

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 18 JUNE 2010

CONSULTATION REPORT - EDUCATION PROVISION AT CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To present for consideration of Members the Cabinet report in relation to the Consultation Report on "The Education Provision at Crossroads Primary School" in the event that Cabinet agree the recommendations as set out in Section 9.1 of the enclosed report.

2. CONSIDERATION OF REPORT

- 2.1** The enclosed report will be presented to the Cabinet meeting to be held on Wednesday 16 June 2010 where Cabinet will be asked to consider the recommendations as set out in the said Section 9.1 of the enclosed report.

- 2.2** An extract of the Minute from the Cabinet meeting will be issued to Members of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 16 June 2010 to inform Committee of the Cabinet decisions taken on this matter.

- 2.3** The Governance and Scrutiny Committee will therefore be asked to consider the outcome of the Cabinet decision and refer any views/further recommendations back to Cabinet for it to consider at the special meeting to be held on Wednesday 23 June 2010.

- 2.4** The reason for this direct referral to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee is to ensure full scrutiny by the Council before Cabinet makes their final decision on the relevant proposal which is set out in the following terms, namely:-

- that Crossroads Primary School will close as a separate educational establishment from 16 August 2010, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- that upon the closure of Crossroads Primary School, the pupils be assimilated into Galston Primary School from 17 August 2010, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- that the present delineated catchment area of Crossroads Primary School be added unchanged into that of Galston Primary School to create an enlarged delineated catchment area for the said Galston Primary School.

- 2.5** This approach recognises the need for the Council to achieve a clear and settled position as soon as possible on this matter in the interests of the children and staff in the affected schools and to allow effective planning to take place. It also brings clarity to the decision-making process in relation to the

Council's statutory obligations under Section 15(2) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 relating to Ministerial call-in.

3. FINANCIAL/LEGAL/POLICY/COMMUNITY PLANNING/RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1** The consideration of the outcome of the Cabinet decision is not a decision by the Council to proceed with the relevant proposal referred to within Section 2.4 above in terms of Section 11(1) of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 and, will not require to be notified to the Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 25(2) of that Act.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1** The Committee is asked to consider the decision of the Cabinet meeting to be held on 16 June 2010 and to thereafter refer any views or further recommendations back to Cabinet so that it may make a final determination on the relevant proposal in terms of Section 11(1) of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.

Alex McPhee

Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support

11 June 2010

JMcG/SC

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPER - NIL

Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Julie McGarry, Administration Manager on Tel No (01563) 576147.

Implementation Officer: Julie McGarry, Administration Manager



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES

CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE FUTURE EDUCATION PROVISION FOR PUPILS IN CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL

This report has been prepared following a review of the proposal that:

- Education provision at Crossroads Primary School be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2010, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- That the pupils of Crossroads Primary School continue their education at Galston Primary School, from 16 August 2010, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- Further, that consideration be given to the delineated area of Galston Primary School being extended to subsume the whole delineated area of Crossroads Primary School, or subsume the catchment area of Crossroads Primary School which lies within the boundary of East Ayrshire Council

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- (a) Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period;
- (b) Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting held on 18 February 2010; and
- (c) HMIE's report

This document has been issued by East Ayrshire Council under the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

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EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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- **Further, that consideration be given to the delineated area of Galston Primary School being extended to subsume the whole delineated area of Crossroads Primary School, or subsume the catchment area of Crossroads Primary School which lies within the boundary of East Ayrshire Council**

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- (a) Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period;**
- (b) Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting held on 18 February 2010; and**
- (c) HMIE's report**

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to :-

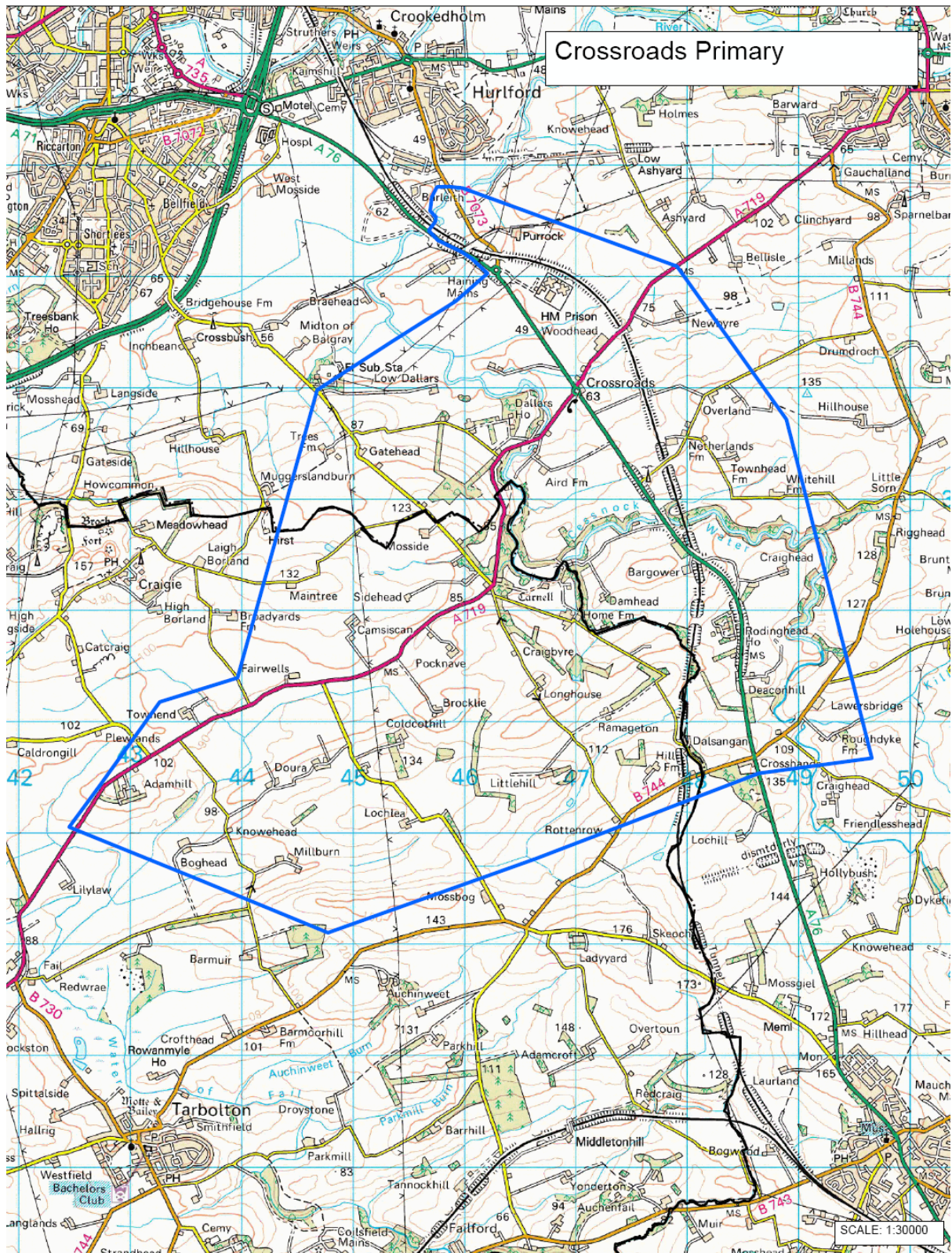
- Set out a record of the total number of written representations made to the Council by any person during the period of the public consultation exercise;
- Set out a summary of those written representations;
- Set out a summary of the oral representations made to the Council at the public meeting held at Galston Primary School on 18 February 2010;
- Set out a statement of the Council's response to:
 - Those written and oral representations
 - HMIE's report
- Provide a copy of HMIE's report
- Set out a statement explaining how the council reviewed the above proposal having had regard (in particular) to :-
 - The relevant written representations received by the Council during the public consultation period;
 - Oral representations made to it at the public meeting held at Galston Primary School on 18 February 2010;

- HMIE's report
- Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Paper (including a statement of the Council's opinion on it);
- Provide a statement of the action taken in respect of the omission or inaccuracy, or if no action has been taken of that fact (why);
- An explanation of the opportunity that may arise for making representations to the Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15(4) of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010;
- Explain how the Council has complied with Section 12 of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above Proposals under Section 9(1) of the said Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010; and
- Explain any change of attitude that the Council has had which is attributable to its compliance with the said Section 12 mentioned above.

2. CROSSROADS AND GALSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL INFORMATION

2.1 SCHOOL DELINEATED CATCHMENT AREAS

2.1.1 Crossroads Primary School Delineated Catchment Area



2.1.2 Galston Primary School Delineated Catchment Area



2.2 ACCOMMODATION

2.2.1 Crossroads Primary School

Opened in 1971, the existing Crossroads Primary School building consists of 3 teaching rooms; there is also a gym hall which encompasses the library and general purpose area, all housed in a flat roofed, timber clad building. Within the central corridor is an area which is used for computing and specialist support for pupils. Outdoor facilities have been utilised to create an eco-garden area.

The building was originally constructed with a life expectancy of 25 years. During the summer of 2009 significant decay to the timber structure was noted and, on the advice of Council and external structural engineers, it was decided that the school should be temporarily relocated to Bellfield Primary School in Kilmarnock. Further work by external consultants identified that the estimated cost to repair the structural components was approximately of £399,000.

2.2.2 Galston Primary School

In August 2008 Galston Primary and Nursery Schools moved to purpose built single storey accommodation in Western Road, Galston. The Primary School element is based in 4 teaching pods, linked by corridors which have access to an ICT suite, a gym hall, dining hall, library, music room, parents' room. In addition the schools have access to secure courtyard areas and a grassed outdoor area which can be used for outdoor teaching.

2.3 PLANNING CAPACITY

2.3.1 Crossroads Primary School

The planning capacity of a school is calculated by dividing the total area of teaching rooms by the space allocation per child (1.7m²). The working capacity takes account of maximum class sizes, for example, composite classes which are limited to 25 pupils. Based on the Council's space allocation guidelines, the classrooms could accommodate 95 pupils; however, due to maximum class sizes for composite classes the capacity of these rooms is limited to 25 each. Therefore, the planning capacity of Crossroads Primary is 95, with a working capacity of 75 based on an assumption of all classes being composite.

2.3.2 Galston Primary School

The planning capacity for Galston Primary is 467 pupils, with a working capacity, based on current class structures of 459.

2.4 PUPIL ROLL AND CLASS STRUCTURES

2.4.1 At the September 2009 census date there were 52 pupils enrolled at Crossroads Primary School, and as at 8 April 2010 there was a pupil roll of 51 pupils. The school structure presently has 3 composite classes made up as follows:

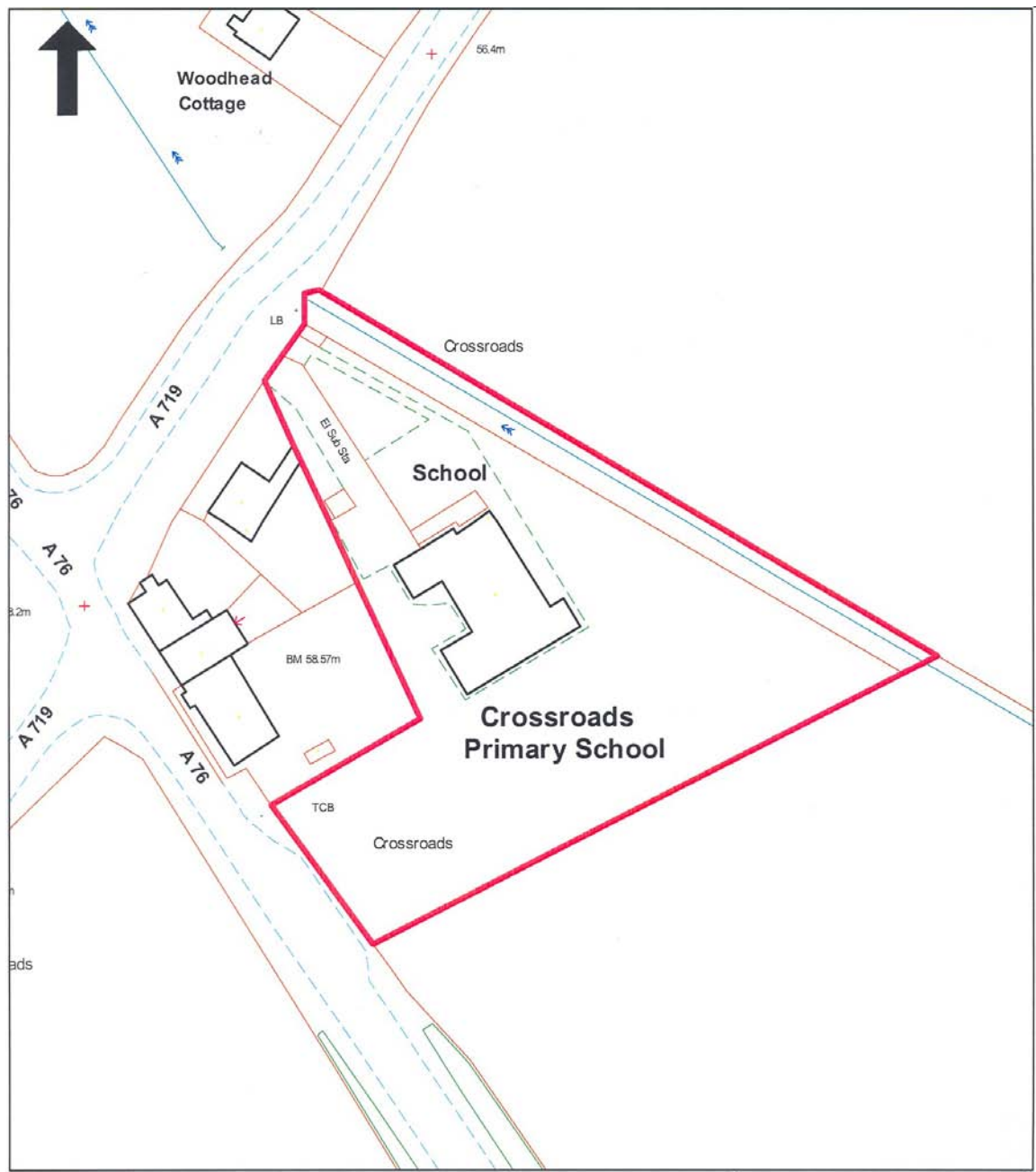
CLASS	NUMBER OF PUPILS
P1/2	15
P3/4	16
P5/6/7	20
	51

2.4.2 Within Galston Primary School there were 277 pupils enrolled at the September 2009 census date, and as at 8 April 2010 there are 278 pupils at the school. The present class structure is as follows:

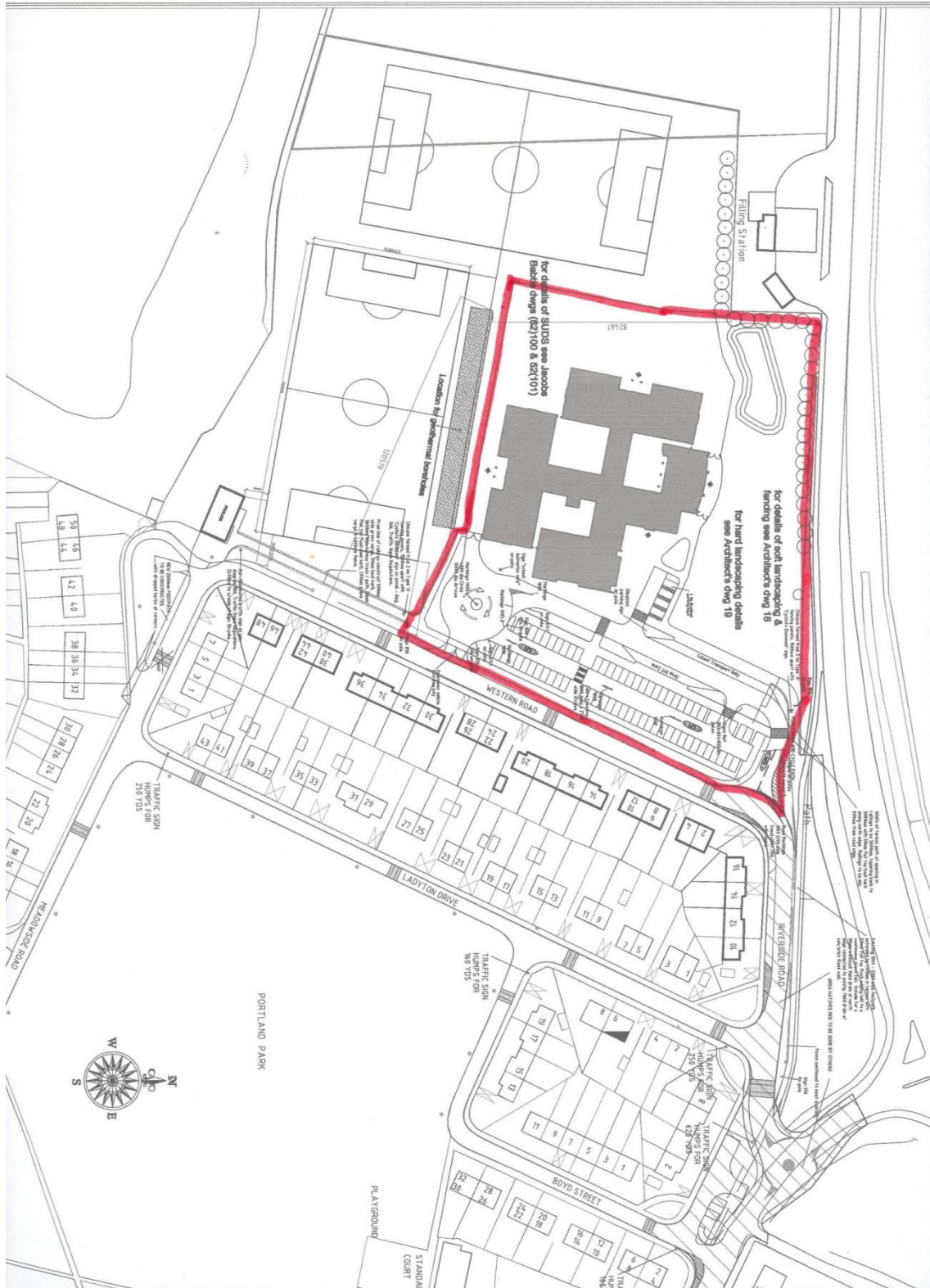
CLASS	NUMBER OF PUPILS
P1A	18
P1B	18
P2A	18
P2B	20
P3A	18
P3B	18
P4A	20
P4B	20
P5	28
P5/6	23
P6	27
P7A	28
P7B	22
	278

2.5 SCHOOL LAYOUT

2.5.1 Outline Of Crossroads Primary School Building And The School Grounds



2.5.2 Outline Of Galston Primary & Nursery Schools Building And The School Grounds



2.6 SCHOOL BUILDINGS

2.6.1 Crossroads Primary School



Photograph 1 : Front elevation from the playground.



Photograph 2 : View into the Gym/Dining Hall with a view of structural timbers which have been exposed to view the extent of decay.



Photograph 3 : Corridor Area front at entrance. Internal roof supports can be seen in the foreground



Photograph 4 : External view of east elevation. The corner timber post at the far right of the photograph was replaced in 2009.

2.6.2 Galston Primary and Nursery Schools



Photograph 1 : Galston Primary and Nursery Schools as photographed from the entrance to the car park. On the left of the picture is the gym hall, with the Nursery School accommodation at the right of the building.



Photograph 2 : Primary classroom with promethean board pictured in the background



Photograph 3 : The library at Galston Primary.



Photograph 4 : the ICT suite at Galston Primary.

2.7 BUILDING CONDITION – CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL

- 2.7.1** The condition of the Crossroads Primary building has been well documented. It is noted that the building was already in need of significant capital investment prior to the identification of structural issues in July 2009, and Cabinet had allocated £650,000 to address a major component renewal programme in the coming years. It has been estimated by external consultants that the cost of structural repairs is in the region of £399,000 and that the total cost of refurbishing the school to its previous standard is £1,030,000.
- 2.7.2** The Options Appraisal exercise which was conducted in the latter half of 2009 and reported to Cabinet on 16 December 2009 identified that this level of capital investment did not reflect efficient use of the Council’s resources or provide the pupils and staff of Crossroads Primary School with a modern designed school conducive to fully meeting the needs of a 21st Century curriculum.
- 2.7.3** Galston Primary School is a modern, well equipped school designed to meet the learning and teaching needs of a modern curriculum. The building has also incorporated the use of “green” technology to assist in reducing running costs and lowering the Council’s carbon footprint. Pupils are actively engaged in monitoring the effectiveness of this technology as part of their curricular environmental studies programme.

2.8 ATTAINMENT DATA

- 2.8.1** The percentage of young people attaining the expected levels in national assessments at Crossroads and Galston Primaries is set out in the tables below.

		READING				
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Crossroads		97.4	97.0	85.3	78.1	80.0
Galston		81.7	76.3	89.1	86.0	84.8
Primaries		77.6	77.7	79.3	80.0	81.8

		WRITING				
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Crossroads		87.2	87.9	64.7	59.4	73.3
Galston		78.7	70.1	77.1	66.9	75.8
Primaries		70.2	70.9	71.4	73.3	75.1

		MATHS				
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09

Crossroads	94.9	84.8	88.2	81.3	90.0
Galston	80.7	82.9	87.6	82.6	81.5
Primaries	83.7	83.1	83.3	83.7	84.7

2.8.2 It can be seen that over the longer term attainment levels at Crossroads Primary have been higher than at Galston Primary. However for the most recent three year period which has been reported, Galston Primary pupils have achieved higher attainment levels than their Crossroads peers in reading and writing, with similar results in 2 of the 3 most recent years for mathematics. It is worth noting that performance at Crossroads, as in all small schools, can be significantly skewed by the small pupil roll. It should be noted that 5-14 results have only a limited application for making comparisons between schools or trends, and they require careful interpretation.

2.9 HMIE REPORT OUTCOMES

2.9.1 As reported in the report to Cabinet on 19 March 2008, the most recent HMIE report on Crossroads Primary School was issued in December 1997.

