

CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL

Report to Clackmannanshire Council

Date of Meeting: 24 June 2021

Subject: ABC Closure

Report by: Lynda McDonald, Improving Outcomes Manager

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. This report provides information on the outcome of the formal consultation on the permanent closure of ABC Nursery
- 1.2. It seeks Council approval and authority for officers to progress the permanent closure of ABC Nursery from 1st September 2021.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Council

Decides to permanently discontinue ABC Nursery School from 1st September 2021, and thereafter Agrees to declare the ABC nursery building at Grant Street in Alloa surplus to operational requirements

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. Background

- 3.1.1. At the Council meeting on 26 November 2020, the Council approved consultation on the permanent closure (described as permanent discontinuation in the Act) of ABC Nursery

The consultation required to be a formal consultation under the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 (the Act) and focused on the educational benefits of the proposal.

- 3.1.2 Following the Council decision on 26 November, the Council undertook a formal consultation on the permanent closure of ABC Nursery.
 - 3.1.3 Copies of the consultation document (Appendix 1) were distributed to all parents and staff at ABC Nursery. Copies were also made available on the Council website.

- 3.1.4 The document was also sent to Alloa Community Councils and the constituency MSP and MP.
- 3.1.5 A formal consultation meeting was held with staff from the nursery.
- 3.1.6 As required by the Act, a formal consultation event was held to which Education Scotland were invited. This took place online on 23 March 2021 and 11 people were in attendance.

3.2 Outcome of the consultation

- 3.2.1 The consultation responses were gathered via Clackmannanshire Council's online consultation database Citizen Space (Appendix 2).
- 3.2.2 There were 32 responses received online. 6 responses were in favour of the proposal to close ABC Nursery and 26 disagreed.
- 3.2.3 The consultation also gave people an opportunity to provide any further comments; these responses are set out in Appendix 3

3.3 Education Scotland report

- 3.3.1 As part of the statutory consultation, officers from Education Scotland attended the public meeting and met with staff and parents from ABC Nursery and Park ELC.

Following this meeting they prepared a report on the consultation which is contained in Appendix 4.

- 3.3.2 The summary of the report by Education Scotland concludes that the council's proposal is of clear educational benefit for children aged 2-5 years. The report also recommends that the Council should set out how it will address the concerns raised during the consultation. In particular, how it will inform parents of the availability of provision for children aged two years and under including those children who may have complex additional support needs.

The Council then complied with the post consultation legislative requirements in relation to publication of the outcome of the report.

Next steps

Should the Council agree to permanently close ABC nursery school, it will be required to inform Scottish Ministers and to publish a notice on its website confirming the decision to close. There is then an opportunity for representations to be made to Scottish Ministers which would could instigate a process of "call in" of the decision. The timescale for this process is 8 weeks in total. After 8 weeks if there have been no representation or call in the decision will take effect.

Council is also invited to agree to declare the building surplus to operational requirements. This would allow the building to be marketed for sale from 1 September 2021.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

5.0 Resource Implications

5.2 Consultations will take place with Trade Unions over any staffing implications

5.3 All staff will be redeployed into vacant positions.

6.0 Exempt Reports

6.1 Is this report exempt? Yes ☐ (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No ☐

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box ☒)

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish	<input type="checkbox"/>

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

8.0 Equalities Impact

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?
Yes ☐ No ☒

9.0 Legality

- 9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes ☒ No ☐

10.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – ABC Consultation paper

Appendix 2 – Citizen Space Consultation Report

Appendix 3 – Comments Summarised

Appendix 4 – Education Scotland Report

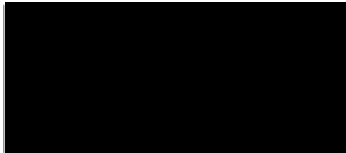
11.0 Background Papers

- 11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)
Yes ☐ (please list the documents below) No ☒

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	TEL NO / EXTENSION
Lynda McDonald	Improving Outcomes Manager	

Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Lorraine Sanda	Strategic Director (People)	



Clackmannanshire Council – People – Education

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Consultation on the proposal to close ABC Nursery, Grant Street, Alloa.

Proposal

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The existing building housing ABC Nursery was used until March 1992 by St. John's Primary School. Scottish Enterprise moved ABC into the building in 1996 and in 1998 Clackmannanshire Council assumed responsibility for ABC Nursery.
- 1.2 Until the emergency closure in May 2020, ABC nursery operated 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. with 23 members of staff and Care Inspectorate registration for up to 88 children, aged 0-5 years. The service was predominately used by working families.

The building is designed around a small main hall. The play areas for 0-2 years and 2-5 years have been created through refurbishment of what were originally classroom areas. In addition there is an administrator's office, a small office for the manager, a parent/carer room and a staff area which is utilised as a meeting room when required.
- 1.3 In May 2020, the ABC Nursery building was subject to emergency closure because the planned structural assessments were unable to take place due to the COVID 19 lockdown. There was a plan to reopen the building in August 2020.
- 1.4 Following a period of extreme weather, an emergency decision was taken in August 2020 not to reopen the building on the basis of Health and Safety.
- 1.5 All children were relocated to local authority Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) establishments or partner providers. Staff were temporarily relocated to the local authority ELC closest to their homes. In January 2021 some staff were temporarily relocated to accommodate the January intake of 3 year olds.
- 1.6 This Proposal Document has been issued as a result of a decision taken by Clackmannanshire Council. On Thursday 26th November 2020, the Council agreed to undertake a statutory consultation regarding the closure of ABC Nursery. The outcomes of the consultation will be reported back to Council

2.0 Reasons for the proposal to close ABC

- 2.1 The building fabric is generally in very poor condition. Following nine separate call outs of reports of water ingress in 2019, an independent roof survey was commissioned and carried out. Further structural assessment survey was also completed
- 2.2 The findings from both surveys concluded that the roofing fabric required immediate attention to stabilise the structure. A programme of roof upgrade and replacement was also required within the short term. Within the areas assessed and observed, there were significant structural defects.

