



**Dumfries and Galloway Council  
Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing**

**Consultation Report: September 2024**

**Report on the outcome of the consultation relating to the proposal  
to discontinue education provision at Hutton Primary School**

This document has been issued by Dumfries and Galloway Council in regard to a proposal in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 210 as amended.

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## **1.0 Summary Proposal**

Dumfries and Galloway Council is proposing, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process, to discontinue education provision at Hutton Primary School which is currently mothballed and:

- re-align its catchment area to Applegarth Primary School or
- split and realign the catchment area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

It is proposed that education provision at Hutton Primary School be discontinued with effect from 1 January 2025.

## **2.0 Reasons for this proposal**

This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposal which are;

- Hutton Primary School has been formally mothballed for seventeen months, with no pupils in attendance since August 2020. The school roll is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18.2% fall in the 0-15 age group from 2018 to 2032.
- Along with several other rural councils, Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment. The annual cost of mothballing the building is £5,380.

This document has been issued by Dumfries and Galloway Council Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This document has been prepared by the Council's Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate with input from other Council Directorates.

## **3.0 Introduction**

This consultation report is prepared in compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide a record of the total number of written responses made during the statutory consultation period;
- Provide a summary of the written responses;
- Provide a summary note of oral representations made at the public meeting held on Tuesday 21 May 2024 at 6pm;

- Provide a statement of Dumfries and Galloway Council's response to those written and oral representations;
- Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of Dumfries and Galloway Council's response to this report;
- State how Dumfries and Galloway Council reviewed the proposal following the representations received during the statutory consultation period and receipt of the report from Education Scotland;
- Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in the proposal paper and state how Dumfries and Galloway Council has complied with sections 11A to 13 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended; and
- Explain the opportunity that may arise to make representations to the Scottish Ministers in connection with Section 15(4) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

#### **4.0 Background**

On 20 September 2022 Education and Learning Committee noted the official mothballing of Hutton Primary School for academic year 2022/23 following a temporary arrangement to amalgamate the school with Applegarth Primary School. The temporary arrangement was in place from August 2020 and originally planned to be in place for a few weeks following the initial Covid-19 lockdown to support both schools by amalgamating them into one setting, therefore reducing pupil and staff isolation and ensuring continuity of education delivery. As time progressed, the advantages of being on one site was shown to have enhanced pupils' learning experiences, whilst extending the opportunities to socialise with a much wider range of peers. The management of shared resources was a further advantage where pupils were able to access the range of facilities available at Applegarth Primary School, whilst staff were able to share their skills and expertise more effectively.

Education and Learning Committee – 20 September 2022 – Item 12 – Transformation Update – Partnerships and School Management Arrangements  
<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=549&MId=5548&Ver=4>

On 29 June 2023 Education and Learning Committee noted a further period of mothballing for academic year 2023/24. Members also agreed that that officers engage with local families and the wider community of Hutton Primary School to further consider future options for the school.

Education and Learning Committee – 29 June 2023 – Item 12 – Transformation Update – Partnerships and School Management Arrangements  
<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=549&MId=5752&Ver=4>

Following engagement with the communities of Hutton Primary School, Education and Learning Committee, on 14 March 2024, were presented with the preliminary requirement document satisfying the requirements of phase one of the Statutory Consultation timeline. Members agreed to the commencement of the Statutory

Consultation process for the closure of Hutton Primary School in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

Education and Learning Committee – 14 March 2024 – Item 18 –

<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=549&MId=5909>

Full details of the proposal, reasons for the proposal, the reasonable alternatives to the proposal that were identified, an assessment of the proposal and each of the reasonable alternatives, and an assessment of the educational benefits to the proposal and each of the alternatives are set out in the Proposal Paper which is attached at Appendix 1.

## **5.0 Impact Assessment**

Dumfries and Galloway Council has undertaken an impact assessment during the consultation process, to ensure that any barriers or discrimination that might affect the communities of Hutton Primary School are highlighted, ensuring we meet our statutory duties under the Equality Act including the Fairer Scotland Duty.

The summary impact assessment document is attached at Appendix 2 and available on Dumfries and Galloway Council's website - [Impact assessments - Dumfries and Galloway Council \(dumgal.gov.uk\)](#)

The impact assessment identified three positive impacts (disability, human rights and health & wellbeing & health inequalities). One negative impact was identified for economic & social sustainability. Whilst there was a negative impact, the positives for pupils and staff outweighed the potential negative of the reduction of a council facility in the community.

## **6.0 Consultation Process**

Following engagement with the communities of Hutton Primary School, Education and Learning Committee on 14 March 2024 were presented with the preliminary requirement document satisfying the requirements of phase one of the Statutory Consultation timeline, Members agreed to the commencement of the Statutory Consultation process for the closure of Hutton Primary School in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

The Proposal Paper was made available on Dumfries and Galloway Council's website:

[www.dumgal.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/consultations)

A summary of that document was also provided to the following consultees:

- a. The Parent Councils of Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School;

- b. The Parents/carers of pupils within the current Hutton Primary School catchment area;
- c. The Parents/carers of pupils attending Applegarth Primary School, Langholm Primary School;
- d. The parents/ carers of any children living within the Applegarth Primary School, Hutton Primary School and Langholm Primary School catchment areas expected to start school within two years of the date of publication;
- e. The pupils at any affected school (considered to be of a suitable age and maturity to be able to communicate a view on the proposal);
- f. The staff (teaching and other) at Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School;
- g. Trade union representatives;
- h. Eskdalemuir Community Council;
- i. Langholm, Ewes and Westerkirk Community Council;
- j. Lockerbie and District Community Council;
- k. North Milk Community Council;
- l. Crichton Campus Leadership Group (Dumfries and Galloway Council, Dumfries and Galloway College, South of Scotland Enterprise, Scottish Funding Council, SRUC Barony College, University of West of Scotland, Glasgow University, Open University, NHS Dumfries and Galloway);
- m. Chief Superintendent, Police Scotland;
- n. Chief Executive, NHS Dumfries and Galloway;
- o. Area Commander Dumfries and Galloway, Fire Scotland;
- p. Scottish Borders Education Authority.

The Proposal Paper and summary document along with key dates were shared via email with Education Scotland, Ward 11 and 12 Elected Members and Dumfries and Galloway Council Ward Officers.

A hard copy of the full Proposal Paper was also made available at the following locations:

- Applegarth Primary School
- Langholm Primary School
- Boreland Village Hall
- Eskdalemuir Community Hub
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Headquarters

The document was made available in alternative formats or languages as requested.

The consultation period ran from 24 April 2024 to 7 June 2024 at 5pm, which is over the minimum requirement of at least 30 school days, as required by Section 6(4) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

A public meeting was held at Boreland Village Hall on 21 May 2024 at 6pm. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting and participate was welcome to do so. Advanced notice of this meeting was sent to all consultees in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended and advertised in the local press,

The Annandale Series (Moffat News, The Herald and The Annandale Observer). The meeting was convened by Dumfries and Galloway Council Officers from the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing directorate supported by an Officer from Planning and Development (Economy and Infrastructure Directorate). The reason for bringing the proposal forward were presented including the options for the catchment area, followed by an opportunity for questions, discussions and comments. A summary note of this meeting is attached at Appendix 4.