2.9.2 The most recent HMIE report on the assessment of education at Galston Primary School was published in May 2002.

2.9.3 During the current consultation period HMIE visited both schools, liaising with staff, pupils and parents. HMIE have commented in their report to the Council that:

- The curriculum in both schools was of a similar quality, and that both were working to develop a Curriculum for Excellence;
- Both schools were also reported to have in place a range of activities to develop pupils' personal and social skills;
- Attainment levels over a 3 year period have been comparable;
- The range of positive learning experiences includes out-of-school activities at both establishments; and
- Children at both schools are encouraged to achieve and successes are celebrated.

2.10 STAFFING

2.10.1 Based on the September 2009 census, Crossroads Primary School had an entitlement to 3.9 FTE. The Council supplemented this teacher staffing level with 0.8 FTE probationary teachers, 0.2 FTE teachers for pupils with additional support needs and the school self funded an additional 0.1 FTE teaching staff through its delegated budgets.

At September 2009 the ancillary staffing at Crossroads Primary consisted of 29.06 hours of clerical support, 37 hours for janitation and cleaning and 37.5 hours for catering.

2.10.2 The September 2009 staffing census figures for Galston Primary School included a basic teaching entitlement of 13.8 FTE. In addition to this the

Council added 1.0 FTE teachers to reduce P1-3 class sizes, 1.4 FTE probationary teachers and 1.0 FTE teachers for pupils with additional support needs. The school funded 0.1 FTE teachers through its delegated budget.

Galston Primary's ancillary support, at September 2009, included 76.94 hours of clerical support, 111 hours for janitation and cleaning and 85 hours for catering.

3. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 East Ayrshire Council's Cabinet approved the recommendation to issue a Proposal Document (attached as Annex 1 of this report) on the future of education provision at Crossroads Primary School for public consultation at its meeting of 13 January 2010. The formal consultation period initially ran from 29 January 2010 to 19 March 2010 and written representations on the Cabinet's proposals were sought from interested parties in terms of the Education (Publications and Consultation etc) (Scotland) Regulations 1981 (as amended) and the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The consultative process was launched under the 1981 Regulations (as amended); however, the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 came into force on 5 April 2010. Throughout, it was the Council's position that the requirements contained within the 2010 Act should also be followed in this exercise. This was confirmed by Cabinet at its meeting of 13 January 2010.

3.2 In accordance with statutory requirements, the following were consulted:

- The Parent Councils of Crossroads Primary School and Galston Primary Schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at these Primary Schools and the parents of children attending Galston Nursery School
- The parents of children expected to attend these schools within 2 years of the date of the publication of the Proposal Document
- The pupils of these schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff of these schools
- The trade union representatives of the above staff members
- The Community Councils of Galston, and Hurlford and Crookedholm
- South Ayrshire Council in respect of the interests of children resident in that authority
- The appropriate members of the Scottish Parliament and the appropriate Member of Parliament
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Ayrshire & Arran
- Chief Executive, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services, East Ayrshire Council
- Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support, East Ayrshire Council

3.3 The Proposal Document was also advertised in the press and copies were made widely available locally and to local interest groups. Additional copies of the document were obtainable from the Department of Educational and Social Services, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock, from the schools

involved and through the Council Website at www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk. Copies were also available at public libraries and Council offices in the areas affected. A copy was also sent to HMIE, who under the 2010 Act are statutory consultees.

- 3.4** It has been previous practice within East Ayrshire to consult directly with the young people of Crossroads Primary, Galston Primary and Galston Nursery and this good practice is now enshrined in the 2010 Act which includes the pupils as statutory consultees. Following the consultation methodology for seeking pupil views the Council organised a series of “circle time” discussions with their class teacher, which were suitable for the age and stage of each class grouping. These sessions allowed pupils to freely express their thoughts and feelings in an environment with which they were familiar and with staff that they knew well. Present at the discussion to record the comments from children was a Quality Improvement Officer, and these discussion records were confirmed with each class teacher.

During the consultation period Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People issued guidance on the processes to be followed when consulting with pupils and it is noted that the Council has considered its position not only in relation to the Statutory guidance issued under Section 19 of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 but also the guidance issued by the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People. The Council made all reasonable efforts to ensure that the greatest number of pupils at both primary schools and Galston Nursery School were meaningfully consulted in ways appropriate to their age and maturity.

The Council therefore concludes that the consultation undertaken was carried out in an objective, neutral and rigorous manner led, as previously noted, by class teachers who know the young people well and ensured they were relaxed and confident in making their responses to questions robustly designed not to lead them in any particular direction. The overall process was based on previous experience of preparation for external inspection from HMIE, which demands evidence of objective pupil questioning. Consequently, although the process did not involve any external consultancy, the Council is satisfied that the pupil consultation followed what it considers to be best practice and that it has complied with the requirements of the 2010 Act.

In addition to the above, a number of young people from both Crossroads Primary and Galston Primary submitted written responses, the detail of which are summarised in section 4 below.

- 3.5** A public meeting was arranged by the Council and took place on 18 February 2010 within Galston Primary School. The meeting was attended by approximately 150 parents, staff and others with an interest in the consultation of the future of Crossroads Primary, Galston Primary School and Galston Nursery School. The District Inspector (HMIE) also attended.
- 3.6** The meeting offered an opportunity for discussion and clarification of the proposals as well as a forum for people to express their views of the consultation proposals. It included a presentation on the proposals and the consultative process. A written record of the meeting was kept and published and is included as part of the final consultative responses.

3.7 During the consultation process further reports were submitted to Cabinet on 24 February 2010 and 10 March 2010. The first of these reports set out the implications of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the consultation process. The report of 10 March 2010 advised Cabinet of a revision to the Net Present Value calculations following submission of comments on the treatment of Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) from a respondent. Following this Cabinet meeting copies of the revised section were made available to all statutory consultees and other interested parties, with the consultation period extended to 26 March 2010 to provide respondents with sufficient time to take account of this revision in their response. Those who had already responded were written to in order to give them a further opportunity to make a further response in the extended timescale if they so wished.

4. RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

4.1 A total of 71 requests for further information and 198 written submissions were received, including those made by e-mail. The table below provides details of the written submissions :

TABLE : RESPONDENTS BY GROUP

RESPONDENT GROUP	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
Crossroads Primary School Parent Council	4
Parents of children attending Crossroads Primary School	37
Pupils of Crossroads Primary School	10
Former pupils of Crossroads Primary School	6
Parents of former pupils at Crossroads Primary School	1
Grandparent of pupils of Crossroads Primary School	6
Parents of children attending Galston Primary School	43
Pupils of Galston Primary School	30
Staff of Galston Primary School	8
Grandparent of pupils of Galston Primary School	1
Parent Councils of other educational establishments	3
Other establishment Head Teachers / Depute Head Teachers	6
Other Council Departments / Services	4
Community Planning Partners	3
East Ayrshire Council Residents / Council Tax Payers	6
Galston Community Council	8
Parents of future Crossroads Primary School children	3
Scottish Rural Schools Network	6
South Ayrshire Council	1
Crossroads Primary School Chaplain	2
MPs / MSPs	5
Members of the East Ayrshire Council Cabinet	2
Parents of children attending no identified school	2
Unknown	1
Total	198

4.1.1 Included within the final written submission supplied by the Parent Council of Crossroads Primary School was a community survey which was undertaken by them to provide information on a perceived wider community viewpoint of the Proposal Document. A summary of the responses received are detailed in full below.

4.1.2 In addition to the written submissions, the meeting of 18 February 2010, referred to above, enabled a number of issues to be raised. A full list of the respondents is attached at Annex 2. The following paragraphs summarise the verbal issues raised at the meeting and in the written responses to the Proposal Document. Every effort has been made to summarise views as accurately as possible. A copy of the submissions is available to be viewed at Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7BU.

4.1.3 On 4 May 2010, a report was received from HMIE on the proposals.

4.2 Public Meeting – 18 February 2010

4.2.1 The public meeting was held in Galston Primary School and chaired by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services. The meeting was attended by senior officers from Educational and Social Services, Finance and Asset Management and Corporate Support. The District Inspector (HMIE) also attended.

Officers from Educational and Social Services presented a series of topics surrounding the current consultation process, including :

- The consultation process;
- The consultation proposals including the Council's preferred option;
- Statutory consultees and legislative requirements;
- Indicative timescale to the conclusion of the process;

4.2.2 Following the officer presentations members of the public were provided with an opportunity to raise issues or seek further information on the consultation. The paragraphs below summarise the main issues raised and statements made by those attending the meeting:

4.2.3 Crossroads Primary School Building Condition

(a) Several of the attendees asked about the structural integrity of the existing Crossroads Primary School building. This element of the discussions also included questions about the metal structural supports which had been added to the school in the early 1970s. Officers were able to confirm that the decision to categorise the building as unsafe was supported by external consultants.

(b) Crossroads Primary parents also asked about the on-going maintenance of the school building and whether it was being left to deteriorate. Officers advised that periodic checks were being made to ensure that no further deterioration took place.

(c) Parents attending also sought clarification on the costs of modular accommodation and asked if that had been considered within the options

appraisal exercise. In addition, parents believed that the £650,000 which had been allocated would repair the school and bring it into a suitable condition for learning and teaching and make it compliant with Disability Discrimination Act requirements. Officers were able to confirm that modular accommodation had been considered as a long term solution but subsequently discounted on grounds of best value.

- (d) One individual asked about the cost of repairs to Bellfield Primary and whether the Council would have spent that funding on Crossroads Primary School. Officers reported that alterations to the entrance and car park were required at Bellfield Primary School to improve bus access and the need for a formal car parking area had been identified at Bellfield Primary School prior to the temporary decant of Crossroads Primary School.
- (e) Attendees queried why the Council had not proceeded with the proposal to link any school building improvement to the proposal to site a bio-digester on adjacent land. One parent commented that the decision to link the two projects was down to the approach taken by the Scottish Government and East Ayrshire Council which did not support creation and innovation. The Executive Director advised that to develop a bio-digester and build a new school could potentially take 2 years in terms of planning, economics, and feasibility of technology while the present problems with the school's structure were immediate.

4.2.4 Financial Implications

- (a) An attendee commented on perceived financial inaccuracies within the Options Appraisal report which had been submitted to Cabinet on 16 December 2009. Specifically the issues raised related to under reporting of the loss of Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE), that the loss of grant would be exacerbated should children resident in South Ayrshire not attend Crossroads Primary and that staffing savings were inaccurate. It was stated that Crossroads Primary was a "cash cow" for East Ayrshire Council and that this information had been contained in an e-mail that had been sent to Elected Members in the early hours of 16 December 2009. Officers advised that they had not been in receipt of the e-mail which had been referred to, but that if this was forwarded to them they would provide a suitable response.
- (b) A number of parents suggested that by investing the funding already identified in the capital programme into the Crossroads Primary School building this would allow the school to operate. It was further commented that an initial investment to bring the school to a structurally sound condition with no improvement would provide sufficient time to consider further investment opportunities at a later date. Officers commented that if any of the retention options were agreed for Crossroads Primary that the building would require significant funding above the £650,000 which had been previously allocated in the Council's long term capital investment strategy. Attendees were also advised that the £650,000 would not result in improvements to the building which would result in it meeting the needs of 21st Century learning and teaching, and that it did not meet best value criteria to spend this sum of money to achieve a lesser standard of building when the pupils could be educated in a building which is suited to the delivery of a 21st Century curriculum.

- (c) Three parents of Galston Primary School children stated that option 5 represented best value for money in the current economic climate. One attendee stated that a new build school should not be considered for Crossroads Primary.

4.2.5 School Ethos

- (a) A number of attendees commented favourably on the ethos of Crossroads Primary, stating that the levels of attainment were very high at Crossroads and that this resulted from the school's small size. One Crossroads Primary School parent commented that the Council were reducing the choice available to parents, particularly those parents who wanted to send their child to a small rural school.
- (b) A number of Crossroads Primary School parents commented on the benefits of children being educated in a smaller establishment and being able to receive what they saw as more focused educational support. Parents also valued the education provision which was provided by the staff at Crossroads Primary.

4.2.6 Community Impact

- (a) A number of attendees commented on the existence of a strong community within Crossroads and that should the school be closed then it would threaten the existence of that community. It was commented that the Council was comparing Crossroads to other communities and setting communities against each other.
- (b) One individual commented that there had been a school at Crossroads for over 100 years, and that it was serving a community. In response to this issue, the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services commented that the issue of Crossroads Primary School being considered for closure was not new and that consideration had previously been given to this proposal by Strathclyde Regional Council but that it had not been actioned by them. Further questions from attendees included whether the Council had given consideration to the detrimental effect that closing the school will have on the Crossroads community and what steps would the Council take to assess how a decision to close the school would affect the community.

The Chair of the Parent Council was given the opportunity to make the closing remarks at the meeting. He commented that in his opinion the consultation was flawed and he encouraged people to submit responses. He spoke in support of Crossroads Primary School and the quality of education provided at the school. He further stated that if the school closed he was sure that the children would do very well at Galston Primary School. He also felt aspects of the community spirit would be affected if the Proposal (Option 5) was taken forward.

4.3 WRITTEN RESPONSES

4.3.1 Crossroads Primary School Parent Council

- (a) During the consultation process the Council received correspondence from the Chair of the Parent Council which intimated his belief that the consultation process was flawed in a number of areas :
- The impact on the local and surrounding rural and agricultural community had not been addressed;
 - No case for the educational benefit for closure had been made;
 - The financial implications had been proven to be fundamentally flawed; and
 - No attempt had been made to assess any other option other than the closure of Crossroads Primary School.
- (b) In response to the Proposal Document the Parent Council submitted a formal response document which commented on a number of areas within the Proposal Document and also provided the results of a community survey. The issues raised by the Parent Council are set out below.
- (i) The first comment within the document is a belief that the Council have failed in their obligation to make adequate educational provision for their children. This is due to the failure to undertake previously identified maintenance on the school building. Commenting on the events in the summer of 2009 the document highlights the parental belief that the condition of the building had implied “that our children had occupied a building in a totally unsafe state for some time”. The Parent Council intimates that a natural conclusion to make from the Council’s failure to maintain the school building is that it has planned to close the school for a “number of years”.
- (ii) With regard to the Options Appraisal exercise the document states that this was “invalidated before it began”. In this respect the Parent Council commented that no attempt was made to either ascertain the costs of modular accommodation, or contact any community groups. The Parent Council response also stated that the Council had “failed to comply with their duty to go to consultation on closure only as a last resort”.
- (iii) Comments on alleged financial inaccuracies in the Options Appraisal document were also raised within the Parent Council response. In particular the advice which had been submitted by the Scottish Rural Schools Network (SRSN) was noted by the Parent Council. The SRSN claimed deficiencies were noted on the treatment of Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE), staff savings, property costs and supplies, that savings attributed to option 5 had failed to take account of the cost of additional teaching staff which would be placed in the merged school for a two year period, and that despite changes having been made to the Net Present Value scores of options 4 and 5 “the financial case remains significantly flawed”.
- (iv) The Parent Council then expressed a view that “the entire consultation failed to comply” with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

- (v) The Parent Council also commented on the public meeting which was held on 18 February 2010 and that a number of complaints had been made about officer behaviour at the meeting.
- (vi) The document states that “other than a description of the ergonomics of Galston Primary School and the fact that it contains good IT equipment and teachers, there is no Educational Benefits Statement of any note”. Comment is included on the non academic achievements at Crossroads Primary and the staff expertise at the school in developing the Curriculum for Excellence.

The statement sets out some of the perceived omissions in the Educational Benefits Statement such as detailing comparative attainment levels, the impact of implementing the preferred option on class sizes, the impact on the education provision for children who would require to move from Crossroads to Galston, including those with additional support needs and no clear statement of the impact on staffing levels at a merged school.

It is the Parent Council belief “that this most important part of the document is completely deficient in any meaningful educational content”.

- (vii) The document details the wider community use of Crossroads Primary for lets and the support from parents and the wider community in school events, even during its decant into Bellfield Primary. The document also expresses the high level of parental involvement in after school clubs which act as a social hub for the children of Crossroads Primary.
- (viii) The statement also includes the results of a survey which had been undertaken by the Parent Council. In this survey, out of 79 households in the area 72 had completed the questionnaire. The results are highlighted below:
 - Those with pre-school aged children (19 households and 21 children) would enrol their child at the school.
 - 20 households surveyed (28%) were not in the school’s catchment area.
 - The vast majority of households (69) consider themselves to be part of the Crossroads Community and participate or would participate in community activities, preferably at Crossroads Primary.
 - The school can be the focal point of the community and 92% of respondents rated it as very important that there was a school in the Crossroads area.
 - The community would benefit from its own Community Council.
 - The majority did not believe they could continue their level of involvement within another school if Crossroads Primary closed.
 - The majority (75% to 83%) believed that the school’s closure would adversely impact on a range of economic and employment factors, with 88% to 99% stating that any closure would negatively impact on a number of community aspects.

- (ix) In relation to consultation with pupils at the affected establishments the document also states the view that “regardless of the Council’s intentions we find the process to have been severely deficient”. It is stated that the Council disregarded new guidelines for consulting with children and that this was a conscious decision.
- (x) The Parent Council conclude that “there are no significant advantages for Crossroads children to attend Galston” and that available research supports the view that building and architecture do not alter a child’s experience or academic attainment. In addition the document states that the Curriculum for Excellence could be taught anywhere and that children benefit from the small scale and family atmosphere, particularly those with additional support needs.
- (c) During the consultation process, representatives of the Parent Council also attended a number of Elected Members’ surgeries. At these meetings Councillors were presented with a copy of one company’s brochure which detailed the facilities which could be provided through the use of modular accommodation. Included within the documentation was a costed proposal which intimated that a feasible solution, delivered with modular accommodation, would cost approximately £544,000. The parents’ representative’s submission was based on costing methodology provided by Council officers.

4.3.2 Parents, Former Parents, Future Parents and Grandparents of Pupils attending Crossroads Primary School

- (a) All of the responses received (47) from these categories of respondent rejected option 5, and supported the retention of Crossroads Primary School at its existing site. Many responses included positive comment on the uniqueness of Crossroads Primary School due to its rural location, its small pupil numbers and that the school was a vital asset to the local community. One parent believed that the social and educational ramifications of closing the school far outweighed the economic rationale, with another stating that closing the school was the equivalent to closing a mine or local ‘Johnny Walker’ commercial operations.
- (b) A number of parents (6) made comments about the conduct of officers at the public meeting, specifically in regard to comments about the former Strathclyde Regional Council not having closed the school, the fact that Option 1 represented the lowest score for non financial aspects and that modular accommodation was not considered appropriate as a long term solution.
- (c) There were 7 responses which commented on the belief that the Council had failed to comply with the spirit and letter of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 or that the consultation process was significantly flawed. In addition 8 responses also included specific comment that the financial calculations were inaccurate and that revenue savings were speculative or over stated.
- (d) Parents also advised that a campaign site had been organised within Facebook. At the time of preparing this report there were 300 “friends” of this

site. The current information contained on the site, and dated 19 April 2010, relates to a meeting of the Crossroads Community Women's Group which was to be held on Thursday 22 March 2010 at a Public House in the village of Craigie.

- (e) Responses also indicated that the Council had promised funding to improve the building fabric at Crossroads, following the conclusion of the previous consultation exercise in 2007/08, but this had not materialised. One individual also commented that had the existing building been maintained over the past 14 years they would not be in this position. Although all the parents, grandparents or future parents who responded (43) expressed a wish to retain the school most did not specify whether they preferred a refurbished building, a refurbished and upgraded building or a new build.
- (f) In addition to the submissions made to Elected Members, by representatives of the Parent Council during the consultation period, one parent (Mr Wallace Hendrie) also submitted a response which included the donation of land for a new playingfield and associated facilities to the Council. The response also suggested the formation of a Community Council to access funding from sources such as the Big Lottery to build community facilities next to a suggested modular school. The response stated that both buildings could then benefit from heating and lighting which would be powered by a bio-digester plant which would be installed by Mr Hendrie.
- (g) One parent of a future Crossroads primary pupil expressed the concern that changes to the boundary of the catchment area would result in her child attending Galston Nursery School for pre-school provision but then having to attend a primary school in South Ayrshire.

4.3.3 Crossroads Primary School Pupils and Former Pupils

- (a) Submissions were received from 10 Crossroads Primary pupils and 6 former pupils. All responses from these groups of respondents indicated their belief that the school should remain open, with several comments indicating that the location and size of the school made it an appropriate environment for learning and teaching. Current pupils commented on the benefits of the small school and small class sizes and the range of opportunities which are present in the school. All 6 of the former pupils submitted very favourable accounts of their time at the school.
- (b) During the consultation process the views of children at each stage were sought in a Circle Time discussion with their class teacher. A Quality Improvement Officer was in attendance during these sessions but played no part in the discussions, instead recording the pupil views on the issues discussed. Primary 1 and 2 pupils liked their classroom and teacher, the close proximity of Primary 7 pupils and the external environment. The group also commented that they would make new friends or meet existing friends who attend Galston Primary, if Crossroads Primary was to close. Pupil concerns about a move to Galston included the feasibility of getting bullied and getting to know a new class teacher.

- (c) Pupils in the Primary 3/4 class commented that they liked their class teacher, liked the small school and that pupils were kind. This group of pupils stated that they would be happy to go to Galston Primary to see friends, although they were also concerned about the potential of bullying, getting lost in a bigger school building, missing existing school friends and that it would be busier at lunchtimes.
- (d) Primary 5 – 7 pupils commented that advantages of being at Crossroads Primary School were the small size of the school meant that pupils all knew each other, that there was a close bond with the teaching staff due to the class sizes and that the external environment was large. Pupils commented that they liked the structure of Galston Primary's building, that there were more people and that they had friends in the school, although it was also noted that some pupils indicated that there was nothing about a switch to Galston Primary which they would like. The group indicated that they were concerned about the possibility of being bullied, that the Galston Primary building was too complicated and they may get lost, that Galston pupils didn't know Crossroads pupils or what they could do and that they may be separated from their current classmates. Concerns were also expressed about siblings not being able to attend Crossroads Primary and comments also asked why the school could not be rebuilt and the pupils stay in Crossroads Primary.