- 2.3 A programme of immediate works was agreed to stabilise the roof structure within the short term to sustain services from this facility. These were completed in November 2019.
- 2.4 This came with a recommendation of further quarterly inspections with the caveat that this work and immediate repairs were a short term solution to sustain provision and restore an element of roof integrity until August 2021.
- 2.5 Every effort has been made by the Property Maintenance Team to sustain this facility resulting in significant reactive maintenance revenue repair costs. By August 2020, the Health and Safety of staff and children could not be guaranteed.
- 2.6 The scope of immediate works required to sustain this building as an Educational Facility in the short to medium term is as follows:

Works Required	Estimated Costs
Upgrade to the Roof Structure and Frame	£300,000
Replacement Roofing Fabric(Slate) , Replacement underfelt Lead Flashings Valleys Rain Water Goods Roof Windows Soffit Boards and Facias	£350,000
Full Replacement Heating Systems	£150,000
Full Electrical Enhancement & Alarms , CCTV	£100,000
Building Re-Commissioning	£30,000
Re-Pointing and Upgrade of Boundary Walls	£50,000
Replacement of Ceilings , Internal Re-Decoration and Floor Coverings	£100,000
Consulting Engineering Fees and Management Fees , Procurement Costs (15%)	£162,000
Totals	£1,242,000

- 2.7 This work would require a full procurement process to be undertaken and any work would require vacant possession of the site.
- 2.8 As part of the 1140 hours expansion of early learning and childcare, children are entitled to a meal. ABC Nursery does not currently have a commercial kitchen to provide meals and this would require capital works.

3.0 Contextual Information

- 3.1 The ABC Nursery roll has shown a decline in roll over the past 4 years:
- session 16/17 - 93 children
 - session 17/18 - 92 children
 - session 18/19 - 64 children
 - session 19/20 - 61 children
- 3.2 Of the 61 registered children in 2019/20:
- 67% of children reside within Alloa
 - 15% of children reside within Tullibody, Sauchie, Clackmannan and Fishcross
 - 12% of children reside within Alva and Menstrie
 - 6% of children reside out with Clackmannanshire
- 3.3 Some of these families used ABC Nursery to purchase additional hours over their entitlement of 600 hours at other establishments. Prior to the 1140 hours expansion of ELC this was the only local authority establishment which offered this flexibility.
- 3.4 ELC settings do not have catchment areas. The National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare which comes in to effect by August 2021 includes the 'Funding Follows the Child' approach, which gives choice to parents/carers to access their child's funded entitlement from any setting. This includes public, private, third sector settings or childminders who meet the National Standard, have a place available and are willing to enter into a contract with their local authority.
- 3.5 The National Standard, which underpins the approach, will provide parents/carers with the certainty that those settings delivering funded hours are offering high quality early learning and childcare provision.
- 3.6 The delivery of the Clackmannanshire ELC expansion offers families the choice of extended year/day or term time options in line with the school day:

	Alloa Cluster	Lornhill Cluster	Hillfoots Cluster
Local authority extended year/day	Park ELC (extension ongoing)	Sauchie ELC Tulach ELC	Menstrie ELC
Local authority term time/school day	Redwell ELC Sunnyside ELC	Banchory ELC Clackmannan ELC Craigbank ELC St Serf's ELC	Alva ELC Strathdevon ELC Tillicoultry ELC Coalsnaughton ELC
Partner Providers	Little Stars Alloa Kidzworld Nursery	Glenview Cottage Nursery Flying Start Nursery	Dollar Nursery
Childminders	5	12	1

- 3.6 For those families requiring more than 30 hours of funded ELC per week there are several local authority options available at Menstrie, Park, Sauchie and Tulach.

Families can also choose from 5 partner nurseries in Clackmannanshire and 18 partner childminders who offer a flexible pattern of attendance.

4.0 Financial information

- 4.1 There are no anticipated revenue savings as a result of the closure of ABC Nursery as the current revenue spend will be transferred to Park ELC to support the new expanded provision. There may be a capital receipt for ABC Nursery if this property is deemed surplus to the Council's needs and is sold.

5.0 Likely Impact on the Alloa Community

- 5.1 The ABC Nursery building is not used for community purposes.

6.0 Travel Plan for Families

- 6.1 No travel plan is required as all current ABC families have accessed alternative ELC establishments.

7.0 Future use of ABC Nursery

- 7.1 The property will become surplus to the Council's operational requirements and an options appraisal for the property will be carried out. All options will be considered for the future use of the property to support the area in terms of both housing and non-housing options.

8.0 The Proposal

- 8.1 Early Learning and Childcare Provision should be discontinued at ABC Nursery.
- 8.2 All children can be accommodated within local authority or partner provider establishments and all staff can be redeployed to other local authority ELC establishments.

9.0 Educational Benefits Statement

- 9.1 Clackmannanshire Council believes the closure of ABC Nursery and relocation of children to alternative local authority and partner provider establishments will provide a range of educational benefits and enhance the Council's efforts to meet the statutory duties enshrined in:

- The Education (Scotland) Act 1980.
- The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000.
- The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.
- The Education Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004 (Updated 2009).
- The Equality Act 2010.
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

- 9.2 **Improved choice for families to access flexible year round provision**
The expansion of ELC in Clackmannanshire has increased the choice and flexibility of provision available to meet the needs of families. This may be based around work patterns, training opportunities and vulnerability.
- 9.3 **Improved learning environments**
The ELC expansion capital investment programme has delivered two new purpose built ELCs at Tulach and Menstrie as well as a refurbishment of Sauchie. The extension to Park ELC is projected to open in August 2021. Some ELC classes have received extensive refurbishments and others have been enhanced. These ELC settings provide a 21st century learning environment which meet the requirements of 'Space to Grow', the benchmark by which any existing property should be assessed to establish suitability of provision.
- 9.4 **Improved transition for those attending ELC closest to catchment school**
When children attend the ELC setting closest to their catchment school, this significantly enhances transition opportunities for children and families. High levels of family involvement are recognised as important to the learning success of children and this can become established at an earlier stage if the ELC is geographically closer to the school.
- 9.5 **Continuity of learning experiences for those in ELC classes**
This proposal supports continuity in children's learning at the early level of Curriculum for Excellence. The ELC staff and school staff can work closely together to provide the children with a high quality experience over the 3 years of Early Level Curriculum for Excellence.

10.0 Staffing implications

10.1 Council officers will commence discussions with staff and trade unions in relation to any potential staffing implications following approval of this closure by Clackmannanshire Council. Any impact on staffing would be in line with current staffing policies and be agreed with appropriate Trade Unions.

11.0 Consultation Timeline

11.1 The proposal to seek to consult on the closure of ABC Nursery was taken at the People Committee on Thursday 26th November 2020.