This Consultation Report is Dumfries and Galloway Council's response to the issues raised regarding the proposal during the consultation exercise. It will be published on Dumfries and Galloway Council's website for a period of no less than three weeks prior to the final consideration of the proposal at Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee on 10 October 2024.

## **7.0 Pupil Engagement**

The proposal to close Hutton Primary School could have an impact on pupils, parents/ carers and the local community. Pupils' views are a significant part of the consultation process. To that regard, where possible pupils from the Hutton Primary School catchment area took part in focus groups alongside their peers with a Quality and Improvement Officer from the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing directorate.

The focus group at Applegarth Primary School consisted of six pupils from Primary 2 to Primary 6, including 2 pupils from the Hutton Primary School catchment area, and was held on 10 May 2024.

Two focus groups at Langholm Primary School consisted of a total of twelve pupils from Primary 6 to Primary 7, these focus groups were held on 22 May 2024.

Primary pupils at both Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School, deemed to be of suitable age and maturity to be able to communicate a view on the proposal, were given information regarding Dumfries and Galloway Council's proposal. Pupils were offered an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas through a series of questions and have these recorded as part of the consultation process.

Pupils in the focus group held at Applegarth Primary School said:

- "You will get more social skills because you will meet different types of people."
- "You can play with lots of other children and learn with more people."
- "There might be people at the big school that you don't like, if he's not your friend anymore."
- "You might not know anyone when you go to the school."
- "Teachers can help you better because there's not loads of people that need help."

- “You won’t get to meet many people and it’ll just be a bit boring when you’re doing things because there won’t be many people to do them with.”
- “Not enough people to do group work. The teacher might have to go into a group.”
- “Mostly sad but also happiness because my friends go to Applegarth. I don’t really mind.”
- “It was fun there but it’s sad because I had to go to a different school. The different school is good.”
- “I think it’s a good thing because I’ve got friends here that I wouldn’t have met if I went to Hutton.”

Pupils in the focus groups held at Langholm Primary School said:

- “You might get more support in a bigger school because low pupil numbers will mean there aren’t many staff.”
- “I have never moved but simply moving schools can be hard. You need to make sure it’s a good bigger school. Transition needs to be good.”
- “If you’ve got a big class there might be more disruption.”
- “You might get one-to-one work with the teacher.”
- “It would be really hard on the teachers because they are just by themselves.”
- “If someone was getting picked on you could see it easier because you can’t hide in a smaller school.”
- “Sad that there’s not enough people for a team.”
- “I would get fed-up of there not being many people there. I’m a social person so I think it would be sad x 2.”
- “How are you going to have friends? Who are you going to choose to play with? It would be sad.”
- “I reckon it’s good to close it because you can’t really do much.”
- “It would be harder on the parents because they would have to travel to the school. It could affect the parent’s work. There are new people that come and you try and help them as much as possible.”
- “We do get people who come quiet a lot here so it wouldn’t be too different. It’s always nice to have someone else because you can make new friends. It wouldn’t feel too different.”
- “They should consider asking the pupils that went there what should happen to the building – gym, youth club.”
- “If it’s knocked down don’t waste the land use it for something very important for the village.”

A summary of the pupil focus group response is attached at Appendix 6.



## **8.0 Responses to the Consultation Exercise**

There were twelve responses received during the consultation period, all were received via the online survey. Nine of the twelve survey responses can be viewed in full at Appendix 3. Three respondents did not give consent for their written response to be made publicly available therefore their written response is not included within Appendix 3. Their summarised responses are detailed below.

Respondent number 3 submitted that they were in support of the closure of Hutton Primary School and their preference would be for the full Hutton Primary School catchment area to be realigned with Applegarth Primary School. They suggested a shared catchment area where pupils could choose between Applegarth Primary School or Langholm Primary School. The respondent went on to say that it was time that a decision was made around the future of Hutton Primary School for the confirmation and clarification of all involved.

Respondent number 4 was not in support of the closure of Hutton Primary School. They chose for the Hutton Primary School catchment area to be realigned with Applegarth Primary School in totality, but they would prefer that Dumfries and Galloway Council did not close any schools. No further comments were left.

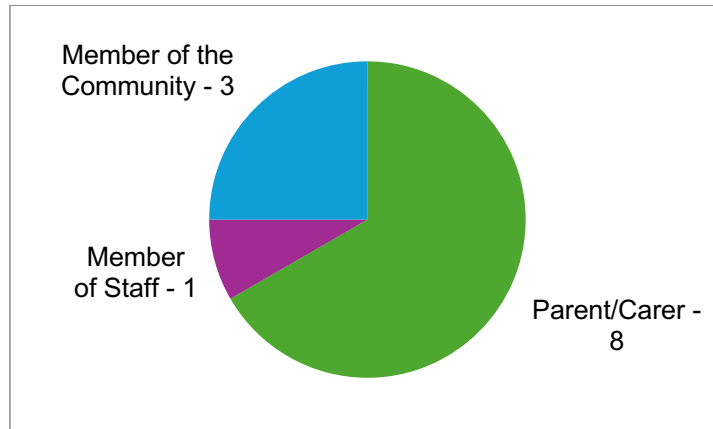
Respondent number 8 was not in support of the closure of Hutton Primary School. They chose for the Hutton Primary School catchment area to be split between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School as they believed it was the better option for the children of Eskdalemuir. Issues were highlighted with public transport to Applegarth Primary School. The respondent highlighted the importance of excellent teachers in small schools and that catchment areas are not relevant as a result of parental choice.

## **8.1 Online Survey Responses**

An online survey was made available for the duration of the consultation period. All consultees were made aware of this survey and the other means by which representation could be made. A paper format of the online survey was also made available at the public meeting. Dumfries and Galloway Council did not receive any further representations to those received via the online survey.

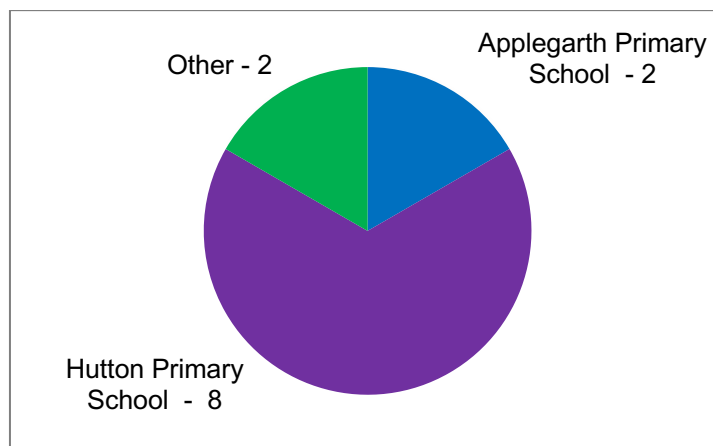
There were twelve responses to the online survey during the consultation period (a blank copy of this survey and responses for which permission was granted for publication are available at Appendix 3. A summary of the survey is detailed below;

What is your relationship to the school?



