", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
129. "Football pitch", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
130. "Clubs", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
131. "Indoor Skatepark", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
132. "Clubs", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
133. "Soft play ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)

134. "Day care ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
135. "Day care", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
136. "Art club Library", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
137. "A club for children to have fun and learn.", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
138. "PE hall football basketball and other games", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
139. "Club's example: dancing club or football club or a art club!", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
140. "Sports hall eg basketball court.", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
141. "Cool club 😊😊", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
142. "Football pitch on the grass and on concrete the hall for multiple sports and basketball hopes ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
143. "The hul could be useful club lunchtime", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
144. "The whole could be something for multiple sports cheer or any other sports indoor", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
145. "A diner in the massive hall", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
146. "Make hall for club", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
147. "A park,youth club or a community centre ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
148. "Use the hall for after school clubs", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
149. ".I think it should turn into a playpark for children to play at ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
150. "Clubs", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
151. "Art club and football cult and cheerleading club ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
152. "Put a a club on in the top hole motorsports out say to be basketball and football", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
153. "They have quite a big hall so that would be good for sports", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
154. "They could use the hall for multi sport football diner ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)

155. "Art room And multi sports cheer classes and football ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
156. "The hall could be use multi sports ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
157. "You could probably try and use like if the people from Beancross is they moved here then they could make that into after school clubs that you can go to", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
158. "We could use it for old town academy or maybe a restaurant ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
159. "The hall could be a place where we make dinners like pasta and desserts and fun games for all ages and then we could raise money for us and a charity along with the children cooking the food and setting up", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
160. "A nursery for the small kids", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
161. "You could do a club / you could do a library / a nursery ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
162. "Make it into like a library or a museum ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
163. "A nursery", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
164. "Library ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
165. "Make a library or a nursery to help little children ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
166. "A community Hall", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
167. "A community haul ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
168. "Park and maybe a swimming pool or a gym ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
169. "Yes please ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
170. "I think they should make the school into a school to help kids with special needs.", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
171. "Arcade ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
172. "I think they should turn the property in to a field ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
173. "A nursery", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
174. "A library or a shop.", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
175. "Turn into a rage room ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)

176. "I think that this primary school should be turned into a restaurant ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
177. "I think they should turn it into a club where people can draw play music instruments and ect.", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
178. "A nice cafe", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
179. "To have a good playground", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
180. "Money ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
181. "Health Centre", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
182. "An after school hub.", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
183. "Cafe", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
184. "Maybe a place for clubs", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
185. "Cafe", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
186. "Hospital", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
187. "Sports centre ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
188. "Money ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
189. "Bakery/cafe", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
190. "School reasorce centre ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
191. "Library ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
192. "A charity or a place for foster kids to go, ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
193. "I think this building would be a great building for a cafe or a community centre", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
194. "I would be good to use stone and bricks", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
195. "A care home ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
196. "Pharmacy ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)
197. "I think this school would a good area as a health care centre or a children's mental health unit. ", (Beancross Primary School Pupil)

Appendix 4: Public Meeting Minutes

Bothkennar Primary School

17/03/2026 18:30-19:30

Attendance: 3 consultees (+4 officers, +1 HMIE)

Officers:

Deborah Davidson (Head of Education)

Kenny McNeill (Strategic Service Manager)

Richard Teed (Senior Forward Planning Officer)

Groups Represented at Public Meeting

Groups Represented	Number
Resident within the Bothkennar Primary School area (who was a former teacher at Bothkennar Primary School and former Head Teacher at Blackness Primary School)	1
Beancross PS Staff (Head Teacher & Principal Teacher	2
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (Scotland)	1

Due to the low attendance, the meeting took the form of a conversation between officers and those attending.

Deborah Davidson opened the meeting and then Richard Teed provided some background on the proposal, the steps taken to mothball the school, previous consultations and the alternatives to closure that were considered.

Deborah Davidson then outlined the educational reasons and benefits of the proposal. Most of the discussion was undertaken with regard to this subject. The local resident, who was a former teacher at the school, and small school headteacher at Blackness Primary School before retiring, had expressed concerns in writing and at the meeting that the proposal document gave the impression that the education that had been on offer at Bothkennar Primary School was inferior in comparison to Beancross.

Deborah outlined the educational benefits that had arisen since mothballing and would be cemented through closure, and how it had been the small numbers attending Bothkennar that had reduced what could be offered, not in any way a reflection on the quality of the school and what it had offered to pupils over the years. She also provided context for the Educational Benefits Statement with regard to the proposal for permanent closure, in that the Authority are obliged to state the benefits of closure and, hence, amalgamation of pupils into the larger school.