11.2 Education Scotland is involved in every proposal which a local authority consults on under the 2010 Act.

11.3 Education Scotland must review the local authority's proposal paper along with other relevant documents. The review will have a particular focus on the educational aspects of the proposal. Education Scotland sometimes attends, and observes the public meeting.

11.4 Education Scotland must prepare a professional and independent report on the educational aspects of the proposal being consulted on. In preparing their report, Education Scotland will consider the local authority's proposal paper. They will also take account of written responses received by the local authority, a summary of oral representations made at the public meeting, and any other relevant documents.

11.5 Education Scotland may visit ELC establishments affected by the proposal when they are preparing their report. In this case, it is possible they will meet parents/ carers children and staff to hear their views.

11.6 A report on the consultation will be taken back to Elected members for a decision as to whether ABC Nursery is to close.

Consultation arrangements: Distribution of the proposal document, stakeholders, and the consultation process

Distribution of the proposal document

A copy of this document is available on Clacksweb

A copy of this document will be provide for

- The families of children who had been enrolled at ABC Nursery for session 2020/2021
- The staff at ABC Nursery
- Trade Union representatives of the staff at ABC Nursery
- Alloa Community Council
- Elected members of Clackmannanshire Council
- Constituency MP and MSP
- Education Scotland

This document is available in alternative formats or translated for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply to Clackmannanshire Council Education Service, Kilncraigs, Alloa, FK10 1EB or by email: education@clacks.gov.uk

Consultees

We will be consulting:

- Parents and carers of all children previous enrolled at ABC Nursery
- Nursery staff and trade unions
- Alloa Community Council

The Consultation Period

The consultation will take place between Monday 22nd February 2021 and Monday 26th April 2021.

Public meeting

A virtual meeting will take place on Tuesday 23rd March at 7 p.m.

Please contact education@clacks.gov.uk by Tuesday 16th March for joining instructions.

We would urge anyone who would like to participate, but feel they would be limited by this approach, to contact us directly to discuss (contact details below).

Responding to the Consultation

Please respond online using the Consultation Hub on the Clackmannanshire Council website at:

<https://clackmannanshire.citizenspace.com/>

If you would prefer to write to us directly then you can do so using the email or postal address shown in the contact details below.

All responses should be provided by Monday 26th April 2021.

Due to Covid restrictions all submissions should be in writing or via email.

Following the Consultation

Education Scotland will receive details of both the consultation responses and public meeting and they will then provide Clackmannanshire Education Services with a report.

Education Services will then prepare a consultation report which will be published on the council website. All respondents to this consultation will be notified when it is available.

The consultation report will be discussed by Elected members where they will decide on the matter.

Contact details

Informal telephone enquiries concerning these proposals can be made on 01259 450000.

Please respond to the online consultation response form if you can <https://clackmannanshire.citizenspace.com/> but if you would like to write to us directly in response, please email us at education@clacks.gov.uk or use the following postal address:

ABC Nursery Closure Consultation
Clackmannanshire Council
Education Service
Kilncraigs
Alloa
FK10 1EB

APPENDIX B

ABC Nursery Closure

<https://clackmannanshire.citizenspace.com/education/abc-nursery-closure>

This report was created on Tuesday 27 April 2021 at 08:07

The consultation ran from 22/02/2021 to 26/04/2021

Responses to this survey: **32**

1: Your name

Your name

There were 26 responses to this part of the question.

2: Your contact details

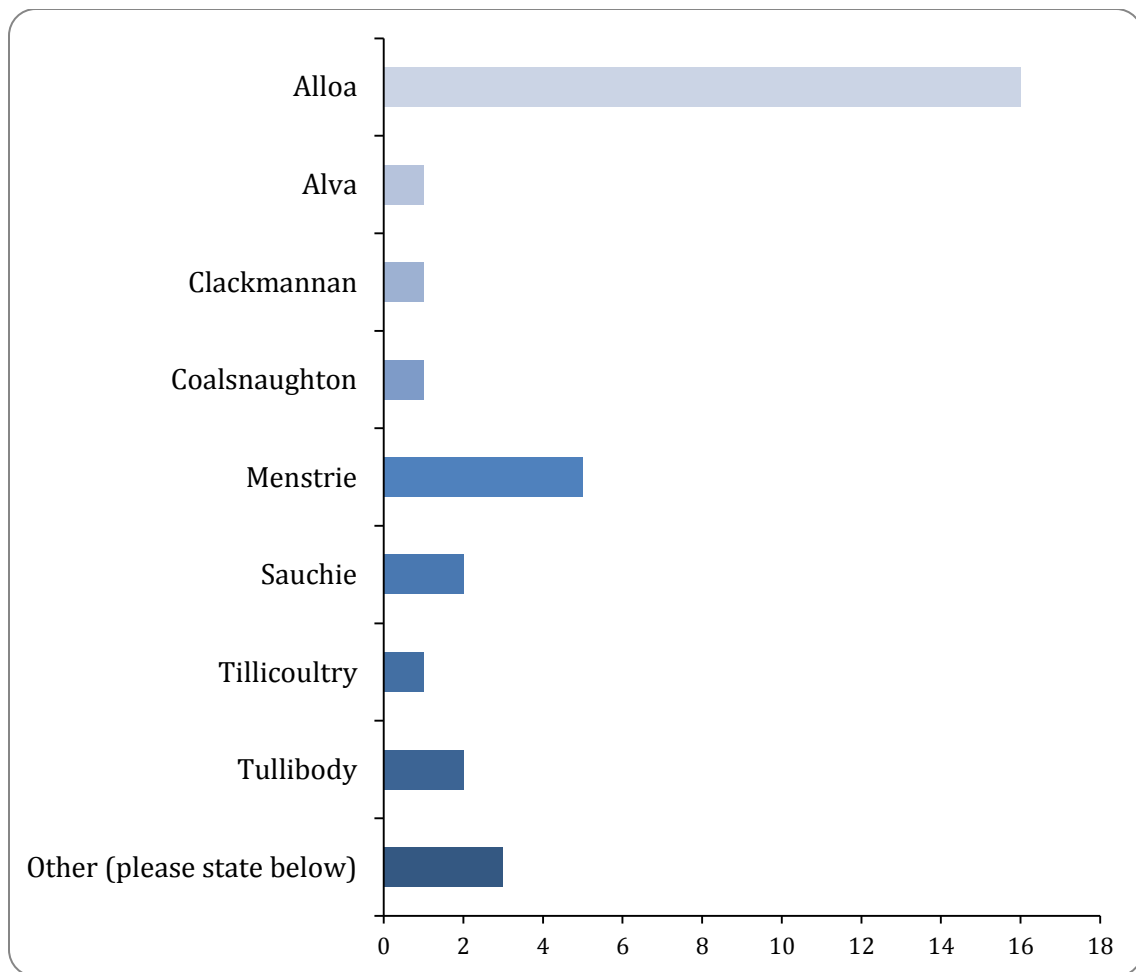
Your contact details

There were 22 responses to this part of the question.