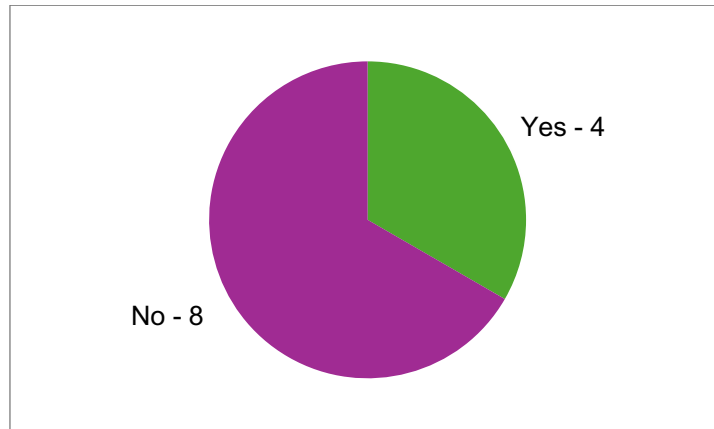
The majority of respondents (eight) identified themselves as parents/carers with a small number of community members also making representation. The eight parents/carers that responded to the survey represented three primary aged children, two nursery aged children and five pre-nursery aged children.

Which catchment area do you live in?



Eight respondents live within the current Hutton Primary School catchment area. Two were from the Applegarth Primary catchment area. There were no responses from anyone residing within Langholm Primary School's catchment area.

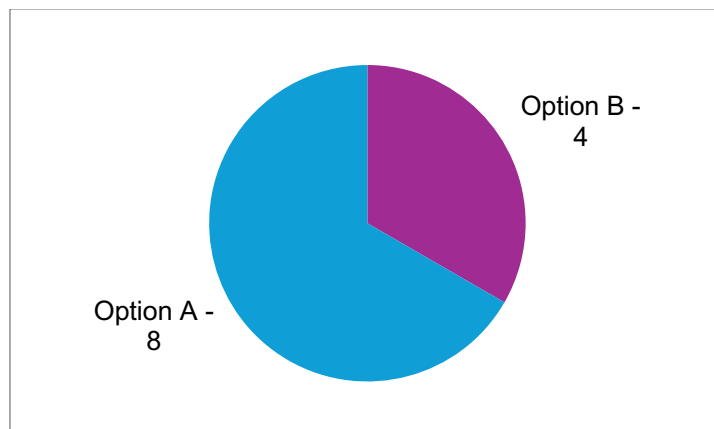
Do you support the closure of Hutton Primary School?



The majority (eight) were not in favour of closure. Focussing in on the eight parents/carer that responded, three detailed they were in favour of closure.

If the closure on Hutton Primary School goes ahead, which option do you prefer for the realignment of the current Hutton Primary School catchment area?

- Option A – Realign Hutton Primary School’s catchment area to Applegarth Primary School or;
- Option B - Split and realign Hutton Primary School’s catchment area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School



Option B was the preferred option for two out of the three respondents that live in this specific area. One respondent noted that only the parents of pupils in the Eskdalemuir area should have the right to make the decision regarding splitting the current Hutton Primary School catchment area as they are the ones impacted by the potential change.

## 8.2 Public Meeting

Oral responses to the proposal were gathered at the public meeting convened by Officers from the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate and was held at Boreland Village Hall on Tuesday 21 May 2024. The meeting was attended by 14 members of the local community along with one local Councillor. An Officer from Planning and Development (Economy and Infrastructure Directorate), the Headteacher of Applegarth Primary School and Nethermill Primary School and a representative from Education Scotland were also in attendance.

A note of the public meeting is attached as Appendix 4.

## 8.3 Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate's Response to Written/Oral Representations

Questions and statements received through the representations made through the consultation period fell into four main themes: catchment area, transport, housing development and community opportunities.

### Catchment Area

**Statement:** The children who already attend Applegarth some would end up in Langholm catchment which seems unfair to them. They then wouldn't be entitled to transport to Applegarth through no fault of their own.

**Response:** As noted in section 10.0 of the Proposal Paper attached as Appendix 1; the current transport arrangements to Applegarth Primary School would be honoured for current pupils and any subsequent siblings that currently live within the area identified in Option B for Langholm Primary School.

No child currently in receipt of transport to Applegarth Primary School or subsequent siblings would lose this entitlement to transport if the catchment area was split.

**Statement:** Your catchment isn't split, in the proposal new Langholm covers most of the hutton catchment with only a very small part being in the new Applegarth catchment. Could you make the catchment and either or option, they could decide to attend Applegarth or Langholm.

**Response:** Option B details a split catchment area, taking into account the existing road infrastructure and the location of all domestic properties.

Dumfries and Galloway Council would not be looking to implement a shared catchment area.

**Statement:** I think Lockerbie Primary should be considered due to better road, and more options in and around Lockerbie.

**Response:** Three respondents suggested Lockerbie Primary School as an alternative to the two options consulted on. Whilst it is acknowledged that there are better transport links to Lockerbie, it was felt on balance that Applegarth Primary School would provide a small school experience. Parental choice continues to be an

option to all families. These comments will be taken into consideration in section 10.1 of this report.

**Statement:** Langholm is the better option for children in Eskdale. Langholm offers greater connection to the social capital in Eskdale. I believe only parents of pupils in the Eskdalemuir area should have the right to answer this question. (This statement was in made in relation to the options for catchment area change)

**Response:** Three respondents highlighted the links or historical educational links between Eskdalemuir and Langholm, these comments will be taken into consideration in section 10.5 of this report.

**Question:** Do the children want to go to Applegarth Primary School rather than one in a neighbouring Local Authority?

**Response:** Families can choose to opt to send their children to a school in another authority, transport would remain the responsibility of the parent/carers. Dumfries and Galloway Council experiences movement both to or from neighbouring authorities.

**Question:** Which side of the Option B catchment line would 'Twiglees' be?

**Response:** Two updated maps clarifying the position of the Option B split boundary line were distributed to all consultees prior to the end of the consultation period. These maps confirmed that the catchment line would be North of 'Twiglees' and 'Twiglees' would be in the catchment area for Applegarth Primary School.

### **Transport**

**Statement:** Applegarth is not accessible by public transport so parents who can't drive have NO way of getting to school other than asking for lifts every time there's an event on.

**Response:** Dumfries and Galloway Council recognises that not all of our schools are on public transport routes and Applegarth Primary School is one of those locations. Applegarth Primary School staff will work with their families to ensure that the most appropriate lines of communication are utilised to ensure families with limited access to transport can access school information/events/meetings etc.

**Statement:** By closing the school you may be forcing some families to choose homeschooling as the travel times are so long.

**Response:** Dumfries and Galloway Council recognises there would be an additional journey time for pupils, this difference is an additional 6.2 miles from Hutton Primary School to Applegarth Primary School.