Andrew Watson, the Headteacher at Beancross, who had also led Bothkennar under a joint headship for a number of years up to when the school was mothballed, expanded on this. He explained that, once the numbers at Bothkennar dropped to such low levels, there was no opportunity for siblings to play and learn in different

groups. Increasingly parents of older pupils in P6 and P7 would request for their children to attend Beancross to increase their peer groups and help with transition towards secondary. Such low pupil numbers also reduced the number of teaching staff to 1 and it had become increasingly difficult to offer the range of education support and extra-curricular activity it was possible to offer at Beancross. Increasingly Bothkennar pupils were attending clubs at Beancross and school assemblies as well.

The local resident acknowledged this and accepted that the falling numbers had made the school not viable but did re-iterate that the proposal document was overly long and complex and off-putting document for parents to read, and gave the impression Bothkennar Primary School had failed, and that this was not the case. In her experience, small schools were happy places to learn and had an important place in education.

Deborah responded that these views would be reflected in the Consultation Report, but also that the Education Authority would ensure that the report would emphasise that the proposal stemmed from the falling numbers at the school, and not in any way from the educational failure of a small school.

Kenny re-iterated what Deborah had said and explained that a rural school closure proposal such as this was complex and lengthy and the proposal document reflected this in order to comply with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act.

The local resident also pointed out an error in the Proposal Document where it had referred to Slamannan Primary School in one sentence. Officers apologised, stating that this had been a proofing error due to the Limerigg Proposal Document being written first, and that this had been corrected on the website, and a note of correction issued to consultees.

Andrew Watson then took the opportunity to report on the benefits that had followed the inclusion of Skinflats (Bothkennar PS catchment) in the Grangemouth Community Council area. This had led to the inclusion of the community in wider Grangemouth events, such as the Grangemouth Children's Day and the Gala Day. This has helped with the integration of pupils into Beancross Primary School and those benefits would continue.

Richard continued the presentation to cover the financial aspects surrounding the proposal and the next stages in the consultation process.

Some discussion followed on how increased engagement in the consultation could be encouraged, including posters in the village.

In further discussion, the local resident pointed out that the local population was getting older and that this may have contributed to the low response rate to the consultation.

Deborah closed the meeting at 7:30pm

Consultation on the Permanent Closure of Bothkennar Primary School

6.30 pm	Welcome and Introduction <i>Deborah Davidson (Head of Education)</i>
6.35 pm	Background to the Proposal <i>Richard Teed (Senior Forward Planning Officer)</i>
6.40 pm	Educational Benefits Arising from the Proposed Closure <i>Deborah Davidson (Head of Education)</i>
6.45 pm	Financial & Property Considerations <i>Richard Teed (Senior Forward Planning Officer)</i>
6.50 pm	Next Steps in the Consultation Process <i>Richard Teed (Senior Forward Planning Officer)</i>
6.55 pm	Questions & Answers
7:30 pm	Closing Remarks <i>Deborah Davidson (Head of Education)</i>

Background to the proposal

- **School Session 2018/19** – Following a steady decline in previous years, the school roll dropped to 4 pupils with no indications that demand would increase to previous levels in the foreseeable future.
- **June 2019** – Bothkennar Primary School was mothballed with a temporary rezoning of the catchment area to Beancross Primary School. This decision was taken following consultation with the parents and staff at the affected schools
- **2021** – Following a statutory consultation, the Education Executive Committee agreed to permanently close Bothkennar Primary School. This decision was referred back to the Council by the Scottish Government's School Closure Review Panel for the Authority to more fully consider the alternatives to closure before a closure decision could be taken.
- **Autumn 2025** – Following another 4 years, during which pupil numbers did not recover, the alternatives to closure were fully explored during a preliminary engagement with the local community and school staff.
- **February 2026** – Executive Committee agreed to undertake a statutory consultation on the proposal to permanently close Bothkennar Primary School



Background to the proposal

- **Catchment Pupils:** There are currently 21 primary-age pupils living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area (compared with 20 primary-age pupils in 2018/19 when the school was last open). 8 of these 21 pupils currently attend Beancross Primary School.
- **Pupil Demand** – Only 4 pupils were attending Bothkennar Primary School in 2018/19. We would expect a similar number to attend from the current primary cohort if the school re-opens.
- **Roll Projections** – No significant change in pupil numbers is projected going forward. A maximum of 5 new primary 1 enrolments can be expected in the next 4 years based on Health Board data
- **Beancross Primary School** – Current Roll of 362 pupils with an operational capacity for 434. There is plenty of capacity going forward to accommodate Bothkennar catchment pupils



Alternatives to Closure

- **Keep the school open**

Not considered a viable option due to low projected uptake, cost of returning the school to operational use and availability of nearby alternative provision at Beancross Primary School.