3: Where do you live?

Where do you live

There were 32 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Alloa	16	50.00%
Alva	1	3.12%
Cambus	0	0.00%
Clackmannan	1	3.12%
Coalsnaughton	1	3.12%
Devon Village	0	0.00%
Dollar	0	0.00%
Fishcross	0	0.00%
Forestmill	0	0.00%
Glenochil Village	0	0.00%
Helensfield	0	0.00%
Kennet	0	0.00%
Marchglen	0	0.00%
Menstrie	5	15.62%
Muckhart	0	0.00%
Sauchie	2	6.25%

Tillicoultry	1	3.12%
Tullibody	2	6.25%
Other (please state below)	3	9.38%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

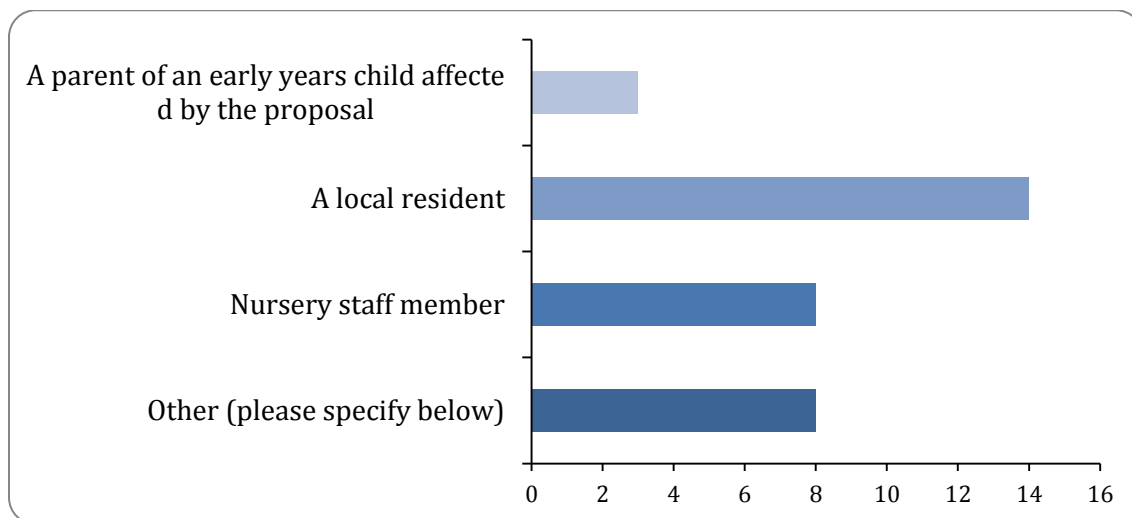
Other place name

There were 5 responses to this part of the question.

1: What group do you belong to?

What group do you belong to

There were 32 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
A parent of an early years child affected by the proposal	3	9.38%
A local resident	14	43.75%
Nursery staff member	8	25.00%
Other (please specify below)	8	25.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

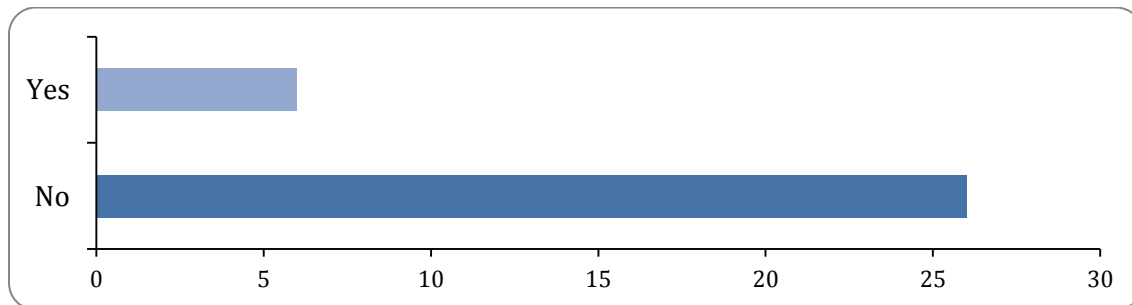
Other group

There were 8 responses to this part of the question.

2: Do you agree with the proposal to permanently close ABC Nursery?

Do you agree with proposal?

There were 32 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	6	18.75%
No	26	81.25%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

3: Please provide any further comments

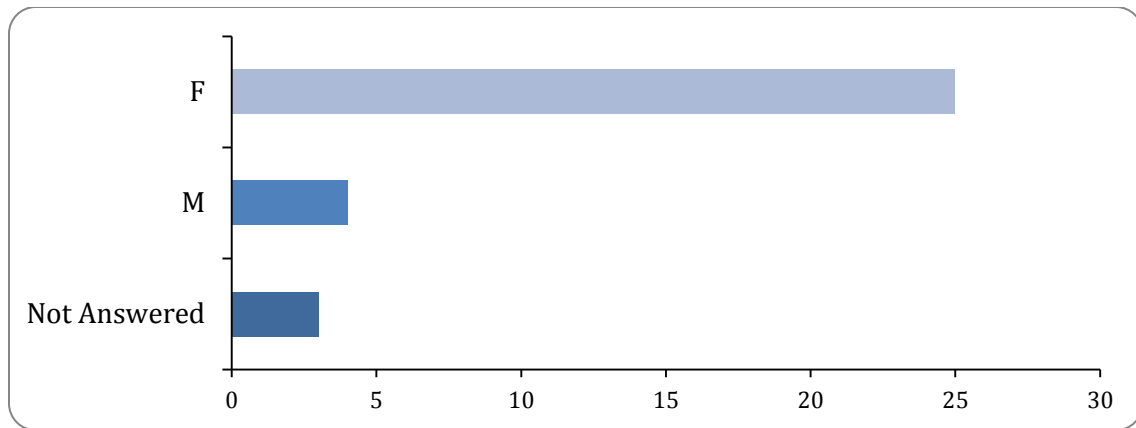
Any further comments

There were 28 responses to this part of the question.