### **Housing Development**

**Statement:** It would be amazing for social housing to be built here and a boom in community spirit.

**Response:** Within the Hutton Primary School catchment area there are no sites allocated for housing development. Any development proposals would need to be

small scale in order to comply with the relevant planning policy – housing development in villages and housing in the countryside as detailed in section 4.4 of the Proposal Paper attached at Appendix 1.

### **Community Opportunities**

**Question:** If it is decided to close the school in January 2025 how long will the building lie empty for?

**Response:** Once the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate declare the building surplus it is passed to colleagues from the Property, Estates and Programmes team within Dumfries and Galloway Council; discussions can take place with the community regarding a community asset transfer (CAT), if there is a community use for the building this is the first option. It is clear the community have a great space in the village hall, but it is worth considering if the school could also be used. If the building is not required by the community other potential uses for the building will be explored or advertised for sale on the open market.

**Statement:** Furthermore the wind farm money is not accessible to the school groups at Applegarth and Langholm; this is such a waste of funds which could be used by Hutton children for a wide array of exciting and horizon expanding opportunities and adventures! Putting local kids in catch 22 without access to these funds or friendly support to access Lockerbie or Langholm equivalent funding pots is such a shame and drags enthusiasm down.

**Response:** Ewe Hill 16 windfarm community benefit fund receives an annual contribution from Scottish Power Renewables of at least £184,000 (index linked over the operational life) to be distributed to worthwhile projects and initiatives which benefit the people living and working in the area of East Dumfriesshire. This fund covers the catchment areas of Hutton Primary School, Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School.

Applications must be from constituted groups (not individuals) and operate on a not for-profit basis.

Full details can be found online - <https://www.decbg.org.uk/the-ewe-hill-16-fund/> the grant information sheet and map detailing the applicant eligibility area are included at Appendix 5.

## **9.0 Education Scotland Report**

In accordance with Section 8(2) of the 2010 Act, a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal.

In preparing their report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 21 May 2024 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

- visits to the sites of Applegarth and Langholm Primary Schools, including discussion with relevant consultees. HM Inspectors also visited the mothballed site of Hutton Primary School.

The Education Scotland report is attached in full at Appendix 7.

This report is supportive of the proposal and its findings can be summarised as follows:

- a. Education Scotland agree that there are education benefits to the proposal to close Hutton Primary School, children from the catchment area are benefitting from the educational benefits available at Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School.
- b. There was no clear agreement amongst stakeholders regarding re-aligning the catchment areas. Therefore, HM Inspectors would support the council's proposal to re-align the catchment to Applegarth Primary School as it would be more cost effective.
- c. Education Scotland noted that should the proposal go ahead, Dumfries and Galloway Council should continue to engage with the local community in the area surrounding Hutton Primary School, this may help to allay any concerns regarding the long-term use of the building.

### **9.1 Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate's Response to Education Scotland Report**

Dumfries and Galloway Council welcomes the report from Education Scotland and agrees with its findings.

The Education Service's response to the findings contained within the Education Scotland Report is as follows:

- a. Education Scotland agree that there are education benefits to the proposal to close Hutton Primary School, children from the catchment area are benefitting from the educational benefits available at Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School.*

Dumfries and Galloway Council agrees that the educational benefits of the proposal for current and future pupils are clear. Pupils from the Hutton Primary School catchment area are benefitting from learning with and alongside a greater number of peers of the same age and stage as themselves. These larger numbers allow pupils to benefit from increased friendship groups and to develop their social skills through building relationships. These relationships help them to become 'Confident Individuals' and Responsible Citizens' by allowing them to overcome the challenges and exercise responsibilities as a member of a larger social group, within a supportive educational environment. They are able to work as part of a team, take part in team activities, exercise their responsibilities and have their voice heard on a

range of school-based committees. The establishment of a larger friendship group can also support their transition to secondary school.

- b. There was no clear agreement amongst stakeholders regarding re-aligning the catchment areas. Therefore, HM Inspectors would support the council's proposal to re-align the catchment to Applegarth Primary School as it would be more cost effective.*

Dumfries and Galloway Council recognises that there would initially be an increased cost in splitting the catchment area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School, until such time that the pupils and their siblings currently enrolled at Applegarth Primary School leave Primary School (anticipated to be three academic years). The additional costs would be as a result of a small number of Langholm Secondary School pupils becoming entitled to transport. When Eskdalemuir Primary School was last open, it was a feeder primary school for Langholm Academy. The respondents from Eskdalemuir of which there were three were marginally in favour of the catchment area being split.

- c. Education Scotland noted that should the proposal go ahead, Dumfries and Galloway Council should continue to engage with the local community in the area surrounding Hutton Primary School, this may help to allay any concerns regarding the long-term use of the building.*

Dumfries and Galloway Council will work with the local community of Boreland to consider the next steps for the Hutton Primary School building. If there is no desire for community use as has been expressed to date, Dumfries and Galloway Council will look to market the property assuming no further uses can be identified.

## **10.0 Rural Schools – Compliance with Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended**

After Dumfries and Galloway Council received Education Scotland's report, officers carried out a further review of the proposal following the close of the consultation period, having regard (in particular) to:

- Written representations received by Dumfries and Galloway Council (from any person) during the Consultation period;
- Views of Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School pupils as gathered during the consultation exercise,
- Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting, and
- Education Scotland's report.

The feedback from the Consultation was considered by Dumfries and Galloway Council officers. Data and factual information were checked where required and advice sought from other Dumfries and Galloway Council directorates where necessary. This ensured that the Council met the requirements to review the proposal under Sections 9(1) and 13(5) of the 2010 Act.



Dumfries and Galloway Council officers carried out a further assessment of the proposal and each of the reasonable alternatives to it as set out in the Proposal Paper, having particular regard to the preliminary requirements for rural school closures as set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act.

The preliminary requirements report (carried out in satisfaction of the preliminary requirements of the 2010 Act) and Proposal Paper (which formed the basis for the statutory consultation) identified four options:

- a. Re-open Hutton Primary School
- b. Continued Mothballing of Hutton Primary School with the temporary catchment of Applegarth Primary School
- c. Closure of Hutton Primary School and Realign the Catchment Area to Applegarth Primary School
- d. Closure of Hutton Primary School and Realign the Catchment Area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

An additional option has been included for review having taken consultee responses into consideration. This option is:

- Closure of Hutton Primary School and Realign the Catchment Area to Lockerbie Primary School

Each of these options have been further reviewed and assessed, below, in light of the consultation responses.

### **10.1 Closure of Hutton Primary School and Realign the Catchment Area to Lockerbie Primary School**

During the review process it was noted that Lockerbie Primary School was suggested as an alternative option to the revised Hutton Primary School catchment area. The suggestion was put forward as an alternative by three respondents.

The responses represented personal choice and improved road infrastructure/transport links.

*“I would have thought Lockerbie would be closer over Applegarth for children in the Hutton district.”*

*“I think Lockerbie Primary should be considered due to better road, and more options in and around Lockerbie”*

Lockerbie Primary School is 6.5 miles from Hutton Primary School and represents a journey time of 11 minutes. Whilst this is only marginally further for pupils to travel we have to take cognisance of the fact that just one pupils from the Hutton Primary School catchment area is currently choosing to access their education at Lockerbie Primary School.