- **Catchment rezoning**

There is a safe walking route from the Glensburgh/Old Town locality to Skinflats, but a preliminary engagement with residents did not identify any support for rezoning this area from Beancross PS.

- **Open Nursery provision**

Not considered a reasonable option due to the location of Bothkennar Primary School, the space availability within the school, the nearby early years provision in Grangemouth and the very low pre-school numbers living locally.

- **Continue with the mothballing of the school**

Not considered viable. The school has been mothballed for over 6 years with no indication that pupil numbers will recover. Mothballing should only be considered as a temporary measure.



Educational Benefits

More diverse learning experience	Wider range of skillsets & experience amongst staff	Collaborative & cooperative learning with peers	Enhanced Learning Support
On-site nursery	Learning & Teaching	Broadening Range of Opportunities	Outdoor areas with play and sport facilities
Same “age and stage” cohorts	Meeting Learners Needs	Environment for Learning	Team activities
Larger peer groups	Building relationships for transition to secondary	Wider social group and opportunities	Wide range of family & community events



Financial & Property Considerations

- **Costs of Mothballing:**

The building currently costs **£40,580** per year to maintain, although has remained operational as a base for Education Services

- **Estimated Running Costs:**

If the school were to re-open with 4 pupils, it is estimated that the current annual operating costs would be **£229,299** or **£40,580 per pupil**, compared with the Falkirk average cost per pupil of **£7,447** (2024/25)

- **Future Use:**

If the proposed closure goes ahead then the school could become an asset surplus to requirements and the Council will consider and consult with the Community on future use.



Next Steps in Consultation Process

- Consultation Closes on 24th April
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIE) report back to Council on 18th May
- Consultation Report Published on website by end of May (all respondents notified)
- Council Decision on Proposal on September 17th
- If proposed closure is agreed, then this will be notified to Scottish Ministers and publicised on website
- 8-week period during which decision can be "called-in" by Ministers and potentially referred to School Closure Review Panel for further consideration



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Appendix 6: Online Survey Responses

If you support the proposal, what are your reasons:

1. "There is not many children living in the area", *(A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)*
2. "Carron shore primary school is closer. Why would this not be the catchment area?", *(Parent/Carer of pupils living in the catchment of Bothkennar Primary School)*
3. "Council assets not being used should be closed to save money." *(A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)*

If you do not support the proposal, what are your reasons:

4. "Carron shore primary school is closer. Why would this not be the catchment area?", *(Parent/Carer of pupils living in the catchment of Bothkennar Primary School)*

How will the proposal affect you?

5. "It won't affect me as my child no longer goes to school," *(A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)*
6. "Our child goes to Carronshore primary school. We have to make personal travel arrangements for him." *(Parent/Carer of pupils living in the catchment of Bothkennar Primary School)*

Do you have any comments on these or any suggestions for other alternatives to closure that should be considered?

7. "Option 1 and 3 are good, There is not many children living in the area.", *(A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)*
8. "Housing., Carron shore primary school is closer. Why would this not be the catchment area?," *(Parent/Carer of pupils living in the catchment of Bothkennar Primary School)*

9. "The large school site could be used for housing if the building is no longer being used or fit for purpose. If the building still have remaining years in its operation lifespan these should be utilised in whatever way possible. The nursery option would be a good idea as nursery waiting lists are very long at the moment., Council assets not being used should be closed to save money.", *(A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)*

If the proposal was to go ahead, what are your thoughts about:

10. "It would make no difference to the community as we have got used to the school being closed. It is a shame kids from the area can't walk to school and are bussed out of the area.", *(A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)*
11. "Travel to other schools will negatively affect children and parents given Carronshore is the closest primary and most children from Skinflats also attend clubs in Carronshore so friendships have been formed. Moving children to other schools would have a negative impact.", *(Parent/Carer of pupils living in the catchment of Bothkennar Primary School)*
12. "If the school were to be permanently shut it would not affect the community as it currently doesn't serve the community. However if it was left unoccupied post closure the negative effects on the community would be from anti-social behaviour from youths and may also make the drug taking around Skinflats more prolific.", *(A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)*

Do you have any further comments on the proposal?