4.3.4 Galston Primary School Parent Council

- (a) No response was received specifically from the Parent Council of Galston Primary School.

4.3.5 Parents and Grandparents of Pupils attending Galston Primary School

- (a) Of the 44 responses from individuals who identified themselves as parents or grandparents of children attending Galston Primary pupils, 35 indicated support for the implementation of the closure of Crossroads Primary, 5 disagreed with the closure proposal and 3 offered no firm view. Of those that agreed with the Council's preferred view a significant number also expressly stated that option 4 (the continuation of Crossroads Primary as a separate educational entity within Galston Primary) should be discounted.
- (b) Views expressed stated that a full integration would benefit all pupils of both establishments, that the Galston Primary School building could easily accommodate the additional pupils and incorporating Crossroads Primary into Galston Primary represented the best financial route for the Council.
- (c) Those expressing a desire to maintain Crossroads Primary as a separate entity commented that rural schools were important, and Crossroads Primary should be refurbished to existing standards. It was stated that class sizes would increase following integration and that this would compromise education for children at Galston Primary.
- (d) Of the 3 respondents who expressed no firm view one form expressed support for any option with the exception of Option 4, one expressed support to either close the school or repair it and move on and one form was submitted with no comment written on any of the 5 options.

4.3.6 Galston Primary School Pupils / Galston Nursery School Children

- (a) Thirty (30) responses were received from pupils attending Galston Primary School. The vast majority of responses (28) agreed with the proposal to integrate Crossroads Primary into Galston Primary. It was commented that this would provide greater opportunities to make new friends, that the children from both schools would attend Loudoun Academy together and that the school could accommodate both the additional pupils and staff.
- (b) Those pupils who did not agree with the closure proposal stated that funding should be provided to refurbish Crossroads Primary.
- (c) A specific consultation process was carried out with each class of Galston Primary and Galston Nursery. This used the same approach as that at Crossroads Primary. The P1 classes liked the ICT room, the story corner, the play area, the library, the playground and gym hall. They commented that they would help pupils who came to the school from Crossroads by including them in games, making friends with them and showing them where everything was located. The P1 pupils were concerned that there may be “bad” pupils in Crossroads Primary.
- (d) The P2 classes liked the ICT room and the Promethean boards, playground, library, their teachers and the gym hall. The pupils would assist those arriving from Crossroads by making friends with them, sharing things and showing them around the school. They raised concerns about the possibility of bullying and whether there was enough space for the additional pupils.
- (e) Primary 3 pupils were recorded as liking the ICT facilities, the school equipment, playground, gym hall, music room and their teachers and the library. The pupils also stated that they would guide pupils from Crossroads around the school and share toys and equipment with them. The classes raised concerns about less available space for them, the possibility of being bullied and that new furniture may be needed for the additional pupils.
- (f) Primary 4 classes stated that they liked the ICT facilities, the playground, music room, dining hall, that the school was eco-friendly, the staff and the gym hall. Pupils advised that they would help show new pupils around the school, introduce them to all their classmates, tell them about the school routines and play with them at breaktimes. P4 classes were concerned about possible bullying and that there might be different rules in place for pupils from Crossroads Primary.
- (g) The P5 class liked the space in the new school building, the ICT equipment, the gym hall, playground games and that the school was an eco school. Pupils said that they would assist pupils from Crossroads by introducing themselves and making friends, guide pupils around the school, tell them about the school subjects and timetable. Concerns were raised about potential bullying, and that there may be less space in the school building and playground.
- (h) The P5/6 class liked assembly time when the whole school got together, the playground, green technology which was at the school, the courtyards and the

toilets. The pupils stated that they would introduce themselves to the new pupils, make friends with them and show them around the school. The P5/6 class were concerned that there may be the possibility of bullying by the new pupils.

- (i) The P6 class liked the bigger playground, the ICT facilities, the gym hall and gym equipment, the bigger classrooms the music room, the toilets and the staff. They commented that they would make friends with new pupils from Crossroads Primary, would show them around the school and share equipment with them. The P6 class was concerned that they may be bullied and that they could get less time for everything.
- (j) The P7 classes liked the increased size of the school, the ICT suite, the new playground games, the gym hall and changing rooms, the after school clubs, that the school was safe with security cameras and a separation of vehicles and pedestrians. The pupils stated that they would welcome new pupils from Crossroads Primary and keep them company, provide them with a tour of the school, and be polite towards the new pupils. Pupils were worried about the possibility of being bullied by new pupils, more crowding in the playground and gym and ICT time may be reduced. In addition pupils in one P7 class thought that it would not be a good idea if Crossroads Primary moved into accommodation at Galston Primary and remained a separate establishment.

4.3.7 Children from Galston Nursery School

- (a) Children attending the Nursery School were also given an opportunity to comment on the proposals with their staff. The children were reported to like the new chute, that they would play with pupils from Crossroads Primary, draw them a picture and make a silly face to make them laugh. Children said that they were afraid of getting hurt, although there were also comments that they would be excited to see their older siblings.

4.3.8 Staff of Galston Primary School

- (a) There were 8 written responses received from staff at Galston Primary School. Six responses intimated that a full integration of the two schools was most beneficial as the facilities at Galston were excellent and would benefit the pupils of Crossroads Primary. Those in favour of the full integration also provided comment that accommodating Crossroads Primary within Galston Primary, as a separate establishment, could be problematic as it would have implications on the resources available to both Primary establishments and the Nursery School.
- (b) One respondent stated that as the Crossroads community did not want to be part of Galston Primary they should stay where they were. The remaining staff member left their response form blank thus not providing any comment on the options in the Proposal Document.

4.3.9 Other Parent Councils

- (a) Responses were received from the following schools' Parent Councils :
 - James Hamilton Academy

- Littlemill Primary School
- Mauchline Primary School and Nursery Class

The Parent Councils each took a distinct position in their response. The Littlemill Primary School Parent Council fully supported Crossroads Primary and empathised with the difficult situation in which they found themselves.

The Parent Council of James Hamilton Academy felt that in the current financial environment the Council could no longer afford the cost of the work to upgrade Crossroads Primary and that pupils could easily be accommodated within Galston Primary.

The Parent Council of Mauchline Primary expressed no definitive view on the proposals but hoped that any pupil who moved from Crossroads to Mauchline would have a smooth transition and quickly feel part of the school.

4.3.10 Elected Representatives

(a) Aileen Campbell, MSP

Ms Campbell advised that she was unable to respond as the school was outwith her constituency area.

(b) Keith Brown, MSP

Mr Brown commented that it would not be appropriate for a Scottish Minister to participate in the consultation process at this stage.

(c) Cathy Jamieson, MSP

Ms Jamieson commented on her disappointment that, despite the introduction of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, there was a consultation exercise on the future of education provision at Crossroads Primary School as this legislation's specific focus was to protect rural schools. Ms Jamieson advised that the majority of constituents who had contacted her in relation to the consultation exercise had expressed their opposition to the closure of Crossroads Primary School, that the school was seen as a vital part of the community and that the Proposal Document failed to recognise the rural nature of the school's catchment area. In addition Ms Jamieson sought clarification on future class sizes, adding that commitments given to provide parents with assurances on this area would affect the economic argument put forward by the Council.

(d) Willie Coffey, MSP

Mr Coffey's response noted that he had followed the consultation process very closely and urged officers and Cabinet to take full account of the contributions from parents and interested parties to ensure certainty about the basis for any future decision. In his submission Mr Coffey deplores the inaction of the previous Council administration who, in times of relative economic prosperity, failed to maintain the condition of Crossroads Primary. Mr Coffey also asks that further consideration be given to the role of the school in its dispersed rural community and that all parties take heed of the

comments which will be submitted by HMIE. Mr Coffey also notes the over capacity built into Galston Primary School and the additional cost that would have arisen as a result of this decision. Mr Coffey has also expressed a desire for officers to work together with parents to jointly assess the merits and concerns of modular accommodation.

(e) Cllr Maureen McKay, on behalf of the Labour Group at East Ayrshire Council

Cllr McKay advised that the Labour Group believed it to be more appropriate to await full access to all of the consultation responses, prior to concluding its final position on the consultation proposals.

4.3.11 Comment from Community Councils and Groups

(a) Galston Community Council

Galston Community Council representatives submitted 8 responses, 7 of which expressed support for the closure of Crossroads Primary. Comments indicated that the individuals concerned thought that it represented the only viable option. One response suggested that Crossroads Primary School should remain at Bellfield.

(b) Crossroads Community

A survey which had been conducted by individuals was submitted to demonstrate the sense of community feeling. The findings of this survey have been summarised previously in paragraph 4.4.1 (viii) above.

4.3.12 Comment from Council Departments / Community Planning Partners

(a) Responses were received from the following Council Departments/Services and Community Planning Partners:

- The former Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services, East Ayrshire Council
- Head of Planning and Economic Development, East Ayrshire Council
- Community Planning and Partnership Manager, East Ayrshire Council
- Strathclyde Police
- Health Care Manager, NHS Ayrshire and Arran

(b) Responses from the Council Departments/Services highlight that option 5 “aligns most clearly to the commitment of Community Planning Partners to delivering high quality services which meet the needs of residents and communities”, that in terms of road risk it provided a much safer environment.

(c) The Community Planning Partners who responded advised that the proposal, if implemented, would have little or no impact on their service provision, although the Health Care Manager identified that it may be difficult for some parents and pupils as they would have to travel.

4.3.13 Other Educational Establishment Head Teachers / Depute Head Teachers

- (a) A total of 6 responses were received from senior educational management in East Ayrshire schools. All of these responses supported the closure of Crossroads Primary and the pupils' integration into Galston Primary. Comment included a belief that the pupils from Crossroads Primary would benefit from a move to a modern school building which provided additional opportunities. One Head Teacher also believed that they were in favour of a rationalisation process which will release more funding into the system to the benefit of all pupils in East Ayrshire.

4.3.14 Other Interested Individuals

(a) **South Ayrshire Council Executive Director – Children and Community**

The response from South Ayrshire Council intimated support for option 5 and that the full catchment area of Crossroads Primary should be amalgamated with the current Galston Primary catchment area as this would ensure continuity of peer relationships.

(b) **Local Churches**

Two responses were submitted from local churches. Both expressed support for the continuation of Crossroads Primary School, arguing that the loss of ethos the school offers would be disastrous for the children and loyal parents. One of the responses suggested that from information provided by the Council that the rebuild or refurbishment of the existing Crossroads Primary School would appear to be an unrealistic choice.

(c) **Scottish Rural Schools Network (SRSN)**

- (i) The Scottish Rural Schools Network identifies themselves as “a network of community groups who campaign for the retention and strengthening of education provision in rural communities, emphasising the importance of research in establishing the true importance and value of education in rural schools, and schools' significance in the community”.
- (ii) The SRSN engaged with Council officers and a wide range of elected representatives and other interested parties throughout the consultation period. Initially comments received intimated their perception of serious flaws in the financial calculations contained within the Options Appraisal report considered by Cabinet on 16 December 2010, including the use of NPV methodology for the financial assessment. The SRSN identified these as being the under-reporting of the loss of Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) arising from the closure of Crossroads Primary, that by no longer enrolling children from South Ayrshire would further reduce the Council GAE, and that savings identified in teaching costs would result in larger class sizes.
- (iii) In their final submission the SRSN highlight what they saw as 3 specific deficiencies in the Proposal Document. These were identified as:
- Financial implications
 - Community impact

- Educational Benefits Statement

- (iv) With regard to financial implications the SRSN expressed that they “have been unhappy” with the manner in which financial details were presented and many of the assumptions used in the calculations. The document submitted states that after taking account of the financial errors the retention of a refurbished Crossroads Primary is the least expensive option for the Council. The SRSN document states that Net Present Value is not a suitable method of presenting the financial appraisal, that the proposal to transfer the £650,000 capital budget for Crossroads Primary refurbishment should be included as a capital cost in options 4 and 5. In addition the document sets out that the level of GAE lost to the Council through a closure of Crossroads Primary has been understated and that further Revenue Support Grant reductions would accrue from any change to the catchment area which removed South Ayrshire children from the total pupil roll of East Ayrshire schools. In addition the SRSN believe that savings in premises-related costs and salary costs have been overstated.
 - (v) The SRSN advise that other than including a heading in the non financial analysis for stakeholder sensitivity on each of the options “no further consideration is given to the community impact of the different options in either of the Options Appraisal paper or the actual Proposal Document”. The document further states that “The council appears to have simply ignored its legal duty to consider the impact on rural communities” and that “The Council has also ignored its obligation to examine viable alternatives to closure in the way set out in the Act....and it is hard to imagine a more complete contempt for the Council’s responsibilities in this regard”.
 - (vi) In response to the Educational Benefits Statement section of the Proposal Document the SRSN comment that the document does not make any distinction between the benefits for pupils attending Crossroads Primary and those which would arise if the proposal were to be implemented. The SRSN state that the possibility of any adverse educational consequence is not considered in the Proposal Document and that without any comparison of the merits of either establishment it “is simply not possible to determine what beneficial or adverse effects there might be”. The document further comments that HMIE have highlighted successful delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence in small rural schools, with varying standards of building, in recent times and that in an annual report by Ofsted identified small schools with 100 pupils or fewer were out-performing larger schools in all 6 identified measures.
 - (vii) The SRSN submission also comments on the high levels of placing requests which have been advised by educational and healthcare professionals and that the document does not detail the impact of a closure proposal for these children. The SRSN also raised concerns that the closure of one of the “very few remaining small primary schools in East Ayrshire...will lead to a major reduction in parental choice in this part of East Ayrshire”. The SRSN believe that “The Educational Benefits Statement provided in the Consultation Document is utterly deficient. It fails to meet the Council’s obligations under both the Act and the Statutory Guidance.”
- (d) East Ayrshire Residents / Parents of School Aged Children / Council Tax Payers**

Nine responses were received from individuals who were identifiable as East Ayrshire residents or Council Tax Payers. Of this group 5 expressed support for the retention of Crossroads Primary, with comments including that the school had a warm, friendly and secure environment, that the education was better at a small rural school and the children had different needs and pastimes to town schools and pupils.

Three individuals believed that the preferred option was the best option and in current economic conditions was the most appropriate, while one response did not provide any comment on the proposals.

4.3.15 Correspondence to East Ayrshire Council Elected Members Regarding Crossroads Primary School

All Elected Members were provided with a copy of the Proposal Document on 29 January 2010. During the consultation process Elected Members, particularly Cabinet Members, received visits to their surgeries where they were presented with a submission from the Chair of the Parent Council which included a costed proposal for modular accommodation. This information was supplied to the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services and logged as a response to the consultation process. The details of the submission has been summarised in paragraph 4.4.1 (c) above.

4.4 HMIE REPORT

4.4.1 The formal HMIE report on the Proposal Document and the submissions received during the consultation process was received by the Council on Tuesday 4 May 2010. This section summarises the contents of the report, which is also attached in full at the end of this section.

4.4.2 In addition to receiving a copy of the Proposal Document and the updated section which was issued following the Cabinet meeting of 10 March 2010 during the consultation process HMIE attended the public meeting on 18 February 2010 and visited both Crossroads and Galston Primaries. At the conclusion of the consultation period HMIE were provided with a copy of all written responses (including those responses requesting further information) and a copy of the minute of the public meeting.

4.4.3 HMIE identified that stakeholders in Crossroads Primary had expressed a number of concerns about the Council proposals and were opposed to the school closure. Parents and children valued the education provision at Crossroads Primary and did not believe that the facilities on offer at Galston would result in improved educational opportunities. Parents of Galston Primary children were also positive about the ethos within the school and they felt that there were benefits of the children from both schools learning together in the same school.

4.4.4 It was reported that children from Crossroads Primary were concerned about the closure of their school. HMIE state that they clearly expressed a desire to return to Crossroads Primary as they felt happy and enjoyed the learning and teaching which took place there. Children from Galston Primary were positive

about the additional pupils arriving and sharing the range of facilities on offer at Galston Primary.

- 4.4.5** HMIE stated that Galston Primary was “designed and built to a high specification and is compliant with all accessibility legislation....is equipped with up-to-date resources, including information communications technology (ICT), and provides an environment for learning which is inclusive, fit for purpose and supports opportunities for learning through play and physical activity”. The report highlights that a refurbished Crossroads Primary School building would not match the standard of facilities available in Galston Primary School.
- 4.4.6** The report states that levels of attainment have been of comparable standard over a three year period. Children from both schools are encouraged to achieve and success is celebrated. It was also recorded that staff from Galston Primary are sensitive to the needs of children who would transfer to the school, should the closure proposal be implemented. HMIE note that pupils with additional support needs at both schools are well supported and that the Council should ensure that this is maintained.
- 4.4.7** It was stated that staff from both establishments were involved in a range of CPD activities, and while those from Galston could share good practice with a partner who teaches at the same stage, the “opportunities for stage focused CPD are more limited” for teachers in Crossroads Primary. HMIE also commented that children attending Galston Primary from the Nursery School would benefit from these close transition arrangements and that this would also be available for children currently attending Crossroads Primary School, should the proposal be implemented.
- 4.4.8** HMIE report that “The proposal makes a strong case for the Council’s focus on achieving continuous improvement in performance while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality of learners’ experiences and sustainable development” and that the proposal identifies the benefits of efficient management of resources for children and young people in East Ayrshire. In terms of investing the capital sum of £650,000 previously allocated to Crossroads Primary to the PE facilities at Loudoun Academy, HMIE comment that, “Should the closure proceed the Council would be better placed to ensure that school accommodation supported its aspirations for positive, flexible and stimulating learning environments”.
- 4.4.9** HMIE comment that further liaison would be required with stakeholders on transport arrangements, the transition processes and staffing enhancements. In addition the Council are asked to address issues raised during the process on meeting the learning needs and personal and social development of the children of Crossroads Primary School.
- 4.4.10** In summary HMIE identify that the proposal is “likely to result in a quality of educational experience for children of Crossroads Primary School and Galston Primary School which, across a range of aspects, is the same as or better than that which they currently experience. There is also likely to be a general benefit, deriving from more efficient use of resources, for learners in the wider community”. HMIE also record that the savings which would result

from the proposal being implemented “would contribute to its actions to secure best value for available resources”.

4.4.11 The full text of the HMIE report is set out below :

CONSULTATION PROPOSAL BY EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT BY HMIE ADDRESSING EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND TRANSFER CHILDREN TO GALSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Introduction

1.1 *East Ayrshire Council proposes the closure of Crossroads Primary School and transfer of the pupils to Galston Primary School in August 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter.*

1.2 *The report from HMIE is required under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. It has been prepared by HMIE in accordance with the terms of the Act. Whilst the Act became statute on 5 April 2010, East Ayrshire Council carried out the consultation under the Act's terms because the consultation and decision-making processes extended into the period which will be covered by the Act. National guidance on the preparation of Educational Benefits Statements was not available to the council when it prepared its proposals.*

1.3 *HM Inspectors undertook the following activities in considering the educational aspects of the proposal:*

- *attendance at the public meeting held on 18th February 2010 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 (EBS) and including consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;*
- *consideration of further representations made directly to HMIE on relevant educational aspects of the proposal;*
- *consideration of further information on all schools affected; and*
- *visits to the site of Crossroads Primary School, to Bellfield Primary School and to Galston Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.*

1.4 *HMIE considered:*

- *the likely effects for children of Crossroads Primary School, for any other users, for children likely to become pupils of the school within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper, and for other children and young people in the local authority area;*
- *any other likely effects of the proposal;*
- *how the authority intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and*

- *benefits which the authority believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the authority's reasons for coming to these beliefs.*

2. Consultation process

2.1 East Ayrshire Council undertook the initial consultation on its proposals with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The consultation included an invitation for written submissions and a public meeting held on 18 February 2010. As a result of an amendment made by the council to the proposal document, the consultation period was extended by one week.

2.2 Stakeholders in Crossroads Primary School expressed a number of concerns about the council proposals and were opposed to it. Parents felt that the children were very well known to all staff at Crossroads Primary School and that the school had an inclusive ethos in which each individual learner was valued. They were concerned that in a bigger school there would be a detrimental impact on the identification of, and action to address, children's learning needs, on the social and emotional development of children and on the strong community links which impacted on in-class and out-of-class learning. Whilst they recognised that the proposed receiving school, Galston Primary School, had better facilities overall, they did not agree that the facilities and resources would result in improved educational opportunities for the children.

2.3 Parents of children attending Galston Primary School were positive about the benefits for children from both schools from learning together in the same school. They felt that existing curricular links and joint activities involving both schools benefited all children and contributed positively to children learning with and from each other. They also felt that all children would have greater opportunities for developing a range of skills and interests through increased parental and community engagement in the life and work of the school.

2.4 Parents from each school were positive about the ethos, quality of teaching and learning, and children's attainment and achievement in their child's school. In both school communities they had concerns about the impact of the proposal on class composition and the extent to which this might lead to children being separated from others in their friendship groups. The parents of children attending Crossroads Primary School in particular had concerns about class sizes.

2.5 Children at Crossroads Primary School were concerned about the possible closure of the school. Although they had successfully settled into Bellfield Primary School when they were decanted from Crossroads Primary School in August 2009 and a number had made new friends there, children were concerned about a permanent move which would result in being separated from some of their classmates. They were very clear that they wanted to move back to Crossroads Primary School. They said that their teachers knew them and that all the children knew each other. They felt that Crossroads Primary School was a happy and friendly school and that they enjoyed learning there. Children at Galston Primary School were positive about welcoming their peers from Crossroads Primary School and sharing with them the range of facilities the building had to offer.

3. Educational aspects of the proposal

3.1 The council's proposal sets out a number of potential benefits for current and future pupils of Crossroads Primary School. Galston Primary School is designed and built to a high specification and is compliant with all accessibility legislation. It has a working capacity of 459 and currently 277 children attend the school. It therefore has capacity to take in the children at Crossroads Primary School, currently 52 pupils, without becoming overcrowded. Galston Primary School is equipped with up-to-date resources, including information and communications technology (ICT), and provides an environment for learning which is inclusive, fit for purpose and supports opportunities for learning through play and physical activity. Classrooms and other areas including the gym hall, library, music and ICT areas offer considerable flexibility. There are significant structural problems with the building at Crossroads Primary School. Although it had been allocated funding for refurbishment, this work would not, once complete, upgrade the building to the standard of the facilities in Galston Primary School nor make it compliant with accessibility legislation.