There would be a neutral environmental impact on the transport position and would have no impact on the current travel arrangements for staff and pupils unless pupils chose to move schools. Transport links are improved with a service bus operating between Langholm and Lockerbie throughout the day.

There is no specific effect on the local community however the movement of pupils at a younger age towards a larger settlement such as Lockerbie may be viewed by

the communities of the Hutton Primary School catchment area as impactful on the sustainability of their rural settlements. Applegarth Primary School represents an environment not dissimilar to that of Hutton Primary School.

There are no specific educational benefits from changing the catchment area to Lockerbie Primary School, however Lockerbie Primary School is on a shared 2-18 campus with the potential for pupils to transition through their nursery primary and secondary education on the same campus. Lockerbie Primary School is a large primary school with approximately 298 pupils, presently pupils attending Applegarth Primary School are benefitting from the rural broader environment, whilst not moving their learning to a school that is completely different to their home environment.

On the basis that only one pupil has currently chosen to attend Lockerbie Primary School, the desire for this to be the revised catchment area for a small number of respondents to meet personal circumstances and the desire to offer an educational experience not dissimilar to the of Hutton Primary School, Dumfries and Galloway Council does not consider realigning the Hutton Primary School catchment area to Lockerbie Primary School to be the best option to address the underlying reasons for the Proposal.

## **10.2 Re-open Hutton Primary School**

Hutton Primary School has been formally mothballed for seventeen months, with no pupils in attendance since August 2020, almost 3.5 years. The school roll is not forecast to rise significantly in the near future.

Re-opening the School would incur an economic impact with respect to the considerable expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard. There would also be costs relating to staffing, and ongoing maintenance.

Whilst the community's desires to reopen the school are recognised, there are no specific educational benefits from re-opening Hutton Primary School. All schools, including Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School, implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

Re-opening the school could have a positive environmental impact in terms of pupils living in the village being able to walk to school, as opposed to travelling by car/bus (as per the current arrangements since the school has been mothballed). However, there would also be an environmental impact in terms of reopening (heating and energy consumption for example) the school building, particularly if it were only for a very small number of pupils.

The above-mentioned potential positive impact on environment (with regards to travelling arrangements) has been weighed up against the very low projected pupil numbers, the challenges in recruiting teaching staff and the considerable expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard. For these reasons and following a review of the Proposal and all reasonable alternatives in light of the consultation feedback, reopening Hutton Primary School is still not considered to be the best option to address the underlying reasons for the Proposal.

### **10.3 Continued Mothballing of Hutton Primary School with the temporary catchment of Applegarth Primary School**

Hutton Primary School has been formally mothballed for seventeen months, with no pupils in attendance since August 2020. The school roll is not forecast to rise significantly in the near future, with no indication (based on the evidence currently available) that Hutton Primary School could become viable or sustainable in the near future.

Continued mothballing would incur an economic impact with respect to the annual expenditure needed to maintain the building. If the mothballing of Hutton Primary School was to continue, the building would likely deteriorate further and costs to reuse the building in any way would be higher.

Continued mothballing of Hutton Primary School would have a neutral environmental impact on the current transport position and would have no impact on the current travel arrangements for staff and pupils.

There are no specific educational benefits from continuing to mothball the school as children from the Hutton Primary School catchment area, presently attending Applegarth Primary School are benefitting from the rural broader environment, whilst not moving their learning to a school that is completely different to their home environment. The small number of children involved has minimal effect on staffing within the receiving primary school.

Almost all stakeholders from the local community who participated in the pre-engagement and consultation were not in favour of further mothballing Hutton Primary School, citing a need for clarity over the future of the school for the local communities. Continued mothballing is not assessed to have any positive impacts on the underlying reasons for the Proposal.

In considering the following points;

- pupil numbers are currently zero, with just four expressing a desire to attend Hutton Primary School for academic year 2024/25 and the number not forecast to rise significantly in the near future;
- having regard to the significant ongoing costs of maintaining the school building and grounds whilst it is mothballed;
- the continuation of mothballing of the school does not generate any benefits to the local community.

It has therefore been assessed that the continued mothballing of Hutton Primary School is still not considered to be the best option to address the underlying reasons for the Proposal.

## 10.4 Closure of Hutton Primary School and Realign the Catchment Area to Applegarth Primary School

Whilst the majority of respondents (eight) did not support the closure of Hutton Primary School, five of these respondents were parents/carers, three parents/carer detailed they were in favour of closure. These responses must be carefully considered in relation to the number of families that expressed a desire to transfer/enrol at Hutton Primary School and the educational benefits firstly for pupils but also the benefits for staff employed at the schools. The majority of respondents (eight) stated a preference that the catchment area was aligned in totality to Applegarth Primary School.

At the time of the publication of the proposal paper (April 2024) there were nineteen P1-P7 living in the Hutton Primary School catchment area, since the change in academic year two P7 pupils have moved onto secondary school and two P1 pupils have started primary school, a small number of children have also left the catchment area. As a result of these changes there are now fifteen P1-P7 pupils living in the Hutton Primary School catchment area as detailed in Figure 1 below. The fifteen children attend the following primary schools; Applegarth Primary School (eight), Langholm Primary School (one), Lockerbie Primary School (one), Lochmaben Primary School (four) and Johnstonebridge Primary School (one).

**Figure 1**

Academic Year	N3	N4	N5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
2024/25	2	4	1	2	3	2	2	3	2	1	15
2025/26				1	2	3	2	2	3	2	15
2026/27				4	1	2	3	2	2	3	17
2027/28				2	4	1	2	3	2	2	16

Numbers detailed in the table above (Figure 1) are correct at Monday 26 August 2024 and are informed by SEEMiS data and NHS birth data, please note children born after 28 February 2023 are not included.

It is clear from the above figures that the majority (eight) of existing parents of primary school aged children in the Hutton Primary School catchment area preference is towards Applegarth Primary School. The reasons for parental choice to schools other than Applegarth Primary School is inconclusive, but may include reasons such as access to ELC, transition from primary to secondary school, access to childcare, and/or work arrangements of parents.

At the time of mothballing, the headship of Hutton Primary School was a partnership headteacher arrangement with Applegarth Primary School, meaning that there are historical ties between the two communities. Applegarth Primary School is currently partnered with Nethermill Primary School.

Dumfries and Galloway Council has reviewed the Educational Benefits Statement that was prepared (see Section 8 of the Proposal Paper at Appendix 1). That review

has concluded that the educational benefits, and effects as identified therein are still valid, and that there are positive educational benefits to be derived from all relevant groups (pupils in particular) should education provision at Hutton Primary School be permanently discontinued. The consultation feedback received has not led Dumfries and Galloway Council to the view that it is necessary to reconsider that Educational Benefits Statement.

