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**Report to Council**

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**Date: 11 March 2010**

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**Subject: The establishment of a nursery class of Park Primary School  
and the closure of Tower Nursery School**

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**Report by: Director, Services to People**

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## **1.0 Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of the report is

- (i) to seek approval to conduct a public consultation on a proposal by Education and Community Services to close Tower Nursery School and
- (ii) to re-establish the service as the nursery class of Park Primary School.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that Council approves the proposal by Education and Community Services to conduct a public consultation on closing Tower Nursery and to re-establish it as the nursery class within Park Primary School.

## **3.0 Considerations**

3.1 The closure of any school requires that a formal, consultation process be carried out

3.2 At its meeting of 27 September 2007, Council approved the recommendations of the independent commission set up to review of the provision of education 3-12. One of the recommendations of the commission was to move to provide early years' education within the campus of primary schools wherever possible.

- 3.3 Council has already approved one closure of a nursery school to re-establish it as a nursery class. The closure of Clackmannan Nursery School and its merger with Clackmannan Primary School was approved by Council in June 2009. Inspections conducted by both HMIE and the Care Commission following the management of both establishments during the interim arrangements, as well as since formal closure of the school, report that the quality of early years' education provided in Clackmannan has been sustained and built upon.
- 3.4 At its meeting in December 2009, Council considered a report on Primary School Provision in Alloa West, and approved a recommendation that officers examine any other possibilities within the Council area for improving the organisation and delivery of teaching and learning through shared leadership of service components.
- 3.5 When it was established, Tower Nursery School provided nursery education for most of the town of Alloa. Over time, nursery classes have been established in the other schools in the town that serve the Alloa catchment area. Tower Nursery currently provides education services to 3-5 year old children who are mainly resident in the catchment area of Park Primary School. The nursery school is located on the same campus as the primary school and the two establishments are a short walk away from each other. Nursery pupils who have extended day places currently use the Park dining room for lunch.
- 3.6 Since the retiral of its headteacher in June 2009, Tower Nursery school has been led by an acting headteacher supported by a team of Early Years Workers. There has been no reduction in the quality of service delivery. Tower Nursery was recently inspected by HMIE and a good report followed.
- 3.7 The post of headteacher at Park Primary School has been filled by an acting headteacher for more than 2 years.
- 3.8 The current vacancies in both establishments allow for a merger under the leadership of a new headteacher of Park Primary School.
- 3.9 The services available to parents and pupils will suffer no detriment as a result of the proposed closure and revised management arrangements, as these will continue to be delivered as the nursery class of Park Primary School. The staffing in the nursery class will continue at the same level as is currently provided.
- 3.10 The new management arrangements will support improved transition for pupils moving from nursery to primary education. The proposed arrangements should also be more convenient for parents who have children who attend both establishments. The work of both establishments should be enhanced in supporting continuity of learning. This is especially important because the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence means that learning at the 'early

stage' covers the age range 3-6 years. A single management arrangement is wholly consistent with the principles of the Early Years Framework, published recently by the Scottish Government and CoSLA. Whilst helping to deliver the GIRFEC agenda, the proposed change in arrangements would be consistent with the Council's Single Outcome Agreement and its Corporate Priorities.

- 3.11 The changes in management arrangements are expected to generate a saving of around £40 000 per annum as the result of the deletion of the head teacher's post in a full financial year. It is proposed that any such savings should be retained for use within the Education and Community Services budget, to enhance services provided out of the redesigned campus. In particular, we would want to enhance the availability of technology within the school and potentially in the home environment, particularly to support children who do not have the benefit of internet access at home and/or as a means to fund any refurbishment required as a potential result of this proposal.
- 3.12 The accommodation needs of the school will need to be kept under review. The current capacity of the school is 300 pupils with a projected roll of 175 in session 2010 - 11. Roll projections indicate that this will drop to around 130 by 2014. However, before the nursery class could be established in the school, the Primary Support Service would require to be relocated as a result of the need for space to accommodate the nursery class.
- 3.13 A minor refurbishment of Park Primary School may be required to provide appropriate accommodation for a nursery class. Officers would be required to examine the extent (if any) of refurbishment required, and consequently identify how any such upgrading would be funded.
- 3.14 A report detailing the outcome of the public consultation will be presented to Council no later than the end of June 2010.

#### **4.0 Sustainability Implications**

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

#### **5.0 Resource Implications**

##### **5.1 Financial Details**

- 5.2 The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate.

Yes

##### **5.3 Staffing**

- 5.3.1 There are no staffing implications in relation to the arrangements which exist currently for the management of nursery provision in Tower Nursery or in Park Primary School. The merger of the nursery school and the primary school, if approved, will allow the deletion of the post of Headteacher, Tower Nursery School.

## 6.0 Exempt Reports

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 2008 - 2011 (Please tick )

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses         | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Our communities are safer  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Vulnerable people and families are supported                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Substance misuse and its effects are reduced                             | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| The environment is protected and enhanced for all                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence        | <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 In adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

## 10.0 Appendices

10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

None

## 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)

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### Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Jim Goodall	Head of Education	Signed by Jim Goodall
Grahame Blair	Director Services to People	Signed by Grahame Blair