3.2 The curriculum in both schools is of a broadly similar quality. Teachers are working to develop the curriculum taking account of Curriculum for Excellence. They are continuing to develop children's awareness in, and understanding of, the importance of healthy lifestyles. In both schools, a range of activities and initiatives including aspects of citizenship, and eco and enterprise activities help to develop children's personal and social skills. Attainment levels over the three year period from 2006 to 2009 are generally of a comparable standard. Most children in both Crossroads Primary School and Galston Primary School attain national standards in reading and mathematics and slightly fewer do so in writing. In both establishments children enjoy a range of positive learning experiences including out-of-school activities and opportunities to develop their skills and interests in after-school clubs. Children at Crossroads Primary School benefit particularly from parental and community involvement in the life and work of the school. Children in both schools are encouraged to achieve and their successes are celebrated well. In both schools there are opportunities for children to take on roles of responsibility including through committees and the pupil council and as buddies.

3.3 The acting headteacher, staff, parents, Parent Council and children at Galston Primary School are sensitive to the needs of the children who would transfer from Crossroads Primary School if the proposal goes ahead. They are committed to welcoming and demonstrating concern for the care and welfare of any new pupils. Children at Galston Primary School reported that they were looking forward to making the new pupils welcome should the proposal go ahead. In both schools, children with additional support needs are well supported and benefit from the schools' links with appropriate external services. The council should ensure that the current strengths are maintained should the proposal go ahead.

3.4 The council's educational benefits statement (EBS) states that, as part of its focus on improving learning and teaching, the authority promotes teacher 'professional learning communities' where teachers share best practice and agree programmes of continuing professional development (CPD) to improve their teaching practice. In both establishments, staff are involved in a range of CPD activities with colleagues in their own establishment and within the learning community. In Galston Primary School, each teacher is able to develop her/his skills and share good practice with a partner who teaches a class at the same stage. Although Crossroads

Primary School is part of a small schools network, opportunities for stage-focused CPD are more limited.

3.5 Galston Primary School and Nursery School share the same building. There is effective communication between staff in the nursery and school. Children in the nursery use school facilities and take part in joint activities with children in the school. They are familiar with the school and staff and are confident in using the facilities and, as a result, transitions for children transferring to P1 in Galston Primary School are smooth. Should the proposal go ahead, children who transfer to Galston Primary School from its nursery class instead of, as some would have done, entering the P1 stage at Crossroads Primary School, would benefit from these links.

3.6 There are alternative venues within the locality of Crossroads Primary School for community use should demand increase in the future.

3.7 The council's proposal is based principally on best value, taking account of its responsibility to use its resources effectively and efficiently. It recognises that a modern, quality schools infrastructure has a key role in supporting and enhancing the teaching and learning environment. It has set out clearly in the proposal the condition and suitability of both Crossroads Primary School and Galston Primary School. As children from both schools transfer to Loudoun Academy at the end of P7, the proposal does not impact on the learning experiences of other children and young people in the local authority area. The proposal makes a strong case for the council's focus on achieving continuous improvement in performance while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality of learners' experiences and sustainable development. The council has demonstrated the impact that the closure of Crossroads Primary School would have in terms of meeting the council's objectives of reducing surplus capacity, addressing maintenance issues and improving property flexibility, and improving accessibility for children whilst meeting the statutory requirements of accessibility legislation. The proposal identifies the potential benefits through efficient management of resources for children and young people in East Ayrshire.

3.8 The council also identifies the potential benefit for children and young people in the Loudoun Academy Learning Community as a consequence of closure of Crossroads Primary School. Specifically it proposes to allocate the savings accrued from not refurbishing Crossroads Primary School to improving the physical education facilities at Loudoun Academy. Should the closure proceed the council would be better placed to ensure that school accommodation supported its aspirations for positive, flexible and stimulating learning environments and reduced barriers to learning for children and young people throughout East Ayrshire.

3.9 The council has indicated that children attending Crossroads Primary School will be entitled to transport to Galston Primary School in accordance with council policy. The proposal does not describe how transport arrangements might allow children to continue to participate in the full range of school life and after-school activities when they live at an increased distance from school.

3.10 The council managed the recent decant of Crossroads Primary School to Bellfield Primary School well. In the EBS, the council confirms its intention to establish, in consultation with stakeholders, a transition programme so that the transition of children to Galston Primary School is effected with the minimum disruption to learning and teaching. The council should provide more detail on its

proposal, including its commitments to support the transition through 'lead in' time for the transition process and enhancements of staffing, and should explain how it will monitor and report on the transition arrangements. The council needs to address concerns raised during the consultation with regard to the broader educational benefits of the proposal, in particular, in relation to meeting the learning needs and the personal and social development of the children of Crossroads Primary School.

3.11 The council's proposal takes account of a number of its approaches to implementing national policies and aspirations, endorsed in its Single Outcome Agreement and Community Plan. It has demonstrated that the proposed receiving school can accommodate the additions to the roll. It should reassure parents by providing them with information about the effects of the increased roll on class sizes and composition, in particular in relation to P1 to P3.

4. Summary

4.1 East Ayrshire Council's proposal is likely to result in a quality of educational experience for children from Crossroads Primary School and Galston Primary School which, across a range of aspects, is the same as or better than that which they currently experience. There is also likely to be a general benefit, deriving from more efficient use of resources, for learners in the wider community.

4.2 Some stakeholders expressed strong concerns about the proposal, including an impact on children's personal and social development, the planned approaches to identifying and meeting their learning needs, the plans for class composition and transport arrangements. The council should reassure stakeholders by providing further information for them on these aspects of the proposal.

4.3 The council has set out a case that the savings resulting from implementation of the proposal would contribute to its actions to secure best value for available resources. This argument is strong in the context of over-capacity of places within the primary schools in East Ayrshire.

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4.5 REQUESTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

4.5.1 Of the 71 requests for further information, 70 (98.6%) came from 4 individuals, three of whom are parents of children attending Crossroads Primary School and the other representing the Scottish Rural Schools Network (SRSN). The information sought included:

- Detail on the option appraisal costing, including revenue savings arising from the closure of Crossroads Primary School.
- How the Council believed it had complied with the School (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 in completing its Educational Benefits Statement.
- How the Council believed it had demonstrated compliance on the community aspects of the consultation proposal.

- The maintenance regime in place for the existing Crossroads Primary School building.
- Whether the Council had considered the use of modular accommodation on a long term basis for Crossroads Primary.
- How the education authority had consulted with pupils of Crossroads and Galston Primaries and the children of Galston Nursery School.
- Staffing and class structures at both Crossroads and Galston Primaries, and the proposed staffing and class structures.

4.5.2 It is acknowledged that respondents may not have agreed with the responses which were issued to them, however every effort, during the consultation period, was made to provide suitable responses to the requests for further information which involved the input from a number of officials from a range of service departments.

5. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

5.1 Once the Council received HMIE's report on 4 May 2010, Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 required the Council to review the relevant proposal (Option 5), which is referred to at the beginning of this report, having had regard (in particular) to the written representations that have been received by it during the consultation period; oral representations made to it at the public meeting held on 18 February 2010 at Galston Primary School; and HMIE's report. In terms of Section 10(2) (e) of the said Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Consultation Report requires to contain a statement explaining how the Council complied with its duty under the above Section 9(1) of the Act. In terms of Section 13(3) of the said Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Consultation Report also requires to contain a statement explaining how the Council complied with its duty under Section 12 of the Act when reviewing the relevant proposal in terms of Section 9(1) above.

5.2 On 18 May 2010, Council Officers convened a special meeting for the purposes of reviewing the relevant proposal (Option 5) having had regard to the written representation received by the Council during the public consultation period; the verbal representations made to it at the said public meeting; and HMIE's report, all as more particularly summarised in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.6 above. When reviewing the proposal (Option 5) against the written and verbal responses as well as the terms of the HMIE's report, the Council had regard to the terms of Section 12 of the Act and the factors that required to be considered, in particular:

- (a) whether there was any viable alternative to the closure proposal
- (b) what the likely effect may be on the local community on consequence of the proposal (if implemented); and
- (c) what the likely effect caused by the different travel arrangements for pupils, staff and any other users of the school facilities that may be required in consequence of the proposal (if implemented), including any environmental impact.

5.3 In complying with section 13(3) (b) of the 2010 Act and having carried out the review mentioned above, Council officers concluded that its attitude to Option

5 had not substantially changed and that Option 5 should proceed, with the qualification that the catchment areas of Crossroads Primary School should be added unchanged into the catchment area of Galston Primary School. The detailed reasons for retaining option 5 are more fully set out within the remainder of this report.

6. THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO WRITTEN AND ORAL REPRESENTATIONS AND HMIE'S REPORT

6.1 It can be seen from Section 4 of this report that the consultation generated a considerable degree of interest from a wide range of stakeholders, and that a number of specific points raised require responses which are detailed throughout.

6.2 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.2.1 Treatment of Grant Aided Expenditure / Revenue Support Grant

- (a)** As detailed in paragraphs 4.4.1 (b) and 4.4.14 (c) the Parent Council of Crossroads Primary School and the Scottish Rural Schools Network commented that there were inaccuracies within the Council's financial appraisal. In particular during the consultation process officers considered comments received in relation to the treatment of Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE). Having reviewed all of the financial data, which was incorporated in to each of the 5 options which were presented to Cabinet on 16 December 2009 as part of the options appraisal exercise, officers recalculated the loss of GAE which could arise if the proposal to close Crossroads Primary School was implemented. This resulted in increased Net Present Value (NPV) costs for both options 4 and 5 and the implications of this were referred to Cabinet on 10 March 2010.
- (b)** Although the increased NPV costs for option 4 (the relocation of Crossroads Primary School to accommodation within Galston Primary School) and option 5 (closure of Crossroads Primary School and integration of pupils into Galston Primary School) did not in any way materially affect the overall scores of these options, or the comparative score of the preferred option against all other options, Cabinet agreed that the consultation period should be extended by one week to 26 March 2010, as this would allow respondents to take full account of the changes in the NPV calculations when submitting their responses.
- (c)** The SRSN also stated that the Council would lose further central government grant as the numbers of children attending Crossroads Primary but resident in South Ayrshire would reduce by 1 per year if the closure proposal was implemented. In fact, the Council has always remained neutral on changes to the current Crossroads Primary School delineated area. Officers confirmed at the public meeting that, even if the closure proposal was implemented and the existing catchment area of Crossroads Primary was altered to take only that part which is within East Ayrshire, younger siblings of pupils currently attending Crossroads Primary School from South Ayrshire would be eligible to attend Galston Primary School. It is therefore appropriate to include this cohort of pupils in future roll projections and to assume that there would be no associated loss of Revenue Support Grant.

6.2.2 Revenue Savings Accruing from the Implementation of the Proposal

- (a) As detailed in paragraphs 4.4.1 (b) (iii) and 4.4.14 (c) (iv) responses expressed opinion that the identified revenue savings on staff and utility costs had been overstated in the Options Appraisal exercise. Responding to these comments, the appropriate officers reviewed the staff savings and confirmed that a saving in the basic teaching entitlement of 1.6 FTE staff will be achieved, which coupled with changes in managerial structures and clerical savings equates to £87,331 per annum at present costs.
- (b) Paragraph 4.4.1 (b) (iii) details the response of the Parent Council of Crossroads Primary School regarding the Council's transition arrangements for school mergers where up to 2 additional teachers are allocated for a period of two academic sessions beyond the date of the schools merging. In practice this, under normal conditions, has meant all teaching staff from the schools concerned being employed in the merged school. The budget for this additional cost is held in a central cost centre and allocated to the school concerned for the appropriate period; this explains why the additional staff incurred would not result in an additional budgeted cost for the Council.

In addition to basic entitlement both schools have enhanced staffing levels to maintain smaller class sizes. It is assumed that this staffing enhancement will be maintained when the schools are brought together. In addition the Council has allocated funding for 21.2 FTE teachers from a central source to reduce the class sizes in P1-3. These points therefore negate the comment that additional teachers will be required to budget for further staff to achieve smaller P1-3 class sizes.

The Council also receives an allocation of fully funded probationary teachers which it uses to bring down class sizes. It is envisaged that the use of this resource will continue in future years, although it is uncertain what numbers of fully funded probationary teachers will be allocated to East Ayrshire in future years.

- (c) Paragraph 4.4.1 (b) (iii) details that the Parent Council also queried the savings resulting from the property element of the proposal. It was argued that pupils will bring with them an overhead cost for heat and light, use of PCs and water. In fact all areas of Galston Primary and Nursery Schools are utilised by pupils, and significant use is already made of ICT facilities throughout the two establishments. It is not envisaged that there would be any material increase in energy costs arising from the additional pupils who would attend Galston Primary School.

With the significant green technologies incorporated into Galston Primary School, including gray water recovery which is used to flush toilets, it is also assumed that there would not be a significant increase in water usage at the school accruing from the additional pupils.

- (d) The full janitorial and cleaning costs associated with Crossroads Primary are also accurately identified as revenue savings since these services are already in place across the Galston Nursery and Primary Schools. In addition the fixed staff costs for catering at Crossroads Primary were correctly identified as a

revenue saving, while the variable meal cost has been assumed to transfer to Galston Primary School with pupils. It has been assumed that the ancillary staff concerned would be redeployed to alternative posts under the Council's redeployment policy into vacancies and therefore there would be no additional cost arising to the Council.

- (e) At paragraph 4.4.14 (c) (ii) the SRSN also queried the appropriateness of using Net Present Value (NPV) as a method determining the financial value of each option. The process which was followed in the Options Appraisal exercise was to assess the costs and savings associated with each option in a consistent manner. It is therefore appropriate to assess the costs using NPV methodology. This is entirely consistent with the HM Treasury Green Book for options appraisal and was also recognised as being a suitable methodology for this purpose within the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy guide on Capital Planning and Option Appraisal. It is the method used in other Council projects such as the replacement Patna Primary School / St Xavier's Primary School project and has been accepted by the Council as a sound method.

Respondents also questioned, reported at paragraph 4.4.14 (c) (iv), the decision to exclude the capital cost of refurbishing PE facilities at Loudoun Academy from options 4 and 5. The rationale behind this treatment was that the refurbishment of the PE facilities is not reliant upon the closure of Crossroads Primary School and the proposal of moving the capital budget from Crossroads Primary School to Loudoun Academy is only one potential method of funding the cost of these works.

6.3 EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT (EBS)

6.3.1 The statutory guidance which has been issued for the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 provides detail on what should be included within the Educational Benefits Statement. The guidance states that authorities should set out the effect of the proposal for different school users, however it is also clear that it does not limit or list the range of factors which should be taken into consideration and/or articulate in the Educational Benefits Statement. Guidance on the EBS was issued during the consultative process, nevertheless officers measured the guidance to see if any amendment was necessary.

6.3.2 The published guidance comments that authorities should set out how its proposal will improve the quality of the curriculum and create positive environments for more effective learning and teaching. It should focus on how the proposal will improve the depth, breadth, coherence, relevance, challenge and enjoyment provided by the curriculum and demonstrate how opportunities for greater personalisation and choice in learning and improved progression will enhance children's experiences. The Proposal Document clearly sets out the benefits that children currently attending Crossroads Primary School would receive at Galston Primary School in a number of areas such as:

- Classrooms which have been specifically designed to facilitate "active learning approaches";
- An infant structured play area;

- Separate ICT, library and music rooms;
- Separate gym and dining halls;
- Formal outdoor learning areas; and
- A building which is fully accessible and compliant with disability discrimination legislation.

6.3.3 Within the Educational Benefits Statement is commentary that as a result of the excellent facilities available within Galston Primary, which are described above, there would be enhanced learning and teaching opportunities provided for the children presently at Crossroads Primary School and better facilitating the delivery of the key elements of a Curriculum for Excellence. HMIE note that the curriculum and attainment levels at both schools are broadly similar.

6.3.4 The strength of Galston Primary School as an educational facility has been recognised by the Scottish Government. In recent correspondence to officers on the publication of a guidance leaflet for parents / guardians on what they can expect from their local authority and the Scottish Government when a change to their school is being proposed, what their role is and how they can have their voice heard the Government have advised that they selected six schools to use in this literature. These schools are examples which best convey the confidence that a new or refurbished school can provide and which engender an environment where communities grow and children thrive. The purpose of this correspondence was to notify that they (the Scottish Government) felt that the image of Galston Primary School was particularly strong in this regard and would appear in the publication. The Scottish Government have subsequently published their Guide to the Schools (Consultation) Act 2010 which features a photograph of Galston Primary School.

6.3.5 Scottish Government guidance also recognises the role of ICT in enhancing the educational experiences for children. This factor was also recognised within the Educational Benefits Statement at paragraph 5.7.2 (ii) which details the levels of ICT investment which were incorporated into the new school building. The HMIE report also commented favourably that Galston Primary School was equipped with ICT. It is believed that this will enhance all staff and pupils' experience in providing enhanced opportunities for greater personalisation such as the use of ICT to access digital learning and teaching materials through the GLOW platform.

6.3.6 The Statutory Guidance also comments on the ability of a school to promote an inclusive educational experience. As a building designed to meet the needs of a 21st Century educational experience Galston is fully DDA compliant with appropriate welfare and medical facilities, which cannot be matched at the existing Crossroads Primary building. HMIE comment that both schools employ a range of activities which assist in the development of personal and social skills. The details of extra-curricular activities were included within the Educational Benefits Statement, as was comment on the care and welfare facilities at paragraph 5.7.2 (iii) in that report.

6.3.7 The guidance also includes the need to comment on the condition of respective school buildings. It is recognised within that the condition of the

Crossroads Primary building was not designed to meet either the delivery of a modern curriculum or accessibility legislation, unlike the Galston Primary building. It is also evident that the building fabric of Crossroads Primary has significant defects. Both the education authority and HMIE have confirmed that there is sufficient space within Galston Primary School to successfully accommodate the additional pupils from Crossroads Primary.

6.3.8 Also considered within the Educational Benefits Statement is consideration of CPD opportunities for both sets of staff. HMIE conclude that staff working at Crossroads Primary have a more limited opportunity for stage-focused CPD unlike their Galston Primary counterparts.

6.3.9 The Educational Benefits Statement also included the transition benefits which would accrue for pre-school children moving into the Primary School. These comments were supported by HMIE who agreed that children attending Galston Nursery School would benefit from an easier transition by attending Galston Primary rather than Crossroads Primary.

6.3.10 Many parents expressed a strong belief that the education provision at a small school was superior to that which could be delivered at a larger establishment. However, Douglas Cairns, HM Assistant Chief Inspector from HMIE, advised the Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee at the 4th meeting of its stage 1 review of the 2010 Act that :-

“Since 2003, we have identified 221 schools in the remote rural and accessible rural categories and have inspected 134, or about 60 per cent, which is a large sample. We considered the follow-through decisions that were made about those schools compared with a national average that was established from 2005 to 2008. The timescales are therefore slightly different. The overall conclusion was that the proportion of small rural schools that fall into the weak category is almost exactly the same—around a fifth—as the national average. A slightly greater proportion—by around 7 per cent—than the national average, or around a third compared with a quarter, fall into the very good category. Roughly half the schools—46 per cent of small rural schools and 54 per cent of schools nationally—fall into the middle category. Therefore, there are slight differences at the top end but, by and large, the spectrum of quality across small rural primary schools seems to be much the same as the national average.”

Therefore it can be seen from the above comments that there is no definitive advantage to be gained for pupils being educated in a smaller school, if the HMIE assertion is to be accepted.

6.3.11 In summary it can be demonstrated that the Educational Benefits Statement follows the guidance as set by the Scottish Government, and in support of this no opinion to the contrary was expressed by HMIE in their response submission.

6.4 COMMUNITY ASPECTS

6.4.1 A number of respondents claimed that under section 12 (sub section 3) of the 2010 Act that the Council had not considered any, or all, viable alternatives to the closure proposal. In fact options 1 to 4 of the Proposal Document, which were included at sections 5.1 to 5.4 of the Proposal Document, provide alternatives to the closure proposal. For the avoidance of doubt the points below highlight what these options represent:

- Option 1 – retention of the school on its existing site and refurbishment to existing standards;
- Option 2 – retention of the school on its existing site with a refurbishment and upgrade to modern standards;
- Option 3 – retention of the school on its existing site with a new build development
- Option 4 – retention of the school as a separate educational establishment but relocated to accommodation within Galston Primary.

The above demonstrates that officers considered a range of alternatives, including its relocation to alternative accommodation.

6.4.2 Although Cabinet had agreed on 16 December 2009 that the closure proposal was its preferred choice all of the 5 options were available for stakeholders to respond to on an equal basis. The fact that a number of respondents chose to submit a return which favoured an option other than the closure proposal clearly demonstrates that there were alternative courses of action available for consultation purposes.

6.4.3 In addition to the 5 options identified for consultation several respondents, including the Parent Council of Crossroads Primary, recommended the supply of modular accommodation as a long term measure. This had previously been discounted by officers on the grounds that has been previous Council practice, since 1996, to remove modular accommodation from other schools such as Dunlop, Newmilns and Mauchline Primary Schools. In addition the costs of this course of action would be in excess of £570,000 and would not represent best value. It is noted that HMIE have noted that the implementation of the preferred option would assist in Council actions to achieve best value for money.

6.4.4 As detailed in paragraph 4.4.2 (f) above one parent had provided the offer of ground for school facilities, with the school having its heating and lighting powered by a bio-digester plant. This proposal had been discounted previously in both a report to Cabinet in December 2008 and at the public meeting held on 18 February 2010 as the proposal remains at the concept stage, and would perhaps take several years to come to fruition and, given that the position at the Crossroads Primary School site requires to be dealt with as quickly as possible, this offer was not considered feasible.

6.4.5 A number of parents commented that the closure of Crossroads Primary would reduce parental choice.

6.4.6 This is clearly not the case for Crossroads Primary. A map which is attached as Annex 3 details Crossroads Primary and the facilities available within a 1 mile, 2 mile, 3 mile, 4 mile and 5 mile radius. The table details the schools which are available within a 3, 4 and 5 mile radius.