Closure of Hutton Primary School, removes a Dumfries and Galloway Council facility from the community, however this is outweighed by the positive educational benefits. The existing facilities in Boreland Village Hall and the Eskdalemuir Hub & Old School Café (The Hub) are prime examples of what can be achieved to meet the needs of the local and wider communities and will remain the focus of community activities. Dumfries and Galloway Council will work with the local communities to establish any desire for community use of Hutton Primary School.

The closure of Hutton Primary School with the realignment of the catchment area to Applegarth Primary School would have a neutral environmental impact on the current transport position and would have no impact on the current travel arrangements for staff and pupils.

On the basis that pupil numbers are currently zero, with the families of four pupils expressing a desire to attend Hutton Primary School for academic year 2024/25 and the number not forecast to rise significantly in the near future; it has therefore been assessed that the closure of Hutton Primary School is still considered to be the best option to address the underlying reasons for the Proposal.

### **10.5 Closure of Hutton Primary School and Realign the Catchment Area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School**

Whilst the majority of respondents (eight) did not support the closure of Hutton Primary School, five of these respondents were parents/carers, three parents/carer detailed they were in favour of closure. These responses must be carefully considered in relation to the number of families that expressed a desire to transfer/enrol at Hutton Primary School and the educational benefits firstly for pupils but also the benefits for staff employed at the schools. The majority of respondents (eight) stated a preference that the catchment area was aligned in totality to Applegarth Primary School, Others stated that those individuals living in the area identified to join the catchment area for Langholm Primary School should be the ones that had the greater voice on the matter.

*“Langholm is closer for us over Applegarth and the catchment area for Eskdalemuir used to be Langholm before Lockerbie. Langholm is our postal town”*

*“Eskdalemuir address is Langholm and years ago it was Langholm Academy that children went to after being at Eskdalemuir primary school.”*

At the time of the publication of the proposal paper (April 2024) there were nineteen P1-P7 living in the Hutton Primary School catchment area, numbers are detailed in

Figure 1 above (Section10.4). Since the change in academic year two P7 pupils have moved onto secondary school and two P1 pupils have started primary school, a small number of children have also left the catchment area. As a result of these changes there are now fifteen P1-P7 pupils living in the Hutton Primary School catchment area as detailed in Figure 1 above (Section10.4). The fifteen children attend the following primary schools; Applegarth Primary School (eight), Langholm Primary School (one), Lockerbie Primary School (one), Lochmaben Primary School (four) and Johnstonebridge Primary School (one).

It is clear from the above figures that the majority (eight) of existing parents of primary school aged children in the Hutton Primary School catchment area preference is towards Applegarth Primary School. The reasons for parental choice to schools other than Applegarth Primary School is inconclusive, but may include reasons such as access to ELC, transition from primary to secondary school, access to childcare, and/or work arrangements of parents.

At the time of mothballing, the management arrangements of Hutton Primary School were a partnership headteacher with Applegarth Primary School, meaning that there are historical ties between the two communities. Applegarth Primary School is currently partnered with Nethermill Primary School. Prior to the closure of Eskdalemuir Primary School in 2004, the school was a feeder primary school for Langholm Academy.

There are historical links between the communities of Eskdale and Langholm with many addresses in this area detailed as Langholm or having the DG13 postcode in common with Langholm. As mentioned above, prior to the closure of Eskdalemuir Primary School in 2004, the school was a feeder primary school for Langholm Academy, there are well established links between these communities.

Closure of Hutton Primary School removes a Dumfries and Galloway Council facility from the community, however this is outweighed by the positive educational benefits. The existing facilities in Boreland Village Hall and the Eskdalemuir Hub & Old School Café (The Hub) are prime examples of what can be achieved to meet the needs of the local and wider communities and will remain the focus of community activities. Dumfries and Galloway Council will work with the local communities to establish any desire for community use of Hutton Primary School.

Dumfries and Galloway Council has reviewed the Educational Benefits Statement that was prepared (see Section 8 of the Proposal Paper at Appendix 1). That review has concluded that the educational benefits, and effects as identified therein are still valid, and that there are positive educational benefits to be derived from all relevant groups (pupils in particular) should education provision at Hutton Primary School be permanently discontinued. The consultation feedback received has not led Dumfries and Galloway Council to the view that it is necessary to reconsider that Educational Benefits Statement.

The closure of Hutton Primary School with the catchment area split between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School would have a neutral environmental impact on the current transport position and would have no impact on

the current travel arrangements for staff and pupils, these journeys are already being made by both staff and pupils. The financial impact of this change for Dumfries and Galloway Council would be that two Langholm Secondary School pupils would become entitled to transport.

The travel arrangements currently in place would continue, with all pupils currently residing in the Hutton Primary School catchment area remaining entitled to transport to Applegarth Primary School, this would be applicable for any siblings of current pupils. Pupils residing in the portion of Hutton Primary Schools catchment area that becomes realigned with Langholm Primary School would become entitled to transport to Langholm Primary School, this would also become applicable for any pupils from this area currently in attendance at either Langholm Primary School or Langholm Secondary School.

On the basis that pupil numbers are currently zero, with the families of four pupils expressing a desire to attend Hutton Primary School for academic year 2024/25 and the number not forecast to rise significantly in the near future; it has therefore been assessed that the closure of Hutton Primary School is still considered to be the best option to address the underlying reasons for the Proposal.

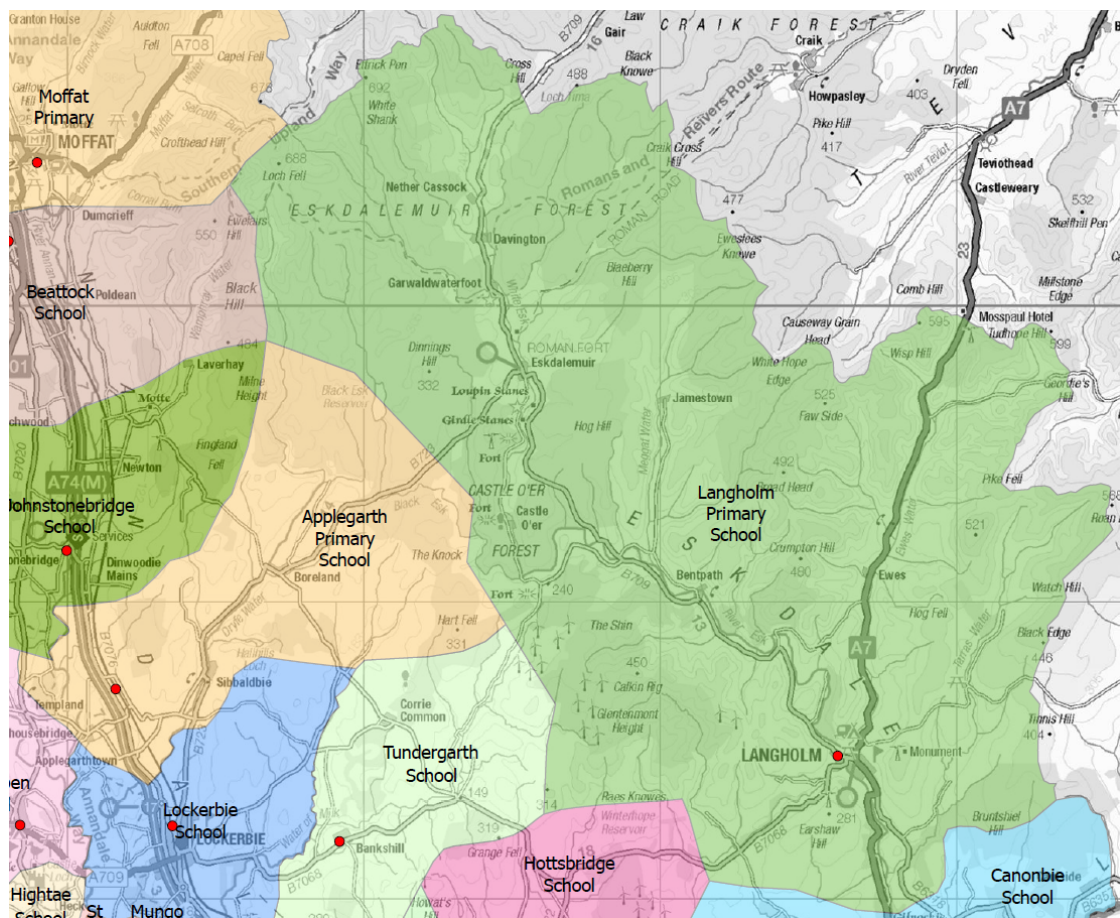
Dumfries and Galloway Council has listened carefully to the points made by stakeholders at the public meeting and have considered equally carefully the Education Scotland report and the written representations. As set out above, the Proposal has been reviewed to consider whether any of the consultation feedback has led the Education Service to reconsider any other options as being reasonable alternatives to the Proposal.