1: Gender

Gender

There were 29 responses to this part of the question.

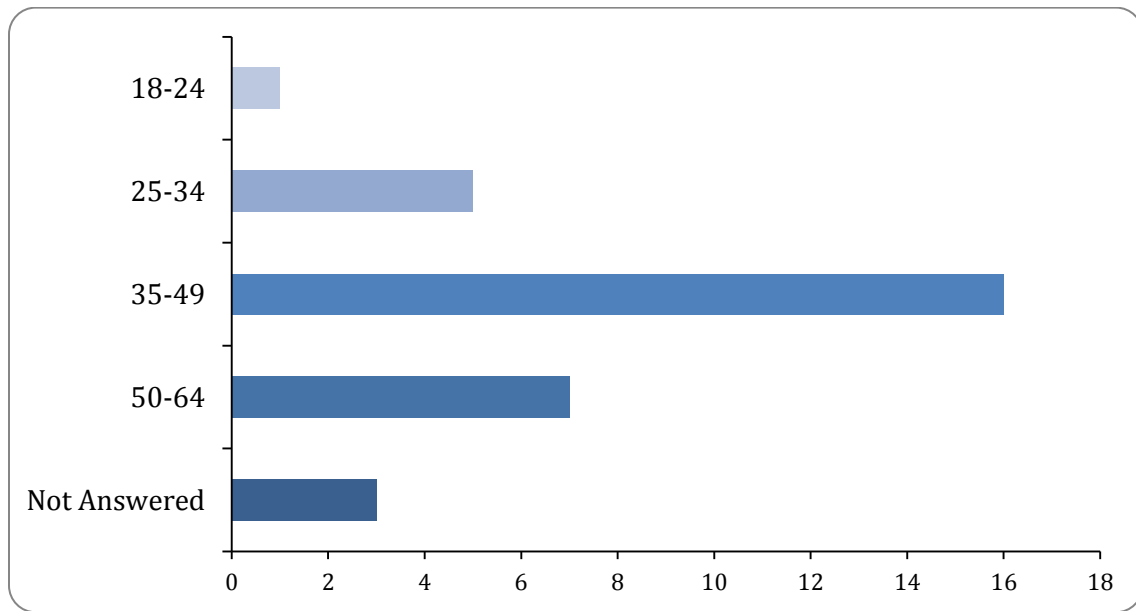


Option	Total	Percent
F	25	78.12%
M	4	12.50%
Other	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	3	9.38%

2: Age group

Age group

There were 29 responses to this part of the question.

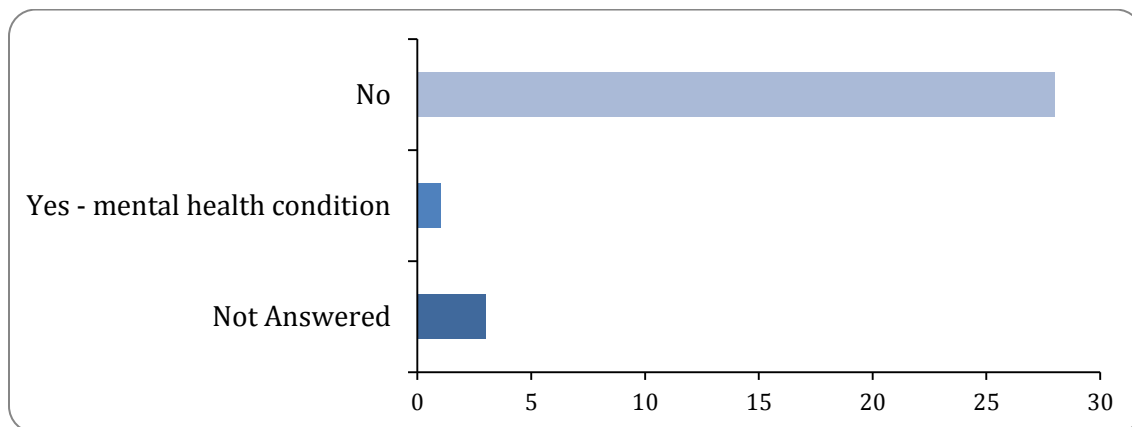


Option	Total	Percent
Under 18	0	0.00%
18-24	1	3.12%
25-34	5	15.62%
35-49	16	50.00%
50-64	7	21.88%
65-74	0	0.00%
75+	0	0.00%
Not Answered	3	9.38%

3: Do you consider yourself to have a disability according to the terms of the DDA?

Disability

There were 29 responses to this part of the question.

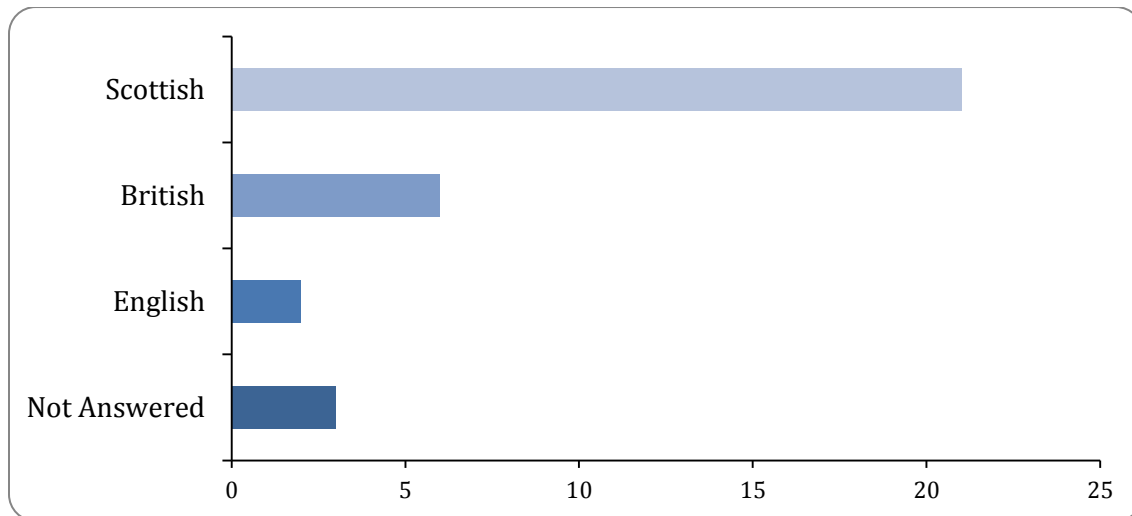


Option	Total	Percent
No	28	87.50%
Yes - learning disability	0	0.00%
Yes - longstanding illness or health condition	0	0.00%
Yes - mental health condition	1	3.12%
Yes - other, such as disfigurement	0	0.00%
Yes - physical impairment	0	0.00%
Yes - sensory impairment	0	0.00%
Yes - prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	3	9.38%

4: What do you consider your national identity to be?

