



## **REPORT TO EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE – 11 OCTOBER 2018**

### **LONGHAVEN SCHOOL**

#### **1 Recommendations**

**The Committee is recommended to:**

**1.1 Note the mothballing of Longhaven School.**

**1.2 Instruct the Director of Education & Children's Services to provide an update report to the Education and Children's Services Committee on 7 February, 2019.**

#### **2 Background / Discussion**

2.1 Longhaven School is an accessible rural school in the Peterhead Schools network in Aberdeenshire.

2.2 Officers have been working closely with the school and with parents since March, 2018, regarding ongoing staffing and recruitment challenges at the school.

2.3 As previously reported to meetings of the Education and Children's Services Committee on 17 May, 2018, and 19 March, 2018, the sole applicant for the post of Head Teacher at Longhaven School withdrew. The dual Head Teacher, whose substantive school was Burnhaven, and the Principal Teacher were no longer able to continue delivering education at Longhaven School following the spring break.

2.4 The five remaining Longhaven pupils were successfully placed at alternative schools in the Peterhead cluster, whilst the post of Head Teacher was re-advertised.

2.5 The post continued to be re-advertised up to the end of the 2017/18 session, with interviews in August failing to secure an appointable candidate.

2.6 Further meetings were held with elected members and parents during September, 2018, to update on the current situation.

2.7 A decision to temporarily 'mothball' the school from 12 October, 2018, was taken by the Service. Mothballing is the temporary closure of a school which does not in itself lead to statutory consultation. This is in accordance with the Scottish Government's statutory guidance, contained in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act of 2010. The relevant sections can be found at Appendix 1 to this report, while the full guidance can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00477028.pdf>

- 2.8 Currently, the situation is being monitored by officers, and an update will be provided when appropriate.
- 2.9 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report, their comments are incorporated within the report and they are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

### **3 Scheme of Governance**

- 3.1 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section E.3.4 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance, as it relates to the functions of the Council under the Education (Scotland) Acts.

### **4 Implications and Risk**

- 4.1 An equality impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. It is included as Appendix 2 to this report. The following impact has been identified which can be mitigated as described: -
- Pupils will be unable to attend their zoned / current school. Transportation will be available to pupils affected by the current situation at Longhaven School.
- 4.2 All support staff at the school have been offered alternative arrangements at local schools in line with their existing contracts.
- 4.3 Costs of around £600 have been incurred relating to the change of transport contracts. These have been met from the School Transport budget.
- 4.4 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level 'Developing Excellence and Equality'. The Council faces challenges regarding the inability to recruit the full complement of teachers.  
<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/21265/directorate-risks.pdf>

**Laurence Findlay**  
**Director of Education & Children's Services**

Report prepared by Maxine Booth, Quality Improvement Manager, Education & Children's Services  
Date: 26 September, 2018

## APPENDIX 1

### Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 – Statutory Guidance

#### **Mothballing**

63. In considering alternatives to closure, authorities may choose to consider “mothballing” a school (or a stage of education or a nursery class at a school). This is a temporary closure which does not lead to a consultation under the 2010 Act. It is only appropriate in very restricted circumstances. When a school roll falls very low, the authority and/or community may consider that the school is not presently viable but do not wish to close it immediately because there is a reasonable prospect that the number of pupils in the area will increase such that it should be re-opened in the future.

64. It is vital that this flexibility to close a school for a temporary period is not used to undermine the requirements under the 2010 Act to consult on all school closure proposals. Mothballing is only appropriate for a temporary period and should be subject to regular review, at least annually, against the same requirements which led to the original decision to mothball the school (or stage of education). The maximum length of its duration is likely to depend on the location of the school and the desirability of maintaining capacity to re-open a school there, but it is unlikely that it should exceed 3 years in areas that are not very remote. The condition of the school building and cost of maintaining the mothballed provision will also be relevant.

65. A school can be mothballed where the school roll has fallen to zero and continues to be zero. It may also be appropriate where the roll or potential roll is very low and the authority considers the only other option to be closure. However, in circumstances where a school is mothballed rather than closed and some children and young people remain in the catchment area, this decision should be taken in consultation with the parents involved, and the possibility should be raised as early as possible, in order to ensure that families can understand the options open to them. Mothballing should not be a way of denying parents access to the statutory consultation process required under the 2010 Act and if the majority of parents oppose mothballing, it would be appropriate to move to statutory consultation on closure as soon as possible.