This review has concluded that;

**Education provision at Hutton Primary School shall be permanently discontinued with effect from 1 January 2025; and the catchment areas of Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School extended to subsume the split catchment area of Hutton Primary School.**

The below diagram (Figure 2) therefore sets out the new proposed catchment areas for Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School.

**Figure 2**



Formal closure of Hutton Primary School allows consideration of any plans to acquire the building to be progressed by the local community, which in turn would increase the availability of assets to the community and even benefit the sustainability of the community.

Education Scotland's report is supportive of Dumfries and Galloway Council's proposal being implemented.

Dumfries and Galloway Council has had regard to the points made at the public meeting, the written consultation responses and Education Scotland's report. It thereafter carried out a review of the Proposal and all the reasonable alternatives and has concluded that the Proposal should be implemented with the catchment area of Hutton Primary School split between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School. Implementation of the Proposal will allow children to have access to increased learning opportunities, wider experiences and better socialisation through being part of a school with larger pupil numbers. The current number of children from within the Hutton Primary School catchment area wishing to attend Hutton Primary School is insufficient to make the school viable. If the school



were to remain mothballed this would be a continuing drain on the Council's resources and against the communities wishes to seek clarity on the position of Hutton Primary School. Implementation of the Proposal will assist Dumfries and Galloway Council to deliver 'Best Value' through making more efficient and effective use of its resources. Furthermore, Dumfries and Galloway Council will engage with the communities of Hutton Primary School to explore options for future use of the school building should they wish to explore this.

### **11.0 Alleged Omissions or Inaccuracies**

Section 10(3) of the 2010 Act places a requirement on Dumfries and Galloway Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission in the Proposal Paper which has either been identified by Dumfries and Galloway Council or raised by consultees. This provision also requires Dumfries and Galloway 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.

In the course of the statutory consultation, there were no areas identified by the respondents as being inaccurate or omitted from the Proposal Paper.

Dumfries and Galloway Council would like to take the opportunity to update the information regarding the reference to the Education and Learning Committee. From August 2024, due to a restructure within Dumfries and Galloway Council, the Education and Learning Committee will be known as the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee. Section 20.0 of the Proposal Paper (available at Appendix 1) refers to the Education and Learning Committee on 10 October 2024, this will now be Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee the date remains unchanged.

### **12.0 Opportunity to Make Representations to the Scottish Ministers**

If at the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee a closure decision is taken, Dumfries and Galloway Council shall notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and publish the fact that the Scottish Ministers have been notified, and that representations can be made to them. Dumfries and Galloway Council would also be required to publish a notice on its website of the decision to implement the proposal and why it has been satisfied that closure is the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal.

The Scottish Ministers will have a maximum of 8 weeks to call in any closure decision made by Dumfries and Galloway Council's Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate in certain circumstances. This 8 week timeframe would consist of an initial 3 weeks from the date of decision, during which representations can be made to the Ministers, and a further 5 weeks for the Scottish Ministers to decide whether to issue a call in notice. During this period Dumfries and Galloway Council will not proceed to implement any closure decision.

If the Scottish Ministers call in a closure proposal, it is referred to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels. The Convener must constitute a School Closure Review Panel within 7 days for determination. Dumfries and Galloway Council may not implement a closure decision in whole or in part until the Panel has made its determination. It will usually issue a decision within 8 weeks of the Panel being constituted.

If the School Closure Review Panel refuses to consent to the closure decision, or following publication of the Consultation Report Dumfries and Galloway Council decides not to implement the closure proposal, Dumfries and Galloway Council cannot publish a further closure proposal in relation to the school for 5 years, unless there is a significant change in the school's circumstances.

### **13.0 Conclusion**

Following a review of the Proposal (as per Section 10, above) it is now proposed that education provision at Hutton Primary School shall be permanently discontinued with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025; and that the delineated catchment area of Hutton Primary School shall be split between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School, as per the maps detailed in Section 10.5.

This is considered to be the best option to address the underlying reasons for this consultation, which are:

- Hutton Primary School has been formally mothballed for seventeen months, with no pupils in attendance since August 2020, almost 3.5 years. The school roll is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18.2% fall in the 0-15 age group from 2018 to 2032.
- Along with several other rural councils, Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment. The annual cost of mothballing the building is £5,380.

### **17.0 Recommendation**

On the basis of the consultation responses received, Education Scotland's report, and having particular regard to the specific factors for rural school closures, it is recommended that education provision at Hutton Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025; and that the delineated catchment area of Hutton Primary School shall be split between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School, as per the maps detailed in Section 10.5.



**Dumfries and Galloway Council  
Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing**

**Proposal Document: April 2024**

**Review of Education Provision  
Hutton Primary School**

## **Proposal for the closure of Hutton Primary School**

### **Summary Proposal**

Dumfries and Galloway Council is proposing, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process, to discontinue education provision at Hutton Primary School which is currently mothballed and:

- re-align its catchment area to Applegarth Primary School or
- split and realign the catchment area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

It is proposed that education provision at Hutton Primary School be discontinued with effect from 1 January 2025.

### **Reasons for this proposal**

This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposal which are;

- Hutton Primary School has been formally mothballed for seventeen months, with no pupils in attendance since August 2020, almost 3.5 years. The school roll is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18.2% fall in the 0-15 age group from 2018 to 2032.
- Along with several other rural councils, Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment. The annual cost of mothballing the building is £5,380.