Table : Schools by Proximity to Crossroads Primary

STRAIGHT LINE DISTANCE FROM CROSSROADS PRIMARY	EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS
3 miles	Hurlford Primary, Galston Primary, Bellfield Primary, Kirkstyle Primary, Shortlees Primary, St Sophia's Primary
4 miles	The above plus Newmilns Primary, New Farm Primary, Silverwood Primary, St Andrew's Primary, Loanhead Primary, Gargieston Primary
5 miles	The above plus Annanhill Primary, Onthank Primary, Hillhead Primary, Mauchline Primary, Tarbolton Primary (South Ayrshire).

6.4.7 The table highlights that there are 17 Primary Schools within a 5 mile radius of Crossroads Primary, including all of the primaries within Kilmarnock. This indicates that, should the proposal be implemented, there remains a significant degree of parental choice available within the distance prescribed by Mr Longmuir. Indeed this point was recorded in the report to Cabinet on 19 March 2008 on the previous consultation exercise undertaken for Crossroads Primary. The report states :-

“The argument that the closure of the school would remove an element of choice from parents, who might choose the small rural school option for their children, is an understandable one. However, it has to be counterbalanced against the need to look dispassionately at existing provision and plan for efficient educational provision, keeping in mind best value, for children according to population trends and projections”.

6.4.8 This factor is also noted by HMIE in their submission which confirms the view that the closure proposal will contribute to the Council's best value arrangements and is a strong argument in the context of over capacity within the primary school estate.

6.4.9 The Council had, in previously considering the future of Crossroads Primary, acknowledged that “Given the size and nature of Crossroads, it is considered that Crossroads Primary School is situated in a position that is peripheral to the main urban area in East Ayrshire – Kilmarnock, to which arguments of urban community and regeneration are more relevant.” The report to Cabinet on 19 March 2008 also intimated that the closure of Crossroads Primary would “not detract from that level of sustainability and the Crossroads area will continue to be recognised as being situated on the periphery of East Ayrshire's main hub town.”

6.4.10 Some respondents also commented on the wider community use of the school facilities, arguing that these groups were using alternative venues due to the high letting costs. Information from the Community Learning and Development service has confirmed that the Crossroads Young Farmers Group had no recorded use of the school facilities in the letting system, but that they had made use of Loudoun Academy most recently in June 2009.

Members will be aware that the annual letting charges are presented to Cabinet for consideration and approval on an annual basis and that charges are consistent for all East Ayrshire establishments.

- 6.4.11** The school makes use of the local church in Hurlford. However, this apart there are no local businesses like a shop or post office which rely on the school for a significant part of their annual income.
- 6.4.12** In the case of Crossroads Primary there is no record of the establishment making use of such external facilities and supporting local economic enterprises; therefore there are no businesses or organisations which would have their income stream significantly reduced by the implementation of the closure proposal. In addition East Ayrshire Council's Draft Local Plan does not identify any housing or commercial development opportunities within the vicinity of the school.
- 6.4.13** The Council does recognise the value placed by parents on the school facilitating social interaction. If implemented, the proposal would further enhance the ability of parents to network with a broader range of parents and allow them to share their educational experiences. This factor was not always seen as a positive step as one parent commented in e-mailed correspondence that "We choose to socialize with likeminded people from similar country backgrounds with similar pursuits and concerns".
- 6.4.14** The Council's current policy is to provide free transport to all primary aged children who reside more than 1 mile from their catchment area school. Therefore pupils, currently attending Crossroads Primary and travelling more than 1 mile from home to school, will be entitled to school transport. It should be noted that, in line with legislation, it is the responsibility of the parents of children attending Crossroads Primary by way of placing requests, and who are not included in the new catchment area which might result from any change, to make their own arrangements to transport their children to school. Therefore all children residing within the proposed extended Galston Primary School catchment area, and living more than 1 mile from the school, would receive free transport to school. Those parents of the 8 children attending Crossroads Primary School from Darvel and Newmilns would have a shorter distance to transport their children to school, assuming they chose to send their children to Galston Primary School. These arrangements will therefore minimise any environmental impact.
- 6.4.15** Until the school's decant to Bellfield Primary in August 2009 there had been no let for any community group since November 2007. Responses were received which indicated that new community groups were, or had been, established during the consultation period. However, there is no verifiable evidence that these groups would make use of the facilities. HMIE also comment that "There are alternative venues within the locality of Crossroads Primary School for community use should demand increase in the future".
- 6.4.16** During the consultation period, and in many responses, the community aspect of the school was raised by parents. For example the community survey submitted by the Parent Council which is summarised in paragraph 4.4.1.(b) (viii) identifies that the vast majority of respondents believe that the school is an important community asset. It should be noted, however, that from the

September 2009 census 29 children (55.8%) out of a roll of 52 pupils were attending Crossroads Primary by way of placing request, and that outside of school times and during school holiday periods these children and their families are members of other communities; this is reflected in the comments of some Crossroads Primary pupils who commented in their circle time discussion that one benefit of moving to Galston Primary would be attending school with friends who are already pupils at Galston Primary. Thus it is clear that the school community of Crossroads Primary is very diluted in terms of local community attendees and the closure proposal would reduce travel distances incurred for parents transporting their children to Crossroads from Darvel, Newmilns and Galston.

6.5 ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRANSFERRING CHILDREN FROM CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL TO GALSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

- 6.5.1** In their response HMIE indicated that further detail was required to address concerns raised by stakeholders on transition arrangements and enhanced staffing following the combination of the two schools. Paragraph 6.4.14 (above) details the proposed transport arrangements, with issues of transition and staffing being set out in the remaining paragraphs of this section.
- 6.5.2** In order to transfer the children from Crossroads Primary School to Galston Primary School with the least disruption to the pupils' learning, ensuring that emotionally the pupils will encounter as little stress as possible, an extensive transition programme would be put in place. It is envisaged that this transition would extend from August 2010 to October 2010, provided Scottish Government agreement to the closure of Crossroads Primary School is obtained. As with any change of school for a pupil, all records including Pupil Progress Record, assessment portfolio, Additional Support Needs files including support plans, Care and Welfare file and samples of pupils work would be made available to the receiving teachers in Galston Primary. In addition, throughout the transition process, the class teachers from Galston Primary would visit their Crossroads Primary colleagues on a number of occasions to discuss the individual Crossroads pupils' attainment levels, learning styles, personal and social development and learning needs of the individual Crossroads pupils. As both schools make use of the same mathematics programme of study it would be possible to identify the Maths groups of the Crossroads pupils in advance.
- 6.5.3** In preparation for the transition programme both Head Teachers will discuss and put in place areas of the curriculum which could be mirrored in each of the schools such as Personal and Social Development topics, social subjects, Religious Education programmes and a similar focus for assemblies.
- 6.5.4** The ongoing progression of the Crossroads pupils' learning and personal and social development is of the greatest importance. Loudoun Learning Community, of which Crossroads is a partner, have in place a very effective transition programme. The elements of this would be easily adapted to the transition process of the Crossroads pupils to Galston Primary. Pupils from Crossroads would visit Galston for increasing lengths of time throughout the transition process. There would be a focus during each of these visits which could include:

- Joint activities
- Using the PE and ICT facilities
- Joining circle time
- Working in their identified maths or language groups
- Attending assemblies
- Staying for lunch and interval
- Meeting support staff

6.5.5 Prior to the final transfer of the Crossroads pupils some bridging topics, for example, a book study or a science topic can commence in parallel classes to facilitate the integration of pupils from both schools into the one class.

6.5.6 Normal Council policy in relation to enhanced teaching staff arrangements of 2.0 FTE have been detailed in paragraph 6.2.2 (b) above and it is proposed that this would be followed in this instance. Any existing Crossroads Primary staff who are not redeployed to Galston Primary would be subject to current Council policy for redeployment to other suitable work tasks. In doing so, every attempt would be made to ensure that there is minimum disruption (including minimum travel disruption) for any staff affected by the implementation of the closure proposal.

6.5.7 In addition to the curricular arrangements which would be put into place to ensure a smooth transition officers would ensure that regular updates are provided to the Parent Councils and wider parent forums of both schools. This would include facilitating joint Parent Council meetings, providing stakeholders with regular updates via newsletters and organising open evenings where parents of Crossroads Primary children can view the facilities on offer in the school building.

6.5.8 As both schools are located within the same Learning Community it is proposed that the Quality Improvement Officer for the schools would monitor the progress of transition arrangements and would report back to the Head of Service : Schools.

6.6 THE AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORS OF EDUCATION (HMIE)

The full HMIE report is referred to in its entirety at paragraph 4.5 above.

6.6.1 In summary, HMIE have taken a broadly similar view to the Council of the advantages of closing Crossroads Primary School and moving the children to Galston Primary School. They have also identified a number of issues which they believe the Council should address. These latter matters are indeed ones on which the Council would wish to reassure parents, and this is explained in more detail below.

6.6.2 HMIE observe that the "Council should ensure the current strengths of Galston Primary School are maintained should the proposal go ahead". Galston Primary School has established high standards that are now enhanced by its new building and setting. It is regularly visited by Authority staff who monitor the school's improvement plans and the educational standards reached. This monitoring includes provision for children with

additional support needs. Taken with the school's own self evaluation procedures, therefore, mechanisms are in place to ensure that current strengths are maintained.

- 6.6.3** The report also seeks comment on how the “transport arrangements might allow for children to continue to participate in the full range of school life and after-school activities when they live at an increased distance”. Under the arrangements at Crossroads before the decant to Bellfield the majority of pupils live within that part of the catchment area where there is an entitlement to free transport and this will not change. For some children the proposal will result in them being educated closer to their home than at present. Where the school organises extra-curricular activities or excursions it is expected that the plans will include provision to ensure that children can arrive home safely. For after school clubs the authority would not provide free transport, but this represents a similar position to that which already exists at Crossroads presently, before the decant.
- 6.6.4** HMIE also ask the Council to provide more detail on “transition arrangements, lead in time; for the transition process and enhancements of staffing and should explain how it will monitor and report on transition arrangements.” Experience has proved that a well managed transition process can lead to an enhancement of the learning experience. If these proposals are agreed, both schools will work together on matters such as harmonising the curricula of the two establishments and ensuring that there is effective transfer of pupil records which are presented in formats that will allow continuity in monitoring of progress and reporting. Parents will receive information on these aspects of the process and be invited to attend workshops. Parents and pupils will be shown around the new school with the opportunity to meet staff and pupils as well as visit the facilities. There will be opportunities for children to attend shared events such as sports days and excursions and to work on joint activities and projects. The Head Teachers of both schools will be able to learn from the experience of St Andrew's Primary School, Kilmarnock, where two establishments were successfully brought together. More information and detail is given about the aspects of the proposed transitional arrangements in section 6.5 above.
- 6.6.5** The inspectors also state “the Council needs to address the broader educational benefits of the proposal, in particular, in relation to meeting the learning needs and the personal and social development of the children of Crossroads Primary School.” The Council is committed to meeting the learning needs of all children irrespective of the establishment or location of their education. There are well developed policies on both inclusion and additional support needs which have received endorsement from HMIE. The actions and activities identified in the above paragraph will also assist the children of Crossroads settle into their new school. Methods such as the use of circle time, buddying and the identification of key staff to whom they can address concerns will all help. Any young person who requires particular support will be assessed, as required and a relevant learning plan will be developed. The way the schools come together will be monitored by the Head Teacher, Chief Officers of the Council and Quality Improvement staff and if necessary arrangements will be reviewed and changed. This will occur in exactly the same way as the move to the Bellfield campus which HMIE recognise as having been well managed.

- 6.6.6** HMIE ask the authority to provide parents “with information on the effects of increased roll on class sizes and composition in particular in relation to P1 to P3”. It is the authority policy that Head Teachers will consult Parent Councils on issues such as class sizes and composition, and that parents will be kept well informed of the size and make-up of the class their child is entering, particularly if it is a composite class or a class that is not a simple stage-to-stage transition. There is no causal link between the size of a school and its class sizes. Indeed some larger schools, because of their higher staffing entitlement do choose to form smaller class groups. As a whole the Authority is committed to reducing class sizes in P1 to P3, and leads the way in Scotland on this aspect of education. The expectation of the Authority is therefore that Galston Primary School will be a full participant in this policy.
- 6.6.7** Beyond the points above, HMIE raised no issues that would be prohibitive. The issues that have been raised will be addressed directly should the proposal be agreed by East Ayrshire Council’s Cabinet.

6.7 CATCHMENT AREA

- 6.7.1** Following a review of the responses it is proposed that, subject to agreement from Cabinet to implement the closure proposal, the catchment area of Galston Primary be extended to incorporate the whole of the Crossroads Primary catchment area. A consequence of this recommendation is that pupils who currently receive school transport to Crossroads Primary would remain eligible for school transport, and those who live in the Galston Primary catchment area but more than 1 mile away from the school would become eligible for school transport.
- 6.7.2** There were two responses, detailed in paragraphs 4.4.2 (g) and 4.4.14 (a), which specifically commented on the future shape of the school’s catchment area. The South Ayrshire Council response indicated their preference for Galston Primary to have its catchment area extended to include all of the current Crossroads Primary delineated area. One future parent of Crossroads Primary advised that if the school closed, and the catchment area for Galston Primary was amended to only take on that area which was within East Ayrshire’s boundaries, her child would attend Galston Nursery School but then transfer to a school in South Ayrshire.
- 6.7.3** Both the Parent Council of Crossroads Primary and the SRSN highlighted the loss of central Government Revenue Support Grant which would accrue if the catchment area was amended to include only that which lay within East Ayrshire. Comments on this issue were described in paragraph 6.2.1 (c) and the Council position was stated that should a decision be taken to reduce the catchment area, by not incorporating the area of land within South Ayrshire territory, siblings of the pupils resident in the affected area and already at Crossroads would be eligible for a place at Galston Primary.
- 6.7.4** Taking consideration of the responses received in relation to alterations to the catchment area, it is proposed that the Galston Primary School catchment area is extended to incorporate all of the existing Crossroads Primary School catchment area.

6.8 RURAL SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

- 6.8.1** As reported in the report to Cabinet in March 2008 on the future of education provision at Crossroads Primary the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan, approved in November 2007, has adopted the concept of Sustainable Development as one of its primary Guiding Principles. It is seen as not just a concept about the environment but about economic growth and social development, and about the type of society in which we wish to live.
- 6.8.2** A number of the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development detailed in the Structure Plan relate to Community Regeneration. In particular, the plan recognises that special needs exist within rural communities and that integrated action is necessary, amongst other things, to address social issues. It is recognised that many of these issues, including education provision, should be addressed through the community planning / local planning process.
- 6.8.3** At the local level, the finalised version of the East Ayrshire Local Plan Alteration has been prepared to fully conform to the Ayrshire Structure Plan and has adopted a single primary strategic aim which is 'to promote sustainable development, to maximise the economic potential of East Ayrshire and to improve the quality of life of its residents'. This aim is, in turn, reinforced by a number of more specific aims including aim 2 'to maintain and improve the integrity, vitality and viability of the area settlements and their rural settings' and aim 8 'to promote appropriate development in rural areas'. The plan aims are implemented through a General Development Strategy which among other priorities 'encourages appropriate and sympathetic development which contributes positively to rural and farm diversification throughout the rural area'.
- 6.8.4** More specifically in relation to community facilities and service infrastructure the plan 'presumes against the loss of important community, education, leisure and recreational facilities to other uses' but recognises that this must be balanced against the need to 'ensure the highest possible level and quality of community facility, education ... provision throughout East Ayrshire to meet existing and anticipated future demand requirements of the local population' (paragraph 5.70, Volume 1).
- 6.8.5** Proposal PROP 8 of the finalised local plan alteration is pertinent to this approach, stating:
- "The Council will, subject to the necessary finance being available, improve and enhance existing community, educational, leisure, recreational and sporting facilities for which it is responsible, both in the area settlements and throughout the rural area. Consideration will be given to the provision of new, expanded or additional facilities where there is a demonstrated need and where finances permit"
- 6.8.6** In addition to the above proposal, the Council requires housing developers to make a positive contribution towards the expansion of education provision, throughout both the area settlements and the rural area, to meet the needs of incoming populations living in their developments.

6.8.7 It is worthy of repetition that, Crossroads Primary School, which serves a dispersed rural population, is located in a countryside location at the junction of A 719 Ayr / Galston road and the A76 trunk road. Because of its limited size, this area itself has not been defined with a specific settlement boundary in the Finalised Draft Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan. There are no specific housing sites in the Crossroads area allocated for future development in the local plan alteration. The ease of accessibility of the Crossroads residents to a full range of modern facilities is also referred to above and is of paramount importance to the sustainability of that area. The closure of the school would not adversely impact or detract from that level of sustainability and the Crossroads area will continue to be recognised as being situated on the periphery of East Ayrshire's main hub town

6.9 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.9.1 Several respondents expressed concern, detailed at paragraphs 4.4.1 (b) (i) and 4.4.2 (e), that investment in Crossroads Primary School has been lower than required over the years and some have interpreted this as "a programme of calculated neglect". The Council has, in common with the majority of Councils suffered from budgetary pressures on both a capital and revenue front to maintain and upgrade schools and other Council properties. However, as previously reported, £650,000 was allocated to address component renewal within the Crossroads Primary School building and from 2004/05 to 2008/09 £46,452 had been spent on building maintenance.

6.9.2 The capital investment in the Primary and Nursery Schools at Galston had been planned for some time to address accommodation issues. The original consultation process for the development was submitted to the Business Sub-Committee of the former Education Committee on 6 November 1997, with funding for preliminary works being agreed at a Special Education Committee meeting held on 7 March 2001. The building has been recognised by the Scottish Government as an exemplar of good practice which incorporates significant "green" technology to reduce both running costs and the Council's carbon footprint.

6.9.3 Responses were submitted which intimated that modular accommodation should be considered as a long term replacement for the existing Crossroads Primary School building. However, as detailed in paragraph 6.4.3 (above), this was discounted as being against existing Council practice which is to remove modular accommodation from schools and as not representing best value for money.

6.9.4 Several responses, including that received from SRSN, suggested refurbishing the existing building to its previous standard. This is rejected on best value grounds and that it would result in the children attending Crossroads Primary being educated in a poorer standard of accommodation than their cohorts in other schools throughout East Ayrshire.

6.9.5 The issues raised in respect of Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) and Revenue Support Grant are responded to in paragraphs 6.2.1 and 6.2.2.

6.10 UNIQUE LOCAL FACTORS

6.10.1 Located in green fields, close to the junction of the A719 and the A76 trunk road, unusually the school is not situated in a village or hamlet; rather, it sits with 5 cottages, but within easy access of Kilmarnock. While it serves dispersed farms and houses, there are no other significant services or facilities serving the location.

6.10.2 Similarly to the consultation exercise in 2007/08 the Crossroads Primary parents and stakeholders have conducted a very well organised campaign for the retention of their school. Their pride in the quality of learning and teaching provided by all of the staff at the school is noted, but this value of education provision is not unique to Crossroads and is in fact, the norm rather than the exception as has been shown whenever the Council has mounted similar consultation exercises. A strong commitment exists within the Council to continue to work in partnership with the parents and their Parent Council in the development of future educational provision for their children and all other learners throughout East Ayrshire.

7. ALLEGED OMISSIONS AND INACCURACIES

7.1 Section (10) (3) of the 2010 Act also places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission within the Proposal Document which has been either identified by the Council or raised by stakeholders. This Section of the 2010 Act also requires the Council to provide a statement on the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission or, if no action was taken, to state that fact (and why). During the consultation period there were 5 areas which were identified by respondents as being either inaccurate or omitted from the Proposal Document. These were:

- Financial inaccuracies within the Options Appraisal exercise which was reported to Cabinet on 16 December 2009;
- The Educational Benefits Statement did not sufficiently address all of the key areas;
- Guidance issued by the Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP) was not followed; and
- There was insufficient evidence provided on the wider community impact which would arise from the closure proposal.
- The Council failed to take account of all viable alternatives to closure, including the failure to consider modular accommodation as a long term option.

7.2 FINANCIAL INACCURACIES

(a) As detailed in paragraphs 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 the Council considered the alleged inaccuracies which were brought to its attention. In relation to the understatement of loss of GAE, which would arise from the closure of Crossroads Primary, officers from the Finance Service re-assessed the position and determined that indeed the loss of GAE would increase above the levels previously identified. The results of this work were reported to Cabinet on 10 March 2010. The Proposal Document was formally amended in part to take account of this re-assessed information and the consultation period was extended by one week, from 19 March 2010 to 26 March 2010, to allow respondents sufficient time to review the revised information and submit suitable responses.

- (b) In addition, paragraph 6.2.1 sets out the rationale for the Council view that there would be no loss of general Revenue Support Grant which may arise from any change to Galston Primary School's catchment area, should Cabinet agree to implement the closure proposal. Officers had advised during the consultation process that the siblings of children resident in South Ayrshire and already attending Crossroads Primary would be able to attend Galston Primary School in future. The Council has previously intimated, at paragraph 6.7.4, that it recommends the catchment area of Galston Primary be extended to include all of the existing Crossroads Primary catchment area. This would ensure that all children currently attending Crossroads Primary and their siblings are entitled to attend Galston Primary and that there would be no loss of Revenue Support Grant which is attributable to primary school aged pupil numbers.
- (c) Officers also reviewed the level of revenue savings which would arise from the closure proposal. This work confirmed the level of savings previously identified to have increased by £500 per annum as detailed in paragraph 6.2.2 of this document. This was also included within the revised financial appraisal report which was submitted to Cabinet on 10 March 2010 which in part resulted in the Proposal Document being formally amended and the consultation period being extended to allow respondents sufficient time to review the revised information and submit suitable responses.
- (d) In response to the comments that the decision to identify the capital sum allocated to Crossroads Primary for component renewal as a potential source of funding for improvements to Loudoun Academy's PE facilities should be included as a capital cost of both options 4 and 5 were discounted by officers. The rationale used was that the upgrade of the PE facilities required to be completed regardless of a Cabinet decision on the future of education provision at Crossroads Primary and as such this decision would not automatically arise from the decision to implement the closure proposal. Within the NPV calculations are costs or savings which would accrue directly as a result of implementing each of the 5 options. Therefore the Proposal Document was not amended as a result of this point.
- (e) Paragraphs (a) to (d) above provide detail on how officers treated comments on financial inaccuracy or omissions. Other than changes to the NPV costs for options 4 and 5, it should also be noted that the revision to the financial appraisals did not in any material way impact the decision to identify the closure proposal as representing best value for money for the Council, with the resulting lowest NPV cost.

