



## 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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:

<b>Works Required</b>	<b>Estimated Costs</b>
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
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£1,242,000</b>

- 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	Lornshill 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 and Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

### **Public meeting**

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

Please contact [education@clacks.gov.uk](mailto:education@clacks.gov.uk) by Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:education@clacks.gov.uk) or use the following postal address:

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