National identity

There were 29 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Scottish	21	65.62%
British	6	18.75%
English	2	6.25%
Irish	0	0.00%
Welsh	0	0.00%
Other (please specify below)	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	3	9.38%

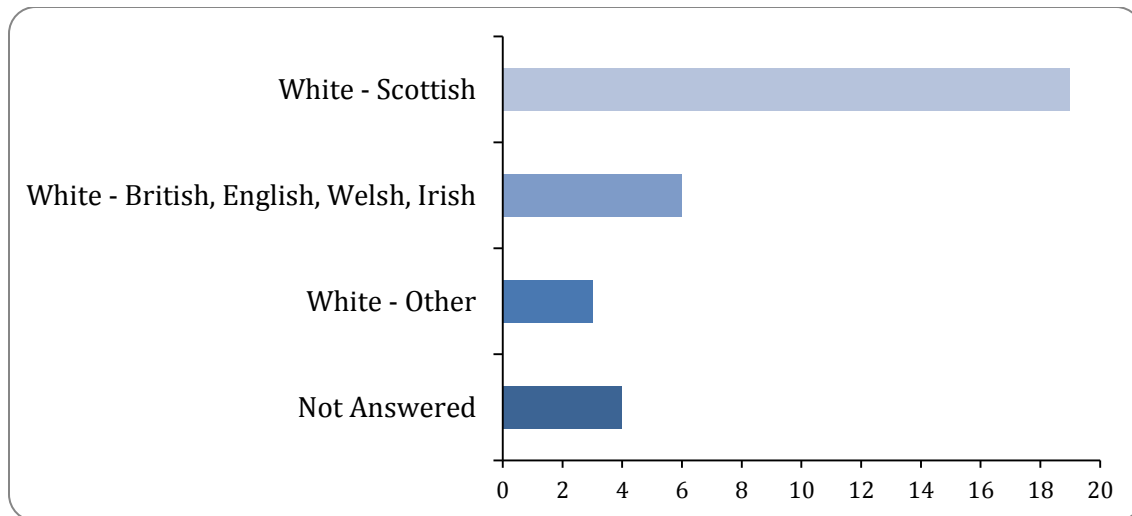
Other national identity

There were 0 responses to this part of the question.

5: What is your ethnic group/background?

Ethnic group

There were 28 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
African, Caribbean or Black	0	0.00%
Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	0	0.00%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	0	0.00%
White - Scottish	19	59.38%
White - British, English, Welsh, Irish	6	18.75%
White - Other	3	9.38%
Other ethnic group (please specify below)	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	4	12.50%

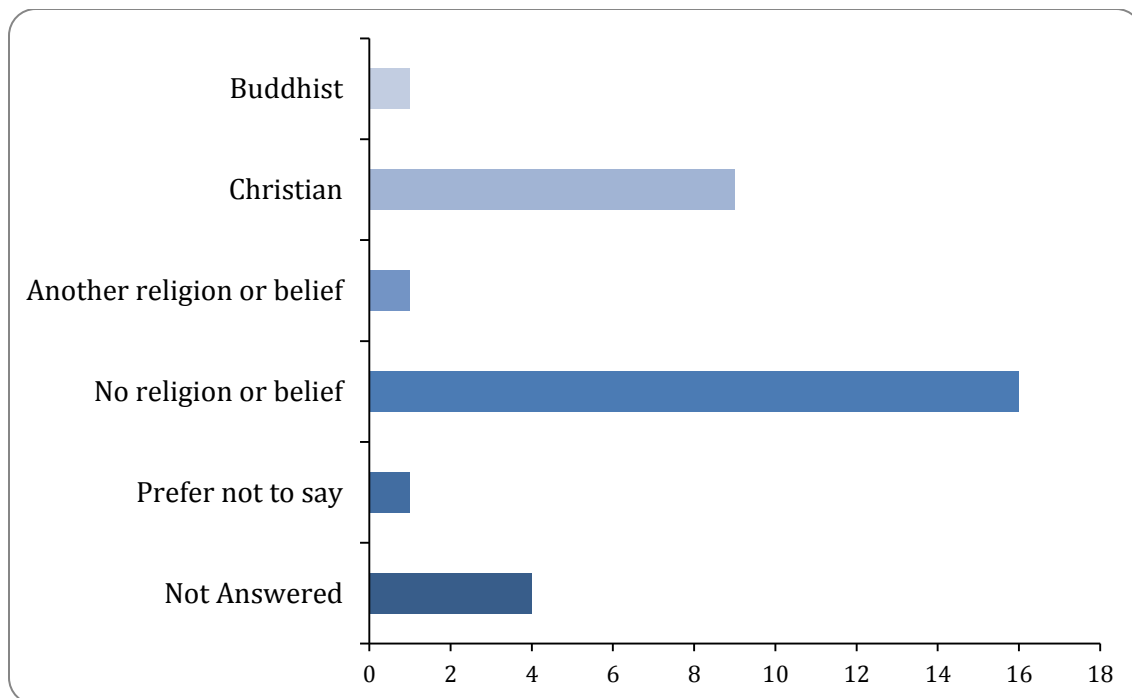
Other ethnic group/background

There were 0 responses to this part of the question.

6: What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?

Religious denomination

There were 28 responses to this part of the question.