7.3 EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT (EBS)

- (a) During the consultation process officers considered the comments which were received by stakeholders on omissions within the EBS. Paragraphs 6.3.1 to 6.3.11 (above) set out the Council response. The Statutory Guidance itself sets out that "Neither the Act nor this guidance are framed in a way that either lists or limits the range of factors that may be relevant in the case of a particular proposal, that an authority might take into consideration and/or articulate in the EBS In preparing the EBS, authorities will want to set out how a proposal will improve the quality of the curriculum and create positive

environments for more effective learning and teaching better matched to the needs of learners. The EBS should focus on how the proposals will improve the depth, breadth, coherence, relevance, challenge and enjoyment provided by the curriculum.”

(b) Within paragraph 5.7.2 of the Proposal Document are details of the benefits that children from Crossroads Primary School will receive in future by attending Galston Primary. Paragraph 6.3.2 of this document provides a summary of the facilities which would be available for the Crossroads Primary children, should they attend Galston Primary.

(c) When providing evidence to the Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee on the 2010 Act, Annette Bruton (then HM Chief Inspector of HMIE) stated that :-

“We would certainly be competent to comment on educational benefits relating to aspects of schooling, but we would be less competent to comment on cost benefit analysis and anything that would require the consideration of an auditor.”

(d) The officer view was that given the foregoing, the EBS met the requirements of the 2010 Act, a fact which appears to be reinforced by the HMIE Report which did not provide any adverse comments.

(e) Having provided the detail within section 5.7.2 of the Proposal Document, having considered the terms of the 2010 Act and Statutory Guidance, it was determined that no further action was necessary to comply with the requirements of the 2010 Act.

7.4 Consultation with Pupils

(a) East Ayrshire is rightly proud of its processes for consulting with children and this has been a long standing arrangement during the course of the Council history. As key recipients of the education service it is right that the thoughts and views of children are considered in light of proposals to alter the education provision. During this consultation process guidance for consulting pupils in light of the 2010 Act was published by Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People. This document was issued on 15 March 2010, and accordingly officers reviewed its contents against the work already undertaken to seek the views of pupils.

(b) Paragraph 3.4 confirms that it has been long standing practice with East Ayrshire to ascertain the views of pupils on decisions which would affect them. Most recently pupils were formally consulted on the range of proposals which were issued in November 2007 and before this the views of pupils were also considered during the design of the Council’s PPP schools and the new Galston Primary and Nursery Schools building.

(c) It is the views of officers that the circle time discussions, which were held with each class, and facilitated by the class teacher, allowed for children to express their thoughts whilst feeling comfortable with their environment. Paragraph 3.4 also confirms that this is the methodology used when seeking pupil views in the preparation for a school inspection by HMIE. In this context,

the Council is of the view that it followed a process which, while not in accordance with the Guidance issued by Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (in that it did not employ the services of an independent person to take the children's views), was and is still considered to be best practice.

7.5 Wider Community Impact

(a) Within the Proposal Document's EBS is comment on the wider implications for the community of the closure proposal. In addition to the detail contained within paragraph 5.7.2 (xii) of the Proposal Document this report includes further comment on the impact for the wider community. In summary, and taking account of the Statutory Guidance for the 2010 Act:

- The school does not make use of external facilities which provide finances for local enterprises or economic activities;
- The school has not been used for lets by community groups since November 2007;
- HMIE confirm that there are suitable alternative venues which could be used by community groups should demand increase;
- Within a five mile radius of the school are 17 other primary schools, which would allow a significant degree of parental choice;
- That additional travelling distances are not excessive for those pupils affected, and for those travelling from Darvel, Newmilns and Galston travelling distance and time would be reduced; and
- Crossroads Primary, and the area it serves, is peripheral to the main conurbation within East Ayrshire.

(b) Taking account of the above information, and the comments contained within paragraph 6.4 above, it is the opinion of officers that no further information or action was necessary to comply with section 12 of the 2010 Act which relates to proposals for rural school closure on this point.

7.6 Viable Alternatives

(a) Within sections 5.1 to 5.5 of the Proposal Document the Council considered 5 options for the future of education provision at Crossroads Primary. Stakeholders were able to comment on any of the options presented and it should be noted that the first 4 of these options would result in the retention of Crossroads Primary.

(b) As was discussed with stakeholders during the consultation period officers had also considered the long term option of replacing the existing Crossroads Primary building with modular accommodation. However, this was discounted on the grounds that it did not represent best value for money. In addition, it has also been Council practice to remove modular accommodation at school sites. For example the refurbishment of Mauchline Primary saw the removal of modular accommodation from the site and similar accommodation has also been removed from Newmilns Primary, Dunlop Primary and the old Galston Primary building.

(c) Officers believe, having considered the above, that they complied with the 2010 Act and that no further information or action was required.

8. PROCEDURES FOR MINISTERIAL CALL-IN

8.1 Since this proposal is to close Crossroads Primary School, section 10(4) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 will apply. At this stage, it is anticipated that Cabinet will be asked to make a decision on the proposal to close Crossroads Primary School on 16 June 2010. If Cabinet agree to the said proposal, the Scottish Ministers must be notified of this decision. They then have a 6 week period commencing on the date of Cabinet's decision to consider whether they will issue a notice to the Council to call-in the Cabinet document. In taking the decision whether to issue a call in notice the Scottish Ministers are required by the Act "to take account of any relevant representations made to them (by any person) within the first three weeks of that six week period." In effect, this means that anyone seeking to have the Council decision called in would need to contact the Scottish Ministers in writing, within three weeks of the Cabinet decision supporting the closure of the school, setting out relevant reasons why the decision should be called in by them.

8.2 Anyone wishing to contact the Scottish Ministers during the three week period referred to above should do so by e-mail to:

schoolestates@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

or in writing to:

James Newman
School Estates Team
Scottish Government
2-D (S) Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

8.3 In the event that the Cabinet of East Ayrshire Council agree to the implementation of the closure proposal as outlined in section 14 of this report, the Council in order that its position is not prejudiced in complying with section 15 of the 2010 Act will recommend to the said Cabinet that notification of its decision be made to Scottish Ministers in advance of any call in of this matter by the Council's internal Governance and Scrutiny Committee.

9 CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM ROLE IN THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

9.1 From the first indication of concerns about the structural integrity of Crossroads Primary School there have been full and regular discussions at the highest level of Officer Management of the Council. During the decant period input from officers at Asset Improvement, Educational and Social Services and Legal Services was combined to ensure minimal disruption to the learning and teaching processes within Crossroads Primary.

- 9.2** Support from a range of senior officers has been crucial in completing the Options Appraisal exercise, which was subject to scrutiny by the Council's Corporate Management Team, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.
- 9.3** During the consultation process a range of officers across Council services provided support in responding to the enquiries for further information. In addition a number of responses were received from other Council Services and Community Planning Partners which have been summarised in section 4 (above).
- 9.4** The outcome of this involvement, in part, is a set of recommendations by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services supported by the Corporate Management Team.

10. THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO CONSULTATION

- 10.1** The foregoing subsections of section 6 above detail the Council's considerations of all issues as originally defined in the Proposal Document and importantly, all of those, both educational and non-educational, raised through the detailed consultation responses and the public meeting. The Council allocated time beyond the statutory minimum (42 calendar days, to include a minimum of 30 school days) consultation period for responses (giving 56 calendar days) in recognition of the significance with which the intended parties/stakeholders regard this matter.
- 10.2** Of the 198 responses received, and the 71 requests for further information, no issue raised remains unaddressed and so Cabinet will have before it in this paper full and detailed arguments for and against the proposal (Option 5).
- 10.3** It is noted that an additional 7 days was added to the consultation period. This allowed respondents sufficient time to assimilate changes to the NPV costs of options 4 and 5 following a review of the treatment of GAE. This, and officer's willingness to provide as much information as possible to respondents, are examples of the transparency and fullness of the consultation exercise.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 11.1** Any reduction in the property portfolio will reduce the risk to which the Council is exposed in terms of issues such as infrastructure failure, vandalism and threats to security. Any property that is vacated, however, is likely to be exposed to an increased level of risk requiring additional security measures.
- 11.2** By implementing the closure proposal, officers will ensure the quality of educational experience for both Crossroads Primary and Galston Primary pupils is maintained or improved. This is a view supported by HMIE.

12. LEGAL ISSUES

- 12.1** By virtue of s22 (1) (b) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended) the Council may discontinue, or change the site of, any educational establishment under its management. However prior to any such decision the Council was initially required to consult in terms of the Education (Publication and Consultation etc. (Scotland) Regulations 1981 as amended and is now

required to do so by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, which consultation forms the subject matter of this report. It is a legal requirement that the Council shall not reach any formal decision without:

- having reviewed the relevant proposal (option 5) having regard in particular to:
 - (a) Relevant written representations received from any person during the consultation period;
 - (b) Oral representation made to it by any person at the public meeting on 18 February 2010;
 - (c) The HMIE report;
- Preparing this Consultation Report; and
- Waiting until a period of 3 weeks starting on the day on which this Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed form has expired.

12.2 If East Ayrshire Council's Cabinet is minded to agree to a closure recommendation it should be noted that no steps can be taken to implement this decision during the period of time where the decision is being scrutinised by Scottish Ministers. Following a final decision by Cabinet (which is anticipated to be 16 June 2010) to proceed with closure the matter must be referred to the Scottish Ministers who will take a period of up to 6 weeks to review the decision making processes and determine whether or not they will call in the decision to implement the closure proposal.

12.3 As provided for in s1 of the 1980 Act it is the duty of the Council to ensure adequate and efficient provision of school education within East Ayrshire such education to be directed towards the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of children or young persons to their fullest potential (Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000 s2). That said, as with all Council duties, the Council has a duty to make arrangements to secure best value and in securing best value the Council is required to maintain an appropriate balance between, inter alia, the quality of its performance of its functions and the cost to the authority of that performance (Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 s1). In coming to any decision members should balance the foregoing duties.

12.4 Article 2 of the first protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights, incorporated into domestic law by the Human Rights Act 1998 provides that "No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions" The principle in the second sentence is accepted into UK law only so far as it is compatible with the provisions of efficient instruction and training, and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure. The right to education is a general right and the relevant provisions of the 1980 Act and the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc (Scotland) Act 2000 go beyond what is required by the provision in the first protocol. Accordingly, provided the Council complies with the duties

referred to in paragraph 12.1. and 12.2, a successful Human Rights challenge to a properly considered decision will be minimised.

12.5 Title Implications

- 12.5.1** There are no subsisting title conditions restricting the use of the site of Crossroads Primary School. Should the closure proposal be accepted and implemented, with the site being declared surplus to requirements, the Council could dispose of the site on the open market.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1** Having carefully reviewed the proposal (Option 5) and having had regard to:
- (a) Relevant written representations received by the Council from any person during the consultation period;
 - (b) Oral representations made to the Council by any person at the public meeting of 18 February 2010; and
 - (c) The contents of the HMIE report

it is concluded that the decision to proceed with the consultation on the closure proposal remains valid. This will be on the basis that the delineated catchment area of Crossroads Primary School will be added in its entirety to the delineated area of Galston Primary School catchment area.

- 13.2** It is clear from the responses received and from officer knowledge that the educational experience for the pupils attending Crossroads Primary School remains very positive. Those parents who responded strongly supported the retention of Crossroads Primary School on its existing site. Parents responded very positively on the educational provision which is provided by staff at Crossroads primary School and this is also recognised by the education authority.
- 13.3** However the decision to recommend the closure proposal (option 5) as the preferred option takes account of a number of factors such as the educational advantages available within Galston Primary School. This fact is also recognised by HMIE in their response to the consultation process.
- 13.4** It is to be recognised that the building design and fabric of Crossroads Primary School was not designed for a 21st Century curriculum and lacks many of the facilities, and resources, which are desirable for a 21st Century learning and teaching environment. Issues such as accessibility are particularly important.
- 13.5** It is believed that, although the staff at Crossroads Primary School deliver a high standard of education provision to the pupils, they would be more effective for the children with the support of a larger cohort that would result from the integration with Galston Primary School. Pupils would also benefit from being able to work within larger groups of their own age and stage. This is reflected in the HMIE report summary which concludes

“East Ayrshire Council’s proposal is likely to result in a quality of educational experience for children from Crossroads Primary School and Galston Primary

School which, across a range of aspects, is the same as or better than that which they currently experience. There is also likely to be a general benefit, deriving from more efficient use of resources, for learners in the wider community.”

13.6 It is clear that integration with Galston Primary School will offer distinct educational advantages as set out in section 6 (above). The size of the school will attract a higher level of teaching and learning resources than could ever be made available at Crossroads Primary. In addition, it is a newly built state of the art educational facility which rivals the very best that can be found anywhere in Scotland. In addition to offering excellent flexibilities for the delivery of a modern education supported by a wide range of technological and other aids to learning, it is an excellent example of sustainable development through the inclusion of a wind turbine, grey water recycling and geothermal power all of which are linked to a database accessed by pupils. The standard of attainment at Galston Primary School, as it currently exists, is already high and the integration of Crossroads Primary pupils into this excellent modern facility will benefit the children and enrich the educational and social experience for all pupils. The larger number of teachers at Galston Primary offers good opportunity for collegiate working and flexibility in how the curriculum is delivered by calling on the specialisms and talents from within its staff complement for the benefit of pupils. The ethos of Galston Primary School as it is, and as it will be, also reflects the aspirations of a rural community.

13.7 In summary, it is considered that Option 5 which will result in the closure of Crossroads Primary School at a date to be determined, with the subsequent transfer of pupils to Galston Primary School, will secure the greatest educational advantage for young people of Crossroads Primary School. In view of the response from South Ayrshire, and taking account of the level of change that would be involved in moving school to Galston Primary School it was felt that a change in the catchment area was not at this time necessary or desirable. Therefore the present boundary to the catchment area should remain unchanged, with the area completely transferring to Galston Primary School.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 It is therefore recommended that:

- (i) Crossroads Primary School will close as a separate educational establishment from 16 August 2010, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- (ii) Upon the closure of Crossroads Primary School, the pupils be assimilated into Galston Primary School from 17 August 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter;
- (iii) the present delineated catchment area of Crossroads Primary School be added unchanged into to that of Galston Primary School to create an enlarged delineated catchment area for said Galston Primary School; and

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

GRS/EC
19 May 2010

LIST OF ATTACHED PAPERS

- i) Proposal Document issued 29 January 2010

Members wishing further information should contact Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services, Telephone (01563) 576017 or Euan Couperwhite, Head of Resources, telephone (01563) 576090.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

A PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

The following schools are affected by this Proposal Document:

- Crossroads Primary School
- Galston Primary School

This document has primarily been issued by East Ayrshire Council for Proposal in terms of the Education (Publications and Consultation etc) (Scotland) Regulation 1981 and Amendment Regulation 1987, 1988, 1989 and 2007. However, the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 received Royal Assent on 5th January 2010. While the provisions of this Act are not yet fully in force, it is anticipated that they will be prior to determination of the proposal by East Ayrshire Council. This document has therefore also been issued by East Ayrshire Council having regard to the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Any Ordnance Survey map data included within this document is provided by East Ayrshire Council under licence from Ordnance Survey in order to fulfil its public function in relation to this public Proposal. Persons viewing this mapping should contact Ordnance Survey Copyright for advice where they wish to licence Ordnance Survey mapping data for their own use.

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the East Ayrshire Council web-site:
www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk

A copy of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Council of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- South Ayrshire Council
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- Community Association
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Ayrshire and Arran
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services, East Ayrshire Council
- Executive Director of Corporate Support, East Ayrshire Council

A copy of this document is also available from:

Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7BU

Public libraries in the vicinity of the schools affected

Local area offices in the vicinity of the schools affected

The schools affected by the proposal

This document is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply to the Department of Educational and Social Services, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7BU, by telephone on 01563-576109; or by e-mail: education.consultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

SUMMARY OF PROCESS FOR THIS PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

1. Consideration by the Cabinet (Education)

This Proposal Document has been issued as a result of a decision by the Cabinet (Education) of East Ayrshire Council. This is to seek views on the proposals in this paper.

2. Proposal Document issued to consultees and published on Council Web-site

A copy of this document will then be issued free of charge to the consultees listed on the preceding page, and it will also be published on the Council website : www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk.

3. Publication of advertisement in local newspapers

An advertisement will be placed in the relevant local newspapers and if necessary any national newspaper. In addition, there may be announcements related to the Proposal process on the local radio station, West Sound / West FM.

4. Length of Consultation period

An advertisement will be placed in local newspapers on 29 January 2010. The consultation will thereafter run until close of business on 19 March 2010, which includes a period of 31 school days.

5. Public meeting

A public meeting will be held, the details of which are given on the following page.

6. Involvement of HMIE

When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to HMIE by East Ayrshire Council. HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made to the Council at the public meeting that 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 Council has sent them all representations and documents mentioned above. However, 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 school and make such reasonable enquiries of such people there as they consider appropriate and may make such reasonable enquiries of such other people as they consider appropriate.

7. Preparation of Consultation Report

The Council 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 and will be advertised in local newspapers and, if necessary, any national newspaper. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, public libraries in the vicinity of the affected schools, local offices in the vicinity of the affected schools as well as the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who made written representations 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 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 details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The Report will also contain a statement explaining how it 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 3 weeks.

8. Decision

This report together with any other relevant documentation will be considered by the Cabinet (Education) who will come to a decision. This decision is then subject to the Council's call-in procedures.

9. Scottish Ministers Call-in

In the event that the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 is fully in force by the time the Council has made a final decision on the proposal, it will require to notify the Scottish Ministers of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 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 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, they will not proceed to implement the proposal approved at stage 8 above. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse to consent to the proposal or grant their consent to the proposal subject to conditions or unconditionally. Until the outcome of the call-in has been notified to the Council, they are unable to proceed 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 will determine if relevant information has been omitted or, there has been an inaccuracy. It will then take appropriate action which may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of the Proposal paper or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and HMIE will be advised.

Special Note

This consultation is primarily being conducted under the regulations that apply at the time of the exercise – the Education (Publications and Consultation etc (Scotland) Regulations 1981 and Amended Regulation 1987, 1988, 1989 and 2007. However, the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 received Royal Assent on 5th January 2010. While the provisions of this Act are not yet fully in force, it is anticipated that they will be prior to determination of the proposal by East Ayrshire Council. This document has therefore also been issued by East Ayrshire Council having regard to the terms of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.

PUBLIC MEETING

A Public Meeting will be held to discuss these proposals. Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so. The meeting, which will be convened by East Ayrshire Council in consultation with the Parent Council of Crossroads Primary School and will be addressed by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services, or other senior officers of the Council.

The meeting will be an opportunity to:

- Hear more about the proposal
- Ask questions about the proposal
- Have your views recorded so that they can be taken into account as part of the Proposal process.

The meeting will be held on:

Venue – Galston Primary School

Date – Thursday 18 February 2010

Time – 7pm – 9pm

A note will be taken at the meeting of questions and views. This note will be published on the Council web-site, and a copy will be made available on request.

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES**

THIS IS A PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

Proposal :

That subject to the outcome of this Proposal exercise :

- Education provision at Crossroads Primary School be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2010, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- That the pupils of Crossroads Primary School continue their education at Galston Primary School, from 16 August 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter, as detailed in option 5 of this document; and
- Further, that consideration be given to the delineated area of Galston Primary School being extended to subsume the whole delineated area of Crossroads Primary School, or subsume the catchment area of Crossroads Primary School which lies within the boundary of East Ayrshire Council.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** At 16 December 2009, there were 52 pupils attending Crossroads Primary School, with 29 children attending by way of placing request. The catchment area schools for this group of pupils are as follows :

Darvel Primary	2 pupils
Newmilns Primary	6 pupils
Galston Primary	12 pupils
Hurlford Primary	5 pupils
Mauchline Primary	4 pupils

Of the 23 catchment area children, 10 are residents of South Ayrshire.

- 1.2** At the Cabinet meeting of 16 December 2009, Elected Members were advised that timber repairs were undertaken to an individual support post and the lower level timber panelling in May 2009. Following this, a series of surveys were conducted in July 2009 which raised concerns about the structural integrity of the building and it became apparent that it was necessary to temporarily relocate the school into alternative accommodation for the start of the 2009/10 academic session. A number of establishments were considered and it was decided that Bellfield Primary was the favoured temporary option as it allowed the visiting Crossroads class structure to be accommodated intact, best met the space criterion and offered a convenient local solution.
- 1.3** Without this full and intrusive investigative survey it would not have been possible to previously determine the full extent of timber decay within the

property. Since July 2009 work has been undertaken to identify the full extent of the timber decay along with the required repair works and associated cost. Independent consultants have reported that all structural posts and the external timber cladding need to be replaced and that the estimated cost of this work is £399,000. A subsequent exercise by officers from Educational and Social Services and Asset Improvement Services has considered courses of action to determine which represents best value for the Council.

- 1.4** At its meeting of 16 December 2009 the Education Cabinet agreed to initiate a full public Proposal exercise considering the future of Crossroads Primary School. This followed the presentation to Cabinet of an options appraisal exercise which assessed the condition of the current school building and determined, against a range of five different options, which option represented best value in financial and non financial terms for the continuation of education provision at Crossroads Primary School. A copy of this report can be found on the Council's website at :

<http://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/crpadmmin/2007%20agendas/cabinet/16%20december%202009/OPTION%20APPRAISAL%20CROSSROADS%20PRIMARY%20-%2016%20DECEMBER%202009.pdf>

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1** It is therefore proposed that:

Proposal :

That subject to the outcome of this Proposal exercise :

- Education provision at Crossroads Primary School be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2010, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- That the pupils of Crossroads Primary School continue their education at Galston Primary School, from 16 August 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter as detailed in option 5 of this document; and
- Further, that consideration be given to the delineated area of Galston Primary School being extended to subsume the whole delineated area of Crossroads Primary School, or subsume the catchment area of Crossroads Primary School which lies within the boundary of East Ayrshire Council

3. VISION

3.1 East Ayrshire Council has an established vision for its school estate which will ensure the delivery of a modern curriculum in school buildings which are suitable for purpose. This vision further states :

“East Ayrshire Council’s Department of Educational and Social Services : committed to providing choice, maximising opportunity for all, developing the potential of individuals and meeting needs through inclusion”

3.2 This statement covers every aspect of the Department’s work including the management and development of educational establishments. The Council’s School Estate Management Plan states that development and improvement in the fabric of school buildings is a key component in the facilitation of the learning and teaching process.