## APPENDIX 2

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity (“activity” is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions).	
Service	Education & Children’s Services
Section	Learning Estates
Title of the activity etc.	Longhaven School
Aims of the activity	To note the mothballing of Longhaven School and instruct the director of Education & Children’s Services Committee to provide an update report on 7 February 2019
Author(s) & Title(s)	Rachael Goldring, Learning Estates Team Leader

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment.	
Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).	School Roll Forecasts School Capacity Information Placing Request Information Housing Land Audit Data Recruitment Information.
Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.	Discussions with appropriate internal officers. Discussions with colleagues in Infrastructure Services and Business Services.
External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).	Discussions with parents of existing Longhaven pupils and with prospective parents of pupils for 2018/19 session. Engagement with local elected members for Peterhead South & Cruden
External data (census, available statistics).	Census data, school roll statistics, school capacity information, statutory performance indicators and Scottish Government Statistics
Other (general information as appropriate).	Placing request data, NHS data regarding number of pre-school pupils

Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.

Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?	Outcome of recruitment process School roll statistics can be subject to variance.
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**Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.**

What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.	Measures:	Timescale:
	Engagement with parents and regular monitoring of the situation.	Ongoing

**Stage 5: Are there potential impacts on protected groups? Please complete for each protected group by inserting “yes” in the applicable box/boxes below.**

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger	Yes	Yes		
Age – Older			Yes	
Disability			Yes	
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)			Yes	
Religion or Belief			Yes	
Gender – male/female			Yes	
Pregnancy and maternity			Yes	
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)			Yes	
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)			Yes	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			Yes	

Stage 6: What are the positive and negative impacts?		
Impacts.	Positive (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)	Negative (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)
Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts on those with protected characteristics you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.	Young people – improved access to the totality of the curriculum in appropriate facilities. Wider range of peers for pupils to interact with.	Young people – pupils will not be able to attend their zoned / current school which could increase travel times for pupils

Stage 7: Have any of the affected groups been consulted?	
If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?	A meeting was held between officers and parents on 22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2018 at Longhaven School to discuss the situation and consult them on their views and options available. Officers also met with parents individually on 28 <sup>th</sup> March 2018 to discuss alternative arrangements. The remaining pupils were successfully placed at alternative schools in the Peterhead cluster whilst the post of head teacher was re-advertised. Further meetings were held with elected members and parents during September 2018 to update on the current situation.

Stage 8: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?		
These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form.	Mitigating Steps	Timescale
	Transportation will be made available for pupils attending a different school due to the current situation at Longhaven School	April 2018 - ongoing

Stage 9: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups?	
These should be included in the action plan.	Ongoing engagement/discussions with parents of pupils, and staff members affected by the situation and ongoing discussions with elected members at regular stages as deemed appropriate.

Stage 10: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?

Discussions/Meetings with Parents, Parent Council and Elected Members. Discussions as the situation arose and ongoing engagement with all persons affected has allowed for the process to be as accessible as possible.

Stage 11: What equality monitoring arrangements will be put in place?

These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).

The situation is currently being monitored by officers within Education & Children's Services. An update on the situation will be provided to Education & Children's Services Committee in February 2019

Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?

Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1	No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.
	2	Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
		Pupils will no longer be able to attend their zoned / current school. Transportation will be available to pupils affected by the current situation at Longhaven School.
	3	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen

\* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.

The situation has arisen due to recruitment challenges. The Council has advertised the position of head teacher on three occasions and there was no appointable candidate. Education & Children's Services have a duty to provide an education to the pupils affected. The existing pupils have successfully been placed at alternative schools in the Peterhead Cluster. The situation will be monitored by officers and an update will be provided to Education & Children's Services committee when appropriate.

Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.

Sign off and authorisation.	1) Service and Team	Education & Children's Services		
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	Longhaven School		
	3) <b>Authors:</b> I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Rachael Goldring Position: Learning Estates Team Leader Date: 17 April 2018 Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:	
		Name: Rachael Goldring Position: Learning Estates Team Leader Date: 02 October 2018 Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:	
	4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name: Date:		
	5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: Vincent Docherty Position: Head of Education Date:	Name: Position: Date:	
	6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee. e.g. Social Work and Housing Committee.	Date:		
	7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: eia@abdshire	Date:		
(Equalities team to complete) Has the completed form been published on the website? YES/NO			Date:	

Action Plan						
Action	Start	Complete	Lead Officer	Expected Outcome	Resource Implications	
Discussion with parents and Local Elected Members	22 March 2018	Ongoing	Vincent Docherty	To have continuous dialogue with parents and Elected Members, and discuss options available and keep all affected informed.	Staff time	
Staff Engagement	Ongoing	Ongoing	Maxine Booth	To provide opportunities for staff to be engaged in the process and to provide support for staff throughout.	Staff time	
Report to ECS Committee	May 2018	Ongoing	Maxine Booth	To note the current situation at Longhaven School and to keep the ECS Committee informed with future reports as appropriate.	Staff time	
Discussion with parents and Local Elected Members	Sept 2018	Complete	Maxine Booth	To update parents and Elected Members on the outcome of the HT interviews	Staff time	
Attend E&CS Committee	October 2018	Ongoing	Maxine Booth	To instruct E&CS Committee to note the Mothballing of Longhaven School and instruct the director to provide an update in 2019	Staff time	