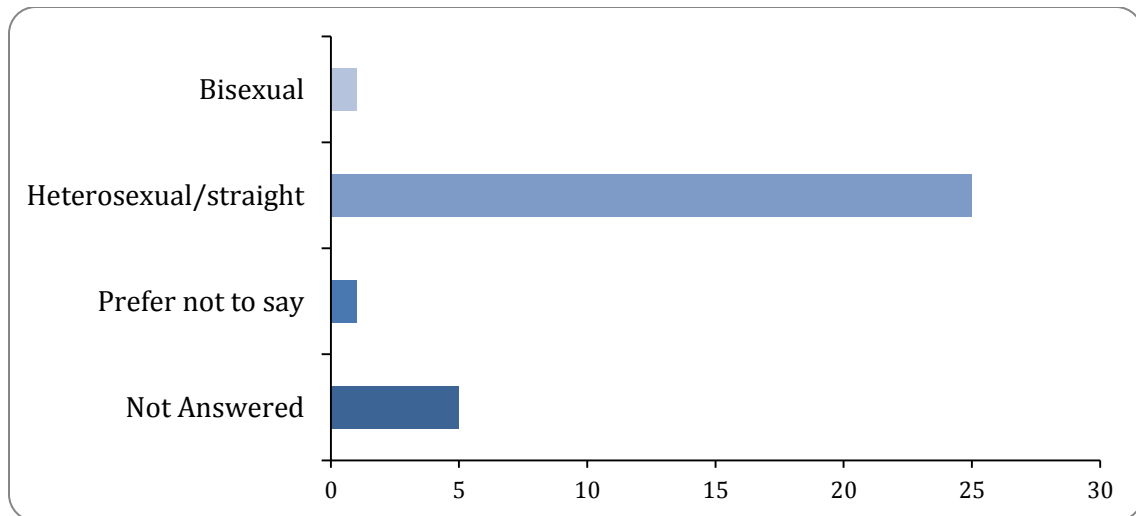


Option	Total	Percent
Buddhist	1	3.12%
Christian	9	28.12%
Hindu	0	0.00%
Jewish	0	0.00%
Muslim	0	0.00%
Sikh	0	0.00%
Another religion or belief	1	3.12%
No religion or belief	16	50.00%
Prefer not to say	1	3.12%
Not Answered	4	12.50%

7: Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

Sexual orientation

There were 27 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Bisexual	1	3.12%
Gay	0	0.00%
Heterosexual/straight	25	78.12%
Lesbian	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	1	3.12%
Not Answered	5	15.62%

Appendix 3 Comments from question - Please provide any further comments

Main theme	comments
Cost and availability of alternative childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There aren't enough nursery and childcare facilities in Clackmannanshire as it is without another one closing down. • There are no other council facilities for childcare for children aged 0-3 and other providers are more expensive. • The closure of ABC has made other nurseries in the area very busy and this will affect the quality of care the children receive • Extended care is not always available at other nurseries. • A nursery facility that takes babies from birth is needed for fulltime working families. • The nursery provides essential childcare for parents who work at an affordable rate. Private childcare costs are ridiculously high and parents will struggle with a closure. • There is now no under 2 council provision in Alloa which is very much needed with a lot of families working in the area. • It was cost effective, flexible and provided care for pre nursery age right through to ready to school. This continuity was excellent • The baby room was always busy offering excellent care for babies and very young children which no other council nursery offers this service also brought income in for the council now young children have to use private nurseries or child minders • Although the cost of care was higher than childminder costs, as a family it was worth it because we trusted the staff absolutely
Building condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building is unsuitable for purpose and better provision is available elsewhere • Poor maintenance of this property has resulted in this building becoming unusable • Does the council have a programme for checking these buildings • The roof has been a cause for concern for a number of years but instead of fixing it, it was just patched up • The ABC building is in poor condition and not located where the greatest need is. • Had it been adequately maintained it could have served this purpose for many years to come. • The building is an old building but the council have not spent the money keeping on top of it which would have allowed it to stay open now like a lot of buildings belonging to the council it's going to cost too much to bring up to standard and is being left to rot • It is a shame that over time ABC has got like this rather than being maintained over the years. • We knew the building was badly needing repairs but why let it get that bad and why could we not be relocated ,my belief

	<p>is there are not enough places for pre school children, some nurseries are getting extensions and outdoor classrooms built, why could Abc not get money spent on it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nursery was left to rot in my opinion, such an amazing building that was not taken care of. • ABC staff reported the building issues on numerous occasions • There are other buildings we could have been moved into, and nurseries who have since had extensions and new buildings provided • The other facilities within Clackmannanshire are newer more modern and safer buildings.
ABC current provision and location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fantastic setting that has provided an effective service for years. • Nursery provide best care for son and fully expected his sister to go there • This was a great nursery right up until it was forced to close. • Not everyone wants to use private nurseries and there was a feeling of inclusion for everyone at ABC • ABC nursery building is a great space because of the many different rooms to accommodate children of different stages of development and needs, including babies. • Location of ABC Nursery was convenient as it is not part of a school so I could easily and quickly drop my children off and pick them up again without searching for a place to park • I liked the security of the building, as you could not see in from the street , all the rooms were to the side and back of the building so I felt reassured that my children were safe in the building. • We were acknowledged as a 'centre of excellence' with visitors from other establishments, local authorities and even countries come to visit us, allowing us to share our way of practice. Also gaining 6's in our most recent care inspection. • Numbers at ABC were always smaller • The faculties are fantastic and the nursery has been part of Grant Street for as long as I can remember. • the space was used to its full potential • It provided extended hours provision in an area where this was needed. • I found the environment to be inviting and nurturing for my children • The children and staff have already been relocated. It's a little too late to consult on the building • There is no other nursery in the area that has the positive reputation of both staff and establishment as this Nursery. • This is a fantastic facility locally with amazing staff • My daughter excelled and they fully prepared her for Primary. • Community resource that offered excellent care • This is by far the best nursery in the area which has a fantastic reputation for the care and learning that all staff

	<p>provide to the children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it has been the heart of the community in Alloa for a very long time • I liked the building and the generous outdoor space - I always felt welcome when I entered the building, it was like being part of a community. • The 2 to 5 room offered excellent care to the children and their families • ABC provided a high standard of care to the children and families that specifically chose us for this reason. • Families came back time after time for the care their children received at ABC • The nursery itself was beautiful with fabulous resources. • We had a baby room where children were given the best start in life by first class staff who were dedicated and professional
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff go above and beyond and make everyone feel welcome • ABC nursery was more than a work place we were a family who cared for every child • I understand that many staff have left over the years as they could not live under the constant threat of closure. • We had a fantastic support network of other agencies around us supporting our children and working together to provide our children with the best possible care • The staff were fantastic and caring • We were a fantastic staff team that worked together for a lot of years • We were known in the local area for our standard of nurture and care, that we provided to all children who became part of the ABC family. • The council staff always demonstrated a high level of professionalism and a genuine care for the children and we had no complaints over the years our daughter attended.
1140 hours expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new large campuses at Menstrie , Redwell etc are not always the answer sometimes small is better, some of these nurseries do not have the experienced staff that abc had. • The other facilities within Clackmannanshire are newer more modern and safer buildings. • Investment is required in Alloa South - infrastructure to improve the learning environment in and around the Park Campus must be a priority.
Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I totally disagree with the closure of this long standing nursery, the community and staff deserve for this decision to close to be overturned. • Closure of another local facility • The Park nursery building, including the extension is not fit for purpose as is, and will not adequately meet the needs of babies according to the plans. • I don't think the 1.2 Million cost to refurbish and fix isn't justified especially given that other buildings haven't been repaired • The communication over ABC temporary closure wasn't the