3.3 The Council has also approved the Department’s objectives for achieving its aims. These are detailed below:

- reducing surplus capacity
- addressing maintenance issues
- meeting statutory requirements of DDA legislation
- improving property flexibility

3.4 The Scottish Government issued its Building Better Schools : Investing in Scotland’s Future in September 2009. The documents sets out the Government’s aspirations for the school estate and states :

- “All children and young people will be educated in, and community users will use, schools that are 'fit for purpose' in terms of condition, suitability and sufficiency;
- Schools are well-designed, accessible, inclusive learning environments that inspire and drive new thinking and change and which support the delivery of high quality educational experiences through *Curriculum for Excellence*;
- Schools are integral parts of the communities they serve, with pupils making use of community facilities and communities accessing school facilities;
- Schools accommodate and provide a range of services, activities and facilities that make a difference to people’s health and well being, to sustaining economic growth and to the strength and vibrancy of communities;
- A sustainable school estate whose design, construction and operation is environmentally and energy efficient; contributes directly to delivering the year-on-year reductions in greenhouse gas emissions introduced by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, which is resilient to the impact of climate change and which leads by example in matters of environmental performance;
- A school estate that is efficiently run and that delivers maximum value for money;
- A school estate which is flexible and responsive - both to changes in demand for school places and to learners' and teachers' requirements

and wishes, and where the beneficial impact of change is maximised by thorough Proposal and engagement with users and stakeholders”.

3.5 This document has been framed taking account of the Scottish Government’s aspirations.

4. PRESENT POSITION

4.1 Crossroads Primary School

4.1.1 Crossroads Primary School provides non denominational primary education to pupils from rural communities south and south east of the town of Hurlford. Appendix 1 (attached) shows the present school delineated areas for both Crossroads Primary School and Galston Primary School. The school sites for Crossroads Primary and Galston Primary are attached as Appendix 2.

4.1.2 The planning capacity of a school is calculated by dividing the total area of teaching rooms by the space allocation per child (1.7m²). The working capacity takes account of maximum class sizes, for example, composite classes which are limited to 25 pupils. Based on the Council’s space allocation the classrooms could accommodate 95 pupils; however, due to maximum class sizes for composite classes the capacity of these rooms is limited to 25 each. Therefore, the planning capacity of the school is 95, with a working capacity of 75. There are currently 52 pupils enrolled and therefore the school has an occupancy rate of 54.7%.

The school structure presently has 3 composite classes made up as follows :

Primary 1, 2, Primary 3/4, and Primary 5/6/7.

Historical and projected pupil roll data for Crossroads Primary School and Galston Primary School is attached at Appendix 3. This data shows that the roll of Crossroads Primary School has been falling over the last decade, with pupil numbers unlikely to increase above their present level. As highlighted in paragraph 1.1 a substantial proportion of the pupils are enrolled by way of placing request.

4.1.3 The Crossroads Primary School building is a single storey building with a timber supporting frame. Additional steel framework was added to the building in the early 1970s to provide further stability to the structure. Paragraph 1.2 (above) details that there is now significant timber decay to the structural posts and that the school has temporarily been re-located to Bellfield Primary School.

4.1.4 Within the existing Crossroads Primary School, prior to the temporary school re-location, the following facilities and accommodation were offered:

- 3 classrooms for primary education
- 1 supplementary teaching area in the corridor entrance to the school , which also serves as an ICT suite
- 1 gymnasium, which also serves as a dining hall and storage facility
- Administrative accommodation
- A reception area

4.1.5 The present accommodation within the Crossroads Primary School building presents a number of issues:

- The overall design of the school is for a school of 1960s vintage and does not incorporate the design principles of a modern primary school such as open areas or in-built information technology.
- The accommodation does not comply with the Disability Discrimination Act as there is no suitable access for children and adults with mobility problems.
- Previous work undertaken has identified that the timber structural elements of the building are in need of replacement.
- The building is energy-inefficient with a high ratio of thin external panelling and glazing combined with poor insulation.

4.1.6 Full details of the options that are available to address the future provision of education at Crossroads Primary School were detailed in a report to the Cabinet on 16 December 2009. These options are also outlined in section 5 of this document. However, the full version of the options can be viewed in the Options Appraisal Document which is attached to the Cabinet Report referred to within paragraph 1.4 above.

5. THE OPTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

5.1 OPTION 1 : REFURBISHMENT OF EXISTING BUILDING TO EXISTING STANDARDS

5.1.1 This option would maintain the status quo by retaining the existing internal layout of the current school building and providing a refurbishment with no betterment of the existing facilities. Included within the refurbishment works is the renewal of structural supports and replacement cladding. The net present value cost of this option has been calculated to be £1.180 m.

5.1.2 This option would not incorporate all of the desired facilities within the building nor would it result in improved traffic management within the curtilage of the school grounds.

5.2 OPTION 2 : REFURBISHMENT AND UPGRADE OF EXISTING BUILDING

- 5.2.1 The refurbishment would result in an upgrade to the internal layout of the existing building to meet the requirements of 21st Century curriculum delivery. This would include the inclusion of disabled facilities and full access, the creation of a dedicated library and ICT area. Works would also improve traffic management arrangements within the school site. The net present value cost of this option has been calculated to be £1.868 m.
- 5.2.2 As result of this proposal it may be necessary to reduce the pupil capacity of the school as classroom space may be required to incorporate additional facilities.

5.3 OPTION 3 : NEW BUILD PRIMARY SCHOOL ON THE EXISTING SCHOOL SITE

- 5.3.1 This proposal would create a new build school on the existing site. The resultant school would create a modern facility which is designed to meet future pupil numbers from the school's catchment area. A new building would meet current and future learning and teaching requirements, incorporating the use of ICT. The building would ensure full compliance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and would also be energy efficient, thereby reducing the Council's carbon footprint. The net present value cost of this option has been calculated to be £2.487 m.

5.4 OPTION 4 : CLOSURE OF THE EXISTING BUILDING AND RELOCATION OF THE SCHOOL AS A SEPARATE EDUCATIONAL FACILITY TO ACCOMMODATION WITHIN GALSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

- 5.4.1 Option 4 would result in the existing building being demolished and the school re-located, as a separate educational establishment, to alternative accommodation within Galston Primary School. Sufficient space capacity can be configured to accommodate the school as a distinct establishment, encompassing 3 classrooms and accommodated 75 pupils, although this will require reconfiguration of the present school layout. The net present value cost of this option has been calculated to be £2.384 m.
- 5.4.2 There are elements of the accommodation at Galston Primary School which will be shared by both establishments. This would include the ICT suite, the library, the gym, the dining hall and outdoor learning areas.

5.5 OPTION 5 : CESSATION OF EDUCATION PROVISION AT CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH THE SCHOOL BEING INCORPORATED WITHIN GALSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

- 5.5.1 This option would result in the closure of Crossroads Primary School as a separate establishment and the pupils being incorporated within Galston Primary School. This would result in pupils being educated in a facility which has been designed for the needs of a 21st Century curriculum. The net present value cost of this option has been calculated to be £0.202 m.

5.5.2 The existing building of Crossroads Primary School would subsequently be demolished and the land declared surplus to the requirements of the Department of Educational and Social Services.

5.5.3 Within this option consideration requires to be given to the delineated area of Galston Primary School subsuming the whole delineated area of Crossroads Primary School or subsuming the delineated area of Crossroads Primary School which is within the boundary of East Ayrshire Council.

5.6 FACTORS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION DURING THE OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.6.1 The temporary relocation of Crossroads Primary School into modular accommodation was considered as part of Options 1 – 3. This was rejected because of access concerns, on health and safety issues regarding pupils and staff being in close proximity to a building site and cost grounds. The costs of modular accommodation for Options 1 – 3 are detailed below:

OPTION	ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION PERIOD	MODULAR ACCOMMODATION COSTS
1.	16 months	£426,000
2.	20 months	£453,000
3.	20 months	£453,000

5.6.2 The Cabinet of East Ayrshire Council had previously considered a development proposal which included the school being provided with heat generated by a local bio-digester. At a meeting of 3 December 2008, the Cabinet agreed that, having taking account of all of the known factors, any refurbishment of the school should be considered within the confines of the Council's known school estate and capital investment strategies.

5.7 PREFERRED OPTION AND EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

5.7.1 Preferred Option

The Cabinet of East Ayrshire Council agreed at its meeting of 16 December 2009 to adopt Option 5 as its preferred option. The educational benefits for this decision are set out below.

5.7.2 Educational Benefits Statement

- (i) The pupils of Crossroads Primary School would benefit from access to classrooms designed to facilitate 'active learning' approaches. Galston Primary and Nursery School is constructed around a 'four pod system' based on maximising resources for each age and stage. Facilities in each pod include ergonomic and age sensitive furniture to support flexible approaches to learning and teaching. Pupils are able to access a large infant structured play area as well as an outdoor learning classroom and dedicated library, music room and modern equipped gym hall. Pupils also benefit from a large multi-use stage facility for assemblies, shows and concerts. There is a carefully crafted outdoor garden and games and sports facilities in the well designed play areas to facilitate eco-learning and promote health and well

being through play and games. In addition to the above there are 3 secure enclosed play areas for children to learn and play together during curricular and play time. Pupils have access to nearby fully grassed pitches for games and competitive sports. Pupils from Crossroads primary school will be able to benefit from all of these facilities and the enhanced opportunities they bring to their teachers who are aiming to deliver the key elements of the Curriculum for Excellence.

- (ii) The pupils of Crossroads Primary School would have access to an extensive range of resources in the proposed move to Galston Primary School. These include the most modern and up to date ICT facilities for learning and teaching. Each classroom in Galston Primary and Nursery School has a Promethean board in use as well as a number of PCs. In addition to classroom ICT resources, there is available to all pupils a fully equipped ICT suite which hosts the most up to date hardware and software. The school and nursery is also fully 'hardwired' to facilitate the possibility of extending the number of computers to allow every single young person in the school, even after inclusion of Crossroads Primary school pupils, being able to individually access a networked PC. These resources already enhance the learning and teaching opportunities for pupils of Galston Primary and Nursery School and the pupils from Crossroads Primary School would also benefit from this process.
- (iii) Galston Primary and Nursery School is fully DDA compliant and has the facilities to cater for the needs of all children, including those with a full range of additional support needs. There are, for example, two fully equipped personal care facilities in the primary school and nursery school. Pupils will also have access to a dedicated medical suite designed for use by a doctor/nurse. These additional facilities will also help to enhance learning and teaching for children of Crossroads Primary School, at present or in the future, who have such a range of additional support needs.
- (iv) The co-location of Galston Nursery School within the same building as the Galston Primary School improves the transition process for the children moving from nursery to primary education. In addition there is an opportunity for joint educational programmes to be delivered between the two establishments.
- (v) The present users of Galston Primary and Nursery School's facilities will not be disadvantaged in any way by the addition of children from Crossroads primary school given that there is more than adequate capacity to cater for the needs of both pupil cohorts. Staff from Crossroads Primary School will benefit from additional CPD opportunities to be gained by working and learning with a larger range of teaching colleagues. The authority is promoting the development of teacher 'professional learning communities' which constitutes groups of teachers, normally 6-8, sharing best practice and agreeing programmes of CPD based on developing their skills as defined in the Standard for Full Registration. Crossroads Primary School staff will, for the first time, be able to make full use of such a model of training and development which should impact on their effectiveness in the classroom. Parents of both schools will be able to access the school facilities, such as the parents' room. There is sufficient space in these facilities for parents of both establishments to make full use of. The school has been designed to cater for

a large expansion in its present role so there would be no impact on the proposal if new pupils moved into the community. The proposal would also have no impact on pupils of any other schools in the area. The pupils of both establishments will link to the same secondary school, so at the point of P7 transition, for example, there would not be an impact on the rolls of any other secondary school and the local secondary school has already factored pupils from both schools into their roll predictions.

- (vi) The likely effects of the proposal would be to create effective teaching sets at all stages which would sit well within the Government class size guidelines.
- (vii) If implemented, the Council would minimise disruption by establishing a comprehensive transition programme for all pupils and parents. Crossroads Primary School is presently decanted to Bellfield Primary School and there is therefore already experience of this process. If there was to be a move to Galston Primary School and Nursery, careful consideration would be given to 'lead in' time and to ensure that all stakeholders were fully consulted and understood all of the steps of the transition programme. The prime consideration would be to minimise any adverse impact on the learning and teaching of children from Crossroads Primary School.
- (viii) Pupils and parents of Crossroads Primary School would have access to a 'state of the art' 21st century educational establishment, which is fully equipped and designed to meet the needs of pupils and fully deliver a Curriculum for Excellence. Galston Primary and Nursery School is also designed to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with additional support needs and has more than enough capacity to meet the needs of all pupils of Crossroads primary school without disrupting the learning of pupils presently resident in the Galston Primary School. There is an opportunity for the pupils, staff and parents of both schools to benefit from working together in an outstanding physical environment to ensure that the very best quality of learning and teaching is available to all pupils, irrespective of their needs or abilities.
- (ix) Pupils would also benefit from the improved access to community facilities which are in close proximity to Galston Primary School. Such facilities include the availability of full sized grass football pitches which are adjacent to the school and the swimming pool at Loudoun Academy. Galston Primary School is also in close proximity to the town centre and the amenities which can be found there, such as shops and community facilities.
- (x) In terms of extra curricular activities Galston Primary runs the following out of school clubs :
 - Fitness club (P2 and P3)
 - ICT (P4 – P7)
 - Cheerleading (P5 – P7)
 - Drama (P5)
 - Football (P2 and P3)
 - Cycling Proficiency (P1 – P7)

In addition to these clubs P5 and P6 pupils participated in golf lessons, P6 pupils participated in a Scottish Country Dancing competition and P7 pupils have attended a Basketball Tournament.

In academic session 2008/09 the Crossroads Primary School pupils undertook the following activities :

- Gardening;
- Football;
- Art and craft;
- Badminton;
- Drama;
- Recorder;
- Orienteering;
- Cycling Proficiency; and
- Cookery

Every effort would be made to encourage the continuation of these programmes, married to the provision presently offered at Galston primary School

- (xi) Out of school hours the Crossroads Primary School has mainly been utilised by parents for events linked to the school such as Parent Council meetings. The number of lets since 2004 are listed below.

Year	No of Lets
2004	22 lets
2005	16 lets
2006	16 lets
2007	26 lets
2008	9 lets
2009	4 lets

There are no recorded events of the school being used for any non-parental community event since November 2007. As the distance to Galston Primary is 2.4 miles it is believed that there will be no significant impact for the wider community to access the wider range of facilities which are located within Galston Primary School. As stated in (x) above every effort will be made to accommodate existing Crossroads Primary School activities within Galston Primary School.

Since the new Galston primary and Nursery Schools building opened in August 2008 the number of lets is as follows :-

Year	No of Lets
2008	10 lets
2009	23 lets

The majority of lets (29) have been for parental activities such as school shows, Parent Council meetings, and parents evenings. In addition there have been 2 lets for the Galston Windpower group, 1 meeting for the Galston Community Council and 1 meeting organised for the Council in relation to the Crossroads Primary School structural issues.

The range of modern facilities within the Galston Primary School building have been designed to promote community use outside of school hours.

- (xii) Under Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 it has been assumed that Crossroads primary School is an accessible rural school. This means that although based in a rural setting, the school is within close proximity to the towns of Kilmarnock, Galston and Hurlford and the amenities which are located within these conurbations.

(a) Alternatives to the Closure Proposal

The alternatives to closure have been detailed in sections 5.1 to 5.4 (above). The options appraisal exercise has demonstrated that Option 5 (cessation of Education provision at Crossroads Primary School) represents best value using a combination of financial and non-financial scores.

(b) Likely effect on the Local Community

As there is no recognised village or built up community in the vicinity of Crossroads Primary it is believed that the proposal will not impact on local social or economic activities. In addition The school has 29 pupils who attend from other communities within East Ayrshire and the proposal will not have any impact on these communities.

The school is mainly utilised by parents for events linked to the school such as Parent Council meetings. The number of lets since 2004 is listed below.

Year	No of Lets
2004	22 lets
2005	16 lets
2006	16 lets
2007	26 lets
2008	9 lets
2009	4 lets

During the 6 years there were 22 lets by the Hopkins Crossroads SWRI, and 14 by East Ayrshire staff for staff training and development, with the remainder for school and parental activities. There are no recorded events of the school being used for any non-parental community event since November 2007. As the distance to Galston Primary is 2.4 miles it is believed that there will be no significant impact for the wider community from the Crossroads Primary School catchment area to access the full range of facilities which are located within Galston Primary School. As such, the likely effect of the closure proposal would be on the Parent Council of Crossroads Primary School which would require to be wound up in the event of the said proposal being implemented.

(c) Likely effect caused by different travelling arrangements

Under normal circumstances there are two contracts in place which bring 25 of the catchment area pupils to Crossroads Primary School, costing £15,145 per annum. During academic session 2009/10 contracts are in place to

transport up to 39 pupils from Crossroads to Bellfield Primary. The cost of this additional arrangement is £33,930 per academic year, based on a cost of £174 per day for 195 school days.

The travelling distance from Crossroads Primary to Galston Primary is 2.4 miles and is estimated to take 10 minutes. The Council has previously estimated that the cost of this additional travelling distance will be £15,000 per annum.

The environmental impact of the preferred option is likely to be reduced from its present impact as there are 20 pupils attending Crossroads Primary from the Irvine Valley who will have a reduced travelling time to arrive at Galston Primary. Vehicular and pedestrian segregation, and therefore pedestrian safety, has been incorporated within the design of the Galston Primary School site.

Staff who reside outwith the Irvine Valley area and who transfer to Galston Primary School, should the proposal be accepted by the Council following the Consultation period, will require to travel an additional distance of 2.4 miles to school. If staff are redeployed to another educational establishment other than Galston Primary School this will be conducted under existing Council terms and conditions with attempts being made, where possible to minimise any additional distance that they may require to travel..

6. CONSEQUENCES OF THE PREFERRED OPTION

- 6.1** The proposal will result in pupils of Crossroads Primary attending a school building which is modern and designed for the delivery of a 21st Century curriculum. The staff, Parent Councils and community will be consulted fully on the development of plans for the integration of pupils from Crossroads Primary into Galston Primary.
- 6.2** Where necessary, any aspect of the implementation of these proposals that impacts on staff will result in consultation with the relevant trade unions and the individuals concerned.
- 6.3** The proposal will result in the demolition of the present building occupied by Crossroads Primary School and the site declared surplus to the requirements of the Education Service.
- 6.4** Consideration requires to be given to the delineated area of Galston Primary School subsuming the whole delineated area of Crossroads Primary School, or subsuming the delineated area of Crossroads Primary School which is within the boundary of East Ayrshire Council. If there were to be any change made to the present delineated area for Crossroads Primary School, whether the school was retained or not, present children within the rationalised area would continue to be guaranteed a place alongside their present peer group. Further, siblings of children presently attending the school would also be guaranteed a place in the same establishment as their brothers and sisters. In this way, the impact of any catchment area change would be limited for individual families, where children currently attend the school. South Ayrshire Council, clearly, has therefore a key role in the consultation process and consequently have been alerted to this element of the consultative exercise.

6.5 Following from the previous Cabinet decision in March 2008 to retain Crossroads Primary School a sum of £650,000 was allocated in future year's capital programmes to refurbish Crossroads Primary School. Subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise this funding will remain within the Loudoun Academy Learning Community and will be utilised to improve the PE facilities at Loudoun Academy.

7. OTHER ISSUES

7.1 Management of Proposals

It is intended that pupils from Crossroads Primary will be integrated within Galston Primary School from the start of the 2010/11 academic session, which commences on Tuesday 17 August 2010, or as soon as possible thereafter. This will allow the Council to conduct the necessary consultation in accordance with the relevant statutory frameworks.

It is acknowledged that should the proposal be approved and implemented, forward planning will be required from the Department of Educational and social Services and school senior staff, as a matter of good management practice. This planning is necessary in respect of curriculum delivery, staff management and associated issues.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The financial implications of this proposal were contained within the Option Appraisal report which was presented to Cabinet on 16 December 2009. In summary, as stated in para 4.1.3 of this report the net present costs of the 5 options are detailed below.

OPTION	NET PRESENT VALUE
1 – Refurbishment to existing standards	£1,180,253
2 – Refurbish and upgrade facilities	£1,868,034
3 – New build on existing site	£2,487,044
4 – Close existing building and locate as a separate educational establishment in accommodation at Galston primary School	£2,384,122
5 – Cease education provision at Crossroads primary and integrate within Galston Primary	£202,107

8.2 Within the Net Present Value (NPV) calculations are capital costs associated with the initial construction works of each option, on-going maintenance and additional revenue costs or resulting savings accruing from each option.

8.3 It is envisaged that the existing building on the Crossroads Primary site will be demolished. This will minimise security costs and also minimise the risks associated with vacant buildings.