13. "The land should be sold for housing as the site is large enough to occupy a similar undertaking to that of the former nursery school site situated next to the Grangemouth Sports Complex.", *(A resident living in the Bothkennar Primary School catchment area)*

Appendix 7: HMIE Inspectors Report



Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

**Report by HMIE addressing educational aspects of the proposal
by Falkirk Council to permanently close Bothkennar Primary
School and realign its catchment to Beancross Primary School.**

April 2026

Introduction

1.1 This report from HMIE has been prepared by His 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 a proposal by Falkirk Council to permanently close Bothkennar Primary School and realign its catchment to Beancross Primary School. 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' view. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it alongside any relevant considerations the council received and then prepare its consultation report. The council's 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 consultation report at least three weeks before it takes its final decision. With all proposals the council needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act. Where a council is proposing to close a school, there are specific additional obligations. These include notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers. There are special provisions that apply to close a rural school.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the schools; any other users; 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 public meeting held on 17 March 2026 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 site of Beancross Primary School and Grangemouth High School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

1.4 As the proposal, if implemented, 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 Bothkennar Primary School, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements of the proposed closure.

Consultation process

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

2.2 The public consultation ran from 23 February to 24 April 2026. Copies of the proposal were made available to stakeholders and on the council website. A public meeting was held on 17 March 2026 at Bothkennar Primary School. One local resident attended the meeting and shared views that Bothkennar Primary School was previously a successful small school and its closure was a loss to the local community. The local resident recognised the reducing roll and small numbers made it impractical for the school to remain open.

2.3 The council received five responses to the online survey and by email. Two out of the three responses to the online survey expressed agreement with the proposal. Only one of the email responses indicated clearly that they disagreed with the closure of the school. The main areas of concern related to the future use of the existing school building, a view that children in the area should have been allocated to a different primary school, and a view that the consultation document does not recognise fully the positive features of education being provided in a small school context.

2.4 The council also consulted with children in P5 to P7 who attend Beancross Primary School to seek their views on the proposal. Through this process, almost all children shared that they are happy attending Beancross Primary School. They also offered interesting suggestions in relation to the future use of the Bothkennar Primary School building if it were to close.

Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 Falkirk Council mothballed Bothkennar Primary School in August 2019. The school roll declined for a prolonged period of time and dropped to four pupils during session 2018-2019. Since then, children who would have attended the school have been reallocated to the catchment area of Beancross Primary School.

3.2 In 2021, Falkirk Council undertook a statutory consultation and the Education, Children and Young People Executive agreed to a permanent closure of the school. Scottish Ministers referred the decision to the Schools Closure Review Panel. The

Panel concluded that the council had not fully complied with the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. As a result, the closure was not approved. The council was required to reconsider alternatives and undertake a fresh statutory consultation. Falkirk Council have since undertaken a preliminary community engagement under section 12A of the Act.

3.3 As the primary aged population in the catchment areas has not increased, nor is there evidence that it will increase in the future, the council now proposes again to permanently close Bothkennar Primary School. The catchment area of Beancross Primary School would be changed permanently to reflect this.

3.4 The council has outlined several educational benefits within the proposal in relation to learning and teaching, educational outcomes, experiences and opportunities, and the environment for learning. HM Inspectors believe that the council has demonstrated the educational benefits successfully within the proposal. HM Inspectors agree that there is sufficient merit to consider the permanent closure of the school.

3.5 All stakeholders who spoke with HM Inspectors were in favour of closing Bothkennar Primary School. They recognise the benefits of children attending Beancross Primary School. Staff and children report that children are benefitting from increased opportunities to develop social and interpersonal skills by working in classes of their own age group. Staff at Beancross Primary School provide children with well-planned individual, paired, group and whole class tasks and activities. Staff talk confidently about how the needs of learners are met well within the current arrangements. Children who spoke to HM Inspectors value regular opportunities to share their views in order to influence their learning and to identify improvements to their school. They regularly adopt a range of leadership roles which are more accessible in a larger school context. These extend to running clubs for peers, planning events such as a whole-school talent contest and introducing a school newspaper designed to share school news and pupil achievements. They enjoy acting as 'buddies' to younger peers, including those in the nursery.

3.6 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a 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 continued to monitor the pupil roll at the school and engage with the school community. There are sound reasons to consider the long term viability of the school. The overwhelming messages about children's experiences in Beancross Primary School are positive. The council has consulted and considered reasonable alternatives to the closure of the school, including the re-opening of the school and the re-opening of the school with an extended catchment area. There is consensus across stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors that these options are not viable and would not result in educational benefits to children.