	<p>greatest I found out more via the local paper - it was closing then it was opening then it was closing again a lot of mixed messages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What beggars belief is this nursery got 6s at there latest care commission inspection but still got closed down • To say I was upset with the closure is an understatement; it has effected me enormously effecting my mental health with how quickly this happened. • The closure of the ABC building during a global pandemic is ludicrous • Clacks council has not thought about the impact this move has had on staff from both establishments, children and families at Park Nursery. • 1140 should never have been allowed to happen within Park nursery when they are already having to accommodate another nursery and having children in extended year which was never the case just months prior. • ABC Nursery received 6's after a recent inspection, and to be honest I have never heard of an achieving nursery being closed completely. • Only if suitable arrangements for childcare can be made available • Clackmannanshire as a whole is getting larger, the population is growing and education provision isn't growing to accommodate the growth in the county. • Very poor decision
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Appendix 4

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Clackmannanshire Council to close permanently ABC Nursery, Alloa.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Clackmannanshire Council's proposal to close permanently ABC Nursery, Alloa. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the setting; any other users and other children in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

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

- attendance at the virtual public meeting held on 23 March 2021 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- virtual visits to the site of Park Primary School and Nursery Class, Menstrie Nursery and Alva Nursery Class. This included discussions with five former staff members of ABC Nursery. Two parents attended the parents' meeting. Both were parents of children who formerly attended ABC Nursery.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Clackmannanshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2 The consultation ran from 22 February to 26 April 2021. The council's proposal paper was made available online and provided to statutory consultees. Taking account of relevant current public health advice and Covid-19 restrictions at the time, a virtual public meeting was held on 23 March 2021 where six stakeholders attended. In addition, a staff only consultation meeting took place on 16 March 2021. In total, 32 people responded to the online consultation. Of the 32 respondents, six were in favour of the proposal and 26 were not. The main reasons for opposing the proposal included a lack of council provision for children under the age of two and greater distance to travel for alternative provision. Respondents also shared their disappointment at the possibility of the permanent closure of ABC Nursery. Stakeholders supporting the proposal highlighted that other early learning and childcare (ELC) settings within Clackmannanshire are available to provide improved learning environments, particularly outdoors.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 ABC Nursery provides full year, extended day provision for babies and children until they start primary school. In May 2020, the nursery was subject to an emergency closure due to planned structural assessments unable to take place at an earlier stage due to Covid-19 restrictions. Following a period of severe weather in summer 2020, significant damage was caused to the roof of the building. A decision was taken not to re-open ABC Nursery in August 2020, due to concerns for the health and safety of children, staff and parents. In May 2020, the nursery manager and staff supported parents to find alternative placements for their children. All children were relocated to other ELC settings. All staff were temporarily redeployed and will be redeployed permanently should the proposal go ahead.

3.2 Clackmannanshire Council has set out a clear case in support of its proposal to close permanently ABC Nursery. The council has identified a range of educational benefits to be gained if the proposal is taken forward. HM Inspectors agree the expansion of ELC in Clackmannanshire Council will increase choice and flexibility of provision to meet the needs of families of children aged 2-5 years. As a result of the ELC expansion capital investment programme, there are now two purpose built settings at Tulach and Menstrie as well as a refurbishment at Sauchie. Park ELC is also undergoing significant extension and refurbishment. Some ELC classes have also received extensive refurbishments and others have been enhanced. As a result, children will be able to access improved learning environments. The council also believe there will be improved transition for children attending ELC settings closest to their catchment school. The proposal also supports greater continuity in children's learning across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence, with increased opportunities for ELC and primary staff to work together.

3.3 Parents and staff who met with HM Inspectors agreed with the proposal to close permanently ABC Nursery due to the structural issues with the building and understood why the emergency closure had to take place. However, most respondents to the online consultation were not in favour of the permanent closure of the nursery. All parents and staff who met with HM Inspectors and those who responded online shared that children previously attending ABC Nursery had always benefited from high quality ELC. Parents and staff were keen that children could continue to access high quality ELC. Overall, they believe new and refurbished settings will continue to provide children with high quality learning environments, particularly outdoors where children will be able to engage readily with a wider range of nature experiences.

3.4 Consultees, who met with HM Inspectors, recognise there will be greater choice and flexibility for families due to an increase in settings with full day provision. However, a few raised concerns about a lack of affordable placements within council settings for children under the age of two. This was previously available at ABC Nursery. In addition, a concern was raised regarding the availability of appropriate placements for children under two with complex additional support needs.

3.5 All parents and staff who met with HM Inspectors could see the benefits of improved transition arrangements where an ELC setting is within a school or on a school campus. This reassured parents. Staff look forward to increased opportunities to work with colleagues across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence to support continuity and progression in children's learning.

4. Summary

The council's proposal is of clear educational benefit for children aged 2-5 years. HM Inspectors agree that there will be greater choice and flexibility of ELC provision for children aged 2-5 years. Improved learning environments, particularly outdoors will provide children with a wider range of experiences. Settings within schools or campuses will be able to provide enhanced transition arrangements for children starting school. There is the potential for greater opportunities for continuity in learning across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence when nursery staff and primary school teachers work closely together. Should the council proceed with its plans to close ABC Nursery permanently, it should set out how it will address the concerns raised during the consultation. In particular, how it will inform parents of the availability of provision for children aged two years and under including those children who may have complex additional support needs. It will also be important that the council should continue to work with ELC settings and schools to support collaboration to ensure continuity of learning across the early level.

Next Stages

Following the publication of this report, Clackmannanshire Council requires to allow time for further consideration. This requires three weeks to lapse before taking a final decision on whether to implement a final proposal. A decision on this consultation is due to be taken by Clackmannanshire Council on 24th June 2021.