9. RESPONDING TO THE PROPOSAL

- 9.1** Interested parties are invited to respond to the Proposal by making written or electronic submissions on the proposal to the Executive Director of Educational & Social Services, East Ayrshire Council, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU, and E-mail: education.consultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk.
- 9.2** A form is provided at Appendix 4 for the convenience of those wishing to respond. Its use is not compulsory. However, those wishing to respond are invited to state their relationship with the school – for example, “pupil”, “parent”, “grandparent”, “former pupil”, “teacher in school”, “member of the Community” etc. Responses from the Parent Councils, staff, and Pupil Council are particularly welcome.
- 9.3** Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically should know that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: “I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to elected members and council officers of East Ayrshire Council.” Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1** On 13 January 2010 the Cabinet of East Ayrshire Council agreed to adopt, for the purpose of consultation, the proposal that:
- (i) Education provision at Crossroads Primary School be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2010, or as soon as possible thereafter;
 - (ii) Further that the pupils of Crossroads Primary School continue their primary school education at Galston Primary School, from 16 August 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter as detailed in option 5 of this document; and
 - (iii) Consideration be given to the delineated area of Galston Primary School subsuming the whole delineated area of Crossroads Primary School or subsuming the delineated area of Crossroads primary Scholl which is within the boundary of East Ayrshire Council.
- 10.2** It is also recommended that:
- i) interested parties be invited to make written submissions on the proposal to :

The Executive Director of Educational & Social Services, East Ayrshire Council, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU

or by e-mail to:

education.consultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

no later than close of business on **Friday 19 March 2010**.

- ii) the Executive Director of Educational & Social Services prepares a report on the results of the Proposal process for consideration at a future meeting of the Cabinet.

28 January 2010

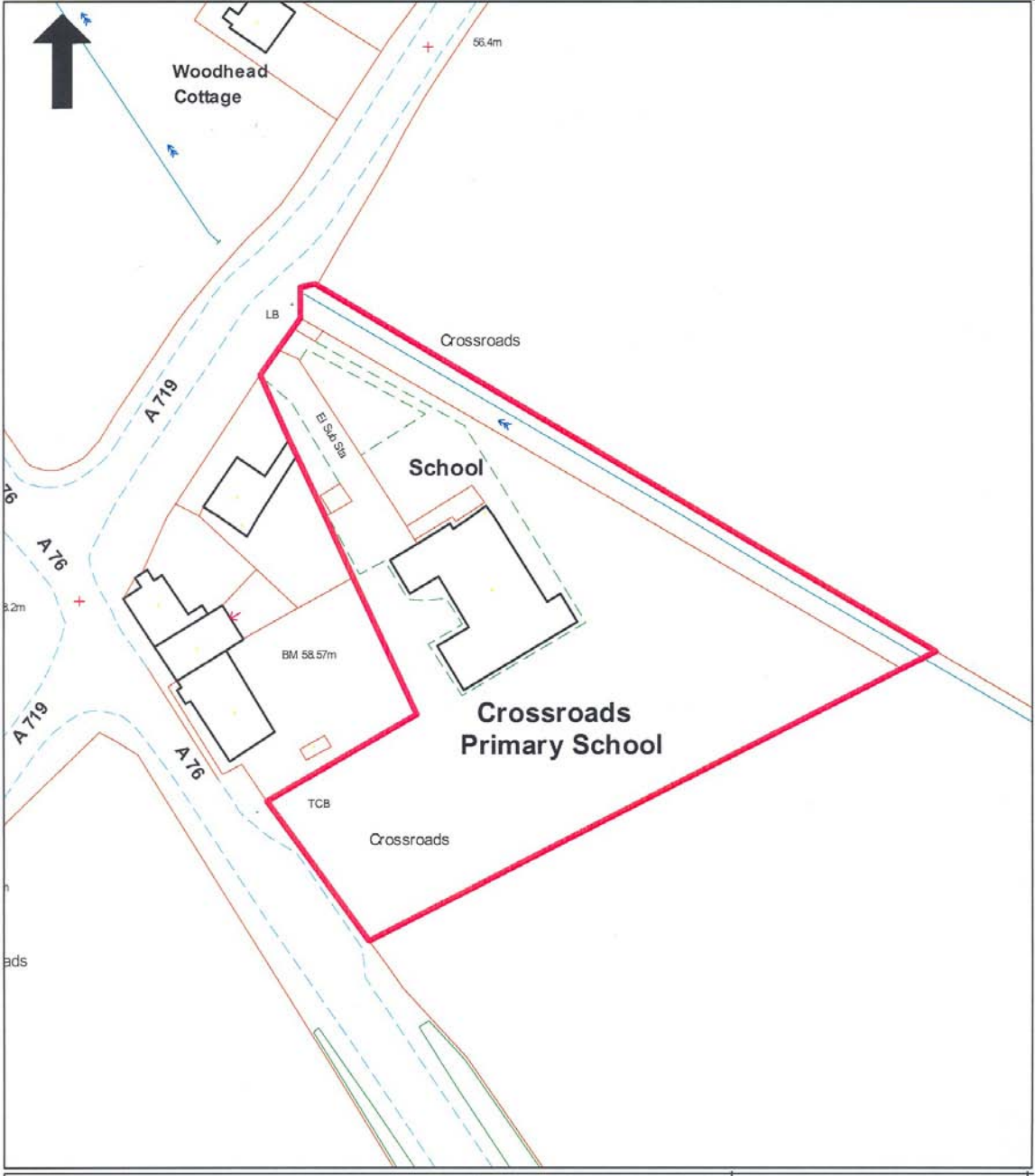
Graham Short

Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

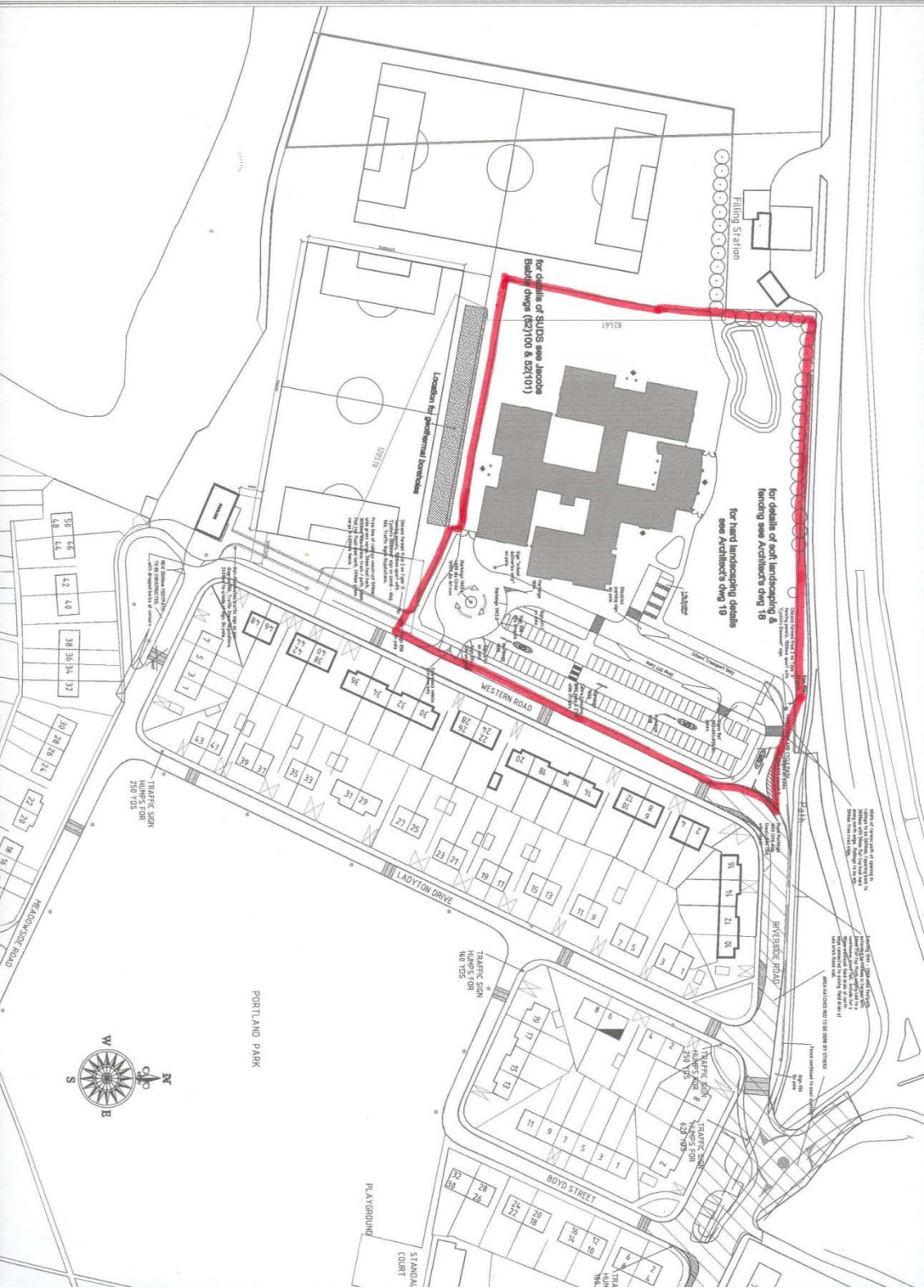
DELINEATED AREA OF GALSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



OUTLINE OF CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL BUILDING AND THE SCHOOL GROUNDS



OUTLINE OF GALSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL BUILDING AND THE SCHOOL GROUNDS



APPENDIX 3

PUPIL ROLL FOR CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL AS AT THE ANNUAL PUPIL CENSUS DATE

SESSION	TOTAL ROLL P1-7
2000/01	69
2001/02	73
2002/03	70
2003/04	67
2004/05	60
2005/06	59
2006/07	52
2007/08	55
2008/09	56
2009/10	52
2010/11	52
2011/12	55
2012/13	55
2013/14	55
2014/15	53
2015/16	48

PUPIL ROLL FOR GALSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL AS AT THE ANNUAL PUPIL CENSUS DATE

SESSION	TOTAL ROLL P1-7
2000/01	407
2001/02	396
2002/03	379
2003/04	367
2004/05	342
2005/06	335
2006/07	323
2007/08	306
2008/09	285
2009/10	277
2010/11	263
2011/12	270
2012/13	270
2013/14	274
2014/15	280
2015/16	282

Note: These roll projections should be treated as a best estimate based on population trends, known housing developments and placing requests. The Council acknowledges that it is difficult to accurately predict school rolls over a long timespan.

APPENDIX 3**COMBINED PUPIL ROLL OF CROSSROADS AND GALSTON PRIMARY
SCHOOLS AS AT THE ANNUAL PUPIL CENSUS DATE**

SESSION	TOTAL ROLL P1-7
2000/01	476
2001/02	469
2002/03	449
2003/04	434
2004/05	402
2005/06	394
2006/07	375
2007/08	361
2008/09	341
2009/10	329
2010/11	315
2011/12	325
2012/13	325
2013/14	329
2014/15	333
2015/16	330

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES

RESPONSE FORM

I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Elected Members and Council Officers of East Ayrshire Council

Proposal

Education provision at Crossroads Primary School be discontinued with effect from 30 June, or as soon as possible thereafter; and

Further that the pupils of Crossroads Primary School continue their education at Galston Primary School as detailed in Option 5 of the Proposal Document and that the delineated area of Galston Primary School be extended to incorporate the delineated area of Crossroads Primary School.

This part of the form must be completed for a valid response:

Name: (please print)	Address:
	Post Code:
I agree/do not agree (delete which does not apply) that my response can be made publicly available	
Signature:	Date:

YOUR INTEREST: (please tick)

Parent <input type="checkbox"/>	Child / Young Person <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Other * <input type="checkbox"/>
Elected Member / MSP / MP <input type="checkbox"/>	Member of Community Council <input type="checkbox"/>		

*Other: (please specify)

Please state your views on the proposal (continue overleaf if necessary)

Office Use:

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

CROSSROADS PS CONSULTATION – ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES RECEIVED

CCR – Crossroads Consultation Response

LOG NO	E-MAIL (EM)/ LETTER RESPONSE FORM (RF)	STATUS OF RESPONDENT
CCR01	Letter	Director, SAC
CCR02	Letter	MSP
CCR03	EM	Head of Service
CCR04	RF	Chief Superintendent
CCR05	RF	Head Teacher
CCR06	RF	Non Elec Mem
CCR07	RF	Chair of other Parent Council
CCR08	Letter	Crossroads PS Chaplain
CCR09	EM	Crossroads PS parent
CCR10	Letter	MSP
CCR11	RF	Member of Galston Community Council
CCR12	RF	Member of Galston Community Council
CCR13	RF	Member of Galston Community Council
CCR14	RF	Other – Tax Payer
CCR15	RF	Member of Galston Community Council
CCR16	RF	Member of Galston Community Council
CCR17	RF	Member of Galston Community Council
CCR18	RF	Member of Galston Community Council
CCR19	EM	Former pupil of Crossroads PS
CCR20	EM RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR21	Letter	Parent, Galston PS
CCR22	RF	Parent, Galston
CCR23	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR24	RF	Health Board rep
CCR25	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR26	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR27	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR28	RF and Letter	Grandparent of Crossroads pupils
CCR29	RF	Grandparent of Galston PS pupils
CCR30	EM	SRSN rep
CCR31	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR32	Letter	Exec Director, NS
CCR33	RF	Former Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR34	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS parent
CCR35	EM to Cllr Jim Roberts	Parent, Crossroads PS parent
CCR36	Letter attached to RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR37	RF	Parent
CCR38	Letter	Head Teacher
CCR39	EM	Parent, Galston PS

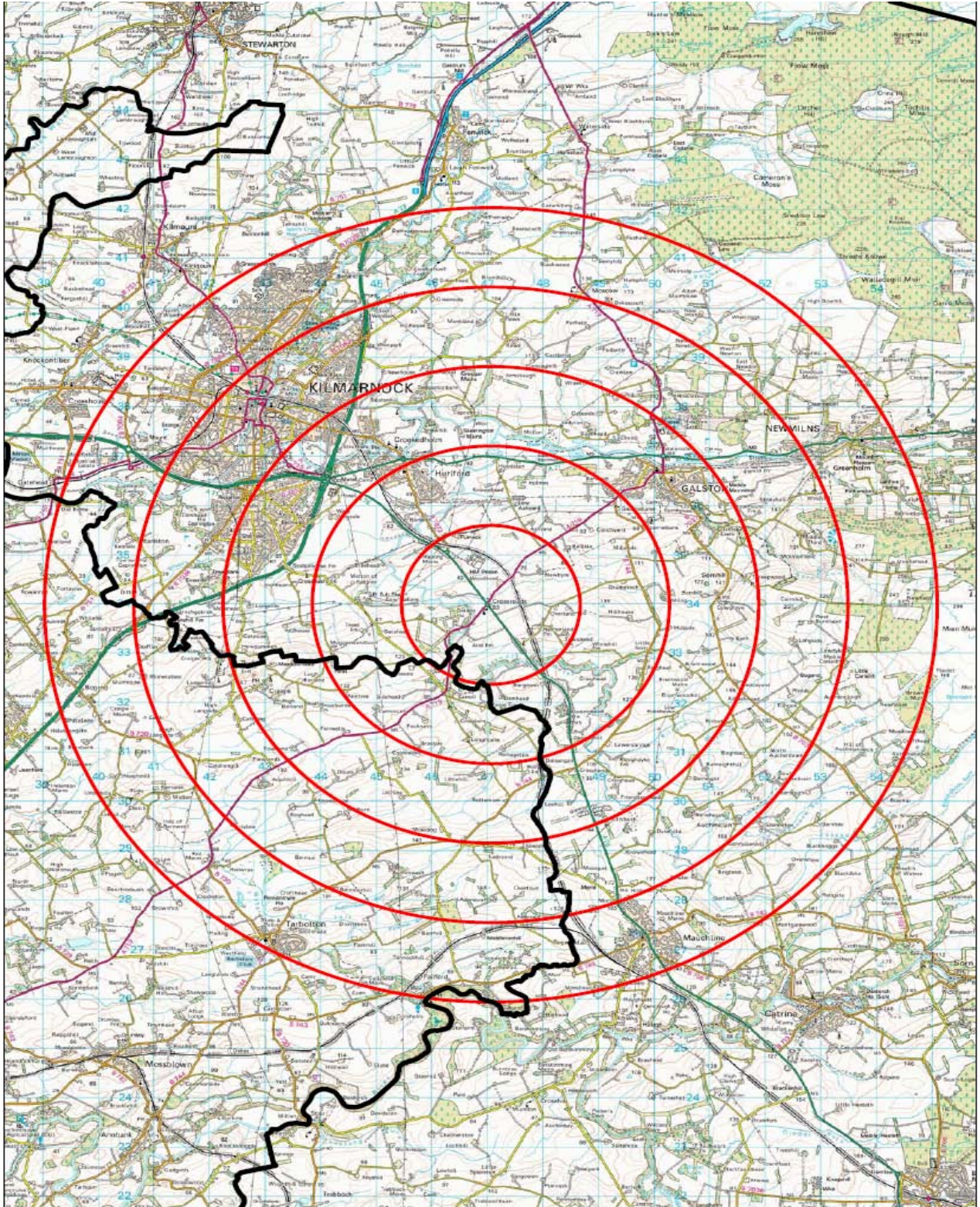
LOG NO	E-MAIL (EM)/ LETTER RESPONSE FORM (RF)	STATUS OF RESPONDENT
CCR40	RF	Head Teacher
CCR41	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR42	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR43	RF	Pupil, Galston PS?
CCR44	RF	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR45	RF	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR46	RF	Former Pupil, Crossroads PS
CCR47	RF	Pupil, Crossroads PS
CCR48	RF	Not stated
CCR49	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR50	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR51	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR52	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR53	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR54	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR55	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR56	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR57	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR58	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR59	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR60	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR61	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR62	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR63	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR64	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR65	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR66	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR67	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR68	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR69	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR70	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR71	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR72	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR73	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR74	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR75	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR76	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR77	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR78	RF	Pupil, Galston PS
CCR79	RF	Staff, Galston PS
CCR80	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR81	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR82	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR83	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR84	RF	Parent, Galston PS

LOG NO	E-MAIL (EM)/ LETTER RESPONSE FORM (RF)	STATUS OF RESPONDENT
CCR85	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR86	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR87	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR88	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR89	RF	Parent,
CCR90	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR91	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR92	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR93	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR94	RF	Staff, Galston PS
CCR95	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR96	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR97	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR98	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR99	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR100	RF	Staff, Galston PS
CCR101	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR102	RF	Staff, Galston PS
CCR103	RF	Staff, Galston PS
CCR104	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR105	RF	Staff, Galston PS
CCR106	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR107	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR108	RF	Staff, Galston PS
CCR109	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR110	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR111	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR112	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR113	RF	Staff, Galston PS
CCR114	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR115	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR116	RF	Other Resident/Council Tax Payer
CCR117	RF	Other
CCR118	RF	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR119	RF	Other
CCR120	RF	Staff another PS in EA
CCR121	RF	Community Council Member
CCR122	RF	Other
CCR123	RF	Other
CCR124	RF	Parent, Galston Ps
CCR125	RF	Parent Galston PS
CCR126	RF & letter	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR127	Letter	Other - Executive Director of NS
CCR128	Foremans modular building folder	Other - Crossroads Parent Council via Councillor McDill

LOG NO	E-MAIL (EM)/ LETTER RESPONSE FORM (RF)	STATUS OF RESPONDENT
CCR129	EM	Parent council Chairperson Mauchline PS
CCR130	EM	Future Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR131	RF	Other – Police Officer
CCR132	EM	MSP Correspondence with Chair of Crossroads Parent Council
CCR133	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR134	RF	Parent, Galston PS
CCR135	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR136	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR137	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR138	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR139	EM RF	Parent Council Chairperson - JHA
CCR140	RF	Pupil, Crossroads PS
CCR141	RF	Pupil, Crossroads PS
CCR142	RF	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR143	RF	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR144	RF	Grandparent, Crossroads PS
CCR145	RF	Grandparent Crossroads Ps
CCR146	RF	Other - DHT Mauchline PS
CCR147	Letter attached to RF	Other - Community Planning Partnership
CCR148	Letter	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR149	Letter	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR150	EM	Future Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR151	Letter	Grandparent, Crossroads PS
CCR152	EM	Ex-pupil, Crossroads PS
CCR153	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR154	EM	Pupil, Crossroads PS
CCR155	EM	Crossroads Parent
CCR156	EM	Chair of Parent Council, Crossroads PS
CCR157	EM	Pupil, Crossroads PS
CCR158	EM	Pupil, Crossroads PS
CCR159	EM	Ex-pupil, Crossroads PS
CCR160	EM	Pupil, Crossroads PS
CCR161	Letter via EM	Ex-pupil, Crossroads PS
CCR162	Letter via EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR163	Letter via EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR164	Letter via EM	Pupil, Crossroads PS
CCR165	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR166	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR167	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR168	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR169	EM (to Local Members, C	Parent, Crossroads PS

LOG NO	E-MAIL (EM)/ LETTER RESPONSE FORM (RF)	STATUS OF RESPONDENT
	Jamieson, W Coffey etc)	
CCR170	EM	Grandparent, Crossroads PS
CCR171	Letter	Ex-pupil, Crossroads PS
CCR172	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR173	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR174	EM	Sandy Longmuir Rural Schools
CCR175	EM	Sandy Longmuir - Rural Schools
CCR176	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR177	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR178	EM	Parents - Crossroads PS - Online Petition
CCR179	EM	Sandy Longmuir - Rural Schools
CCR180	EM	Parent, Galston PS
CCR181	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR182	EM	Tutor - Crossroads PS Art Club
CCR183	EM	Pupils, Crossroads PS
CCR184	EM	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR185	EM	Sandy Longmuir - Rural Schools
CCR186	EM	Parent Crossroads PS
CCR187	EM	Future Parents Crossroads Toddlers Group
CCR188	RF	Elected Member (Labour)
CCR189	EMs	Parent, Crossroads PS
CCR190	EM plus 3 attachments	Parent Council, Crossroads PS
CCR191	EM plus 3 attachments	Scottish Rural Schools Network
CCR192	Covering EM and letter	MSP Cathy Jamieson
CCR193	Covering EM and letter	MSP Willie Coffey
CCR194	Covering EM	Crossroads Parent
CCR195	Crossroads Pupils Response	Crossroads Pupil Response attaching same as above
CCR196	EM	Grandparent, Crossroads PS
CCR197	RF	Minister Hurlford Church
CCR198	EM	Parent Crossroads

CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH SURROUNDING AMENITIES IN 1 MILES BANDINGS



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