3.7 Almost all members of the local community accept the rationale for the school closure. They would like the existing school building to continue to be used purposefully and to ensure it does not fall into disrepair. Travelling arrangements for children will continue with free transport provided for the relatively short travel distance of between two and three miles.

Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there are clear educational benefits for closing Bothkennar Primary School and for children to continue their education at Beancross Primary School. Children benefit from positive learning experiences at the school. They benefit from learning and socialising with larger peer groups, and access to a wide range of achievement experiences and leadership opportunities provided in the larger school. Almost all stakeholders who engaged with the consultation process agree with the council's proposal. Should the proposal go ahead, the council should continue to communicate with the local community to explore plans for the future use of the school building.

HM Inspectors
April 2026

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland

Appendix 8: Letters Received

Email 1

Good morning,

Thank you for the documentation received. Here are my responses.

* on page 6, (e) it mentions ' explore alternative uses for the building that could provide greater long term value' , yet there is NO mention of this on page 7 . It only mentions 4 options and excludes this Option 5. Why is this?

*page 12 of the report goes on to mention advantages of larger numbers in classes and how they can aid in transitioning to secondary school. Consideration should be given to the confidence building and emotional security smaller numbers can provide and it is not always the case that 'bigger is better' There are a significant number of transitioning pupils from larger primaries who find secondary school intimidating and become school refusers.

* page12 paragraph 4. Typo- 'for' not 'or'.

* page 13 paragraph 1. The report justifies at some length the strengths of Beancross Primary school and what Bothkennar could not provide. As a former teacher at Bothkennar (although many years ago) I feel this is not accurate. The quality of education in ANY school is dependant upon the quality of students and their teachers. It is often easier to provide a wider variety of experiences to smaller numbers than to the many. Whole school activities often take place, as older pupils can develop skills of responsibility , caring and citizenship, which is not always the case in a large primary. Evidence of this is in the fact that Bothkennar PS produced 2 Dux medalists at Larbert HS. I would be interested in evidence of the report's statement that 'Beancross PS has consistently delivered positive attainment outcomes'

* page 14 paragraph 5 The report continues to compare what Beancross can provide in comparison with Bothkennar . 'This approach to building expertise across the team can be difficult for a small school due to the small number of staff and time available....'

Surely teachers in a small school have exactly the same contractual hours as those in a larger school? Indeed I would suggest that teachers in a small schools have greater skills in time management and differentiating the curriculum than those in larger schools.

* page15 Extensive justification of transfer to Beancross. The writer has detailed everything that should be embedded in ANY school within Falkirk Council- and should be backed up by School Policy.

I feel I could go on in unpicking this report. I find it unbalanced and an insult to the quality of education delivered at Bothkennar PS. I would have preferred the inclusion of gathered evidence to justify the claims made on every page as to the greater provision of everything that Beancross can provide in comparison to lack of provision at Bothkennar. It has been recognised that this is a financial exercise by Falkirk Council, and whilst I reluctantly accept this decision is inevitable, I take exception to the manner and tone in which the report has been written by odious comparisons of two educational establishments. This approach, in my experienced opinion of teaching in many establishments of varying size and quality, is skewed in favour of influencing prospective parents / grandparents/ councillors / community et al . I would be grateful if you would take account of my views, as I have yours.

(Local Resident)

Email 2

An absolute joke to close any school, and then also to reallocate all the pupils into another single school that won't work. Is there even enough space to meet health and safety requirements and especially regarding fire safety too??? If there are too many pupils then sure this would break the law?

(Unknown)

Appendix 9: Correction Notice

Notice of Correction
19th March 2026

In accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Falkirk Council hereby gives notice of a correction to the Proposal Paper: A proposal to permanently close Bothkennar Primary School and rezone the catchment to Beancross Primary School.

Details of the Correction

It has been identified that an error appears within the proposal paper. The reference to “Slamannan Primary School” on page 21 is incorrect and should read “Beancross Primary School”

The correction does not alter the substance of the proposal, its rationale, or the overall educational benefits outlined within the document.

A corrected version of the proposal paper has been prepared and available:

- Falkirk Council Website
- Participate Plus
- Falkirk Council Libraries and Hubs
- Beancross Primary School
- Falkirk Community Stadium

This consultation Notice will be published in the same manner as the original Proposal Paper and will be made available to all consultees.

Education Services