This document has been issued by Dumfries and Galloway Council Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This document has been prepared by the Council's Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate with input from other Council Directorates.

### **Publication Information**

The proposal paper will be available, free of charge, at:

- Applegarth Primary School
- Langholm Primary School
- Boreland Village Hall
- Eskdalemuir Community Hub
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Headquarters

And published on Dumfries and Galloway Council's website:

[www.dumgal.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/consultations)

Copies of this paper are also available on request from:

Statutory Consultation – Hutton Primary School  
Dumfries and Galloway Council  
Militia House  
109/111 English Street  
DG1 2HR

E-mail: [statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk)

To request this information in a more accessible format or alternative language, please contact the postal or email address listed above.

Formal notice of the Proposal and relevant information will be given and be made available, free of charge, to the consultees listed as follows:

- a. The Parent Councils of Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School;
- b. The Parents/carers of pupils within the current Hutton Primary School catchment area;
- c. The Parents/carers of pupils attending Applegarth Primary School, Langholm Primary School;
- d. The parents/carers of any children living within the Applegarth Primary School, Hutton Primary School and Langholm Primary School catchment areas expected to start school within two years of the date of publication;
- e. The pupils at any affected school (considered to be of a suitable age and maturity to be able to communicate a view on the proposal);
- f. The staff (teaching and other) at Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School;
- g. Trade union representatives;
- h. Eskdalemuir Community Council;
- i. Langholm, Ewes and Westerkirk Community Council;
- j. Lockerbie and District Community Council;
- k. North Milk Community Council;
- l. Crichton Campus Leadership Group (Dumfries and Galloway Council, Dumfries and Galloway College, South of Scotland Enterprise, Scottish Funding Council, SRUC Barony College, University of West of Scotland, Glasgow University, Open University, NHS Dumfries and Galloway);
- m. Chief Superintendent, Police Scotland;
- n. Chief Executive, NHS Dumfries and Galloway;
- o. Area Commander Dumfries and Galloway, Fire Scotland;
- p. Scottish Borders Education Authority.

## 1.0 Introduction

On 20 September 2022 Education and Learning Committee noted the official mothballing of Hutton Primary School for academic year 2022/23 following a temporary arrangement to amalgamate the school with Applegarth Primary School. The temporary arrangement was in place from August 2020 and originally planned to be in place for a couple of weeks following the initial Covid-19 lockdown to support both schools by amalgamating them into one setting, therefore reducing pupil and staff isolation and ensuring continuity of education delivery. As time progressed, the advantages of being on one site was shown to have enhanced pupils' learning experiences, whilst extending the opportunities to socialise with a much wider range of peers. The management of shared resources was a further advantage where pupils were able to access the range of facilities available at Applegarth Primary School, whilst staff were able to share their skills and expertise more effectively.

Education and Learning Committee – 20 September 2022 – Item 12 – Transformation Update – Partnerships and School Management Arrangements  
<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=549&MId=5548&Ver=4>

On 29 June 2023 Education and Learning Committee noted a further period of mothballing for academic year 2023/24. Members also agreed that that officers engage with local families and the wider community of Hutton Primary School to further consider future options for the school.

Education and Learning Committee – 29 June 2023 – Item 12 – Transformation Update – Partnerships and School Management Arrangements  
<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=549&MId=5752&Ver=4>

Following engagement with the communities of Hutton Primary School, Education and Learning Committee on 14 March 2024 were presented with the preliminary requirement document satisfying the requirements of phase one of the Statutory Consultation timeline, Members agreed to the commencement of the Statutory Consultation process for the closure of Hutton Primary School in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

Education and Learning Committee – 14 March 2024 – Item 18 –  
<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=549&MId=5909>

The statutory process for the closure of a rural school is laid out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Act, as amended, introduced a presumption against closure of a rural school and details specific requirements which the education authority is required to follow if they are formulating a proposal to close a rural school. This includes the introduction of certain preliminary requirements which must be satisfied prior to the formulation of a proposal. It is necessary to consider any reasonable alternatives before considering closure. It is also necessary to consider the impact on the wider community of a potential closure and the impact of any

different travel arrangements. These factors have been considered as part of the preliminary requirements which were undertaken prior to this proposal being written and are set out in the Preliminary Requirements document, which is attached as Appendix 5.

In addition, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out a right for community organisations to request the transfer of local assets into local community ownership/management. The community may wish to consider alternative uses for the building as part of this process.

Hutton Primary School has had zero pupils enrolled since the school was officially mothballed at Education and Learning Committee on 20 September 2022. However with ongoing communication with families since the temporary arrangements were put in place, a small number of families have expressed their desire for the school to reopen.

Councils, as an Education Authority, have a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand. This is reflected in Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023-2028, Education and Learning Directorate.

The Council will improve education and learning opportunities to help all our children, young people and citizens fulfil their potential. This starts with pre-school, then school, before progressing into further or higher education or transition into work. We will work with our partners to create and promote lifelong learning opportunities so everyone in the region can live a meaningful and fulfilling life, and contribute to their community.

Strategic Outcomes:

- Places of learning are inclusive, sustainable and meet the needs of local communities
- We get it right for every child
- Children, young people and adults transition successfully through all life stages
- Young people and adults succeed in what they want to achieve
- Participation in creativity and play is part of early and lifelong learning experiences
- Local people can build their skills and confidence

The Council, as an Education Authority, has a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand.

## **2.0 Proposal**

It is proposed that education provision at Hutton Primary School be discontinued with effect from 1 January 2025 and:

- re-align its catchment area to Applegarth Primary School or
- split and realign the catchment area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

It is proposed that children living in the current Hutton Primary School catchment area would be directed to either Applegarth Primary School or Langholm Primary School depending on where they live within the catchment area and the outcome of the statutory consultation process. Maps illustrating the current and proposed catchment area options for the current Hutton Primary School catchment area are attached in Appendix 1 and 2.

### **2.1 Reasons for this Proposal**

This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposal which are;

- Hutton Primary School has been formally mothballed for seventeen months, with no pupils in attendance since August 2020, almost 3.5 years. The school roll is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18.2% fall in the 0-15 age group from 2018 to 2032.
- Along with several other rural councils, Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment. The annual cost of mothballing the building is £5,380.

### **2.2 Additional Considerations**

- The education benefits as set out in Section 8 to current and future primary aged children within the Hutton Primary School catchment area.
- Councils have a statutory duty, introduced in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003, to make arrangements to secure Best Value.
- On 30 November 2023, Elected Members approved the 10 School Model Principles to be used as a basis for a sustainable School Estate. Applying these Principles will help ensure 'best-value' and sustainable settings, resulting in an improved learning environment for all our children and young people, whilst considering the needs and wishes of people and communities. These Principles are detailed in the Preliminary Requirements document at Appendix 5
- Dumfries and Galloway Council currently has in excess of 4,400 (31%) spaces within its current primary school estate. It must be acknowledge that the costs-per-pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high and that



underutilised schools are expensive to maintain and operate. The current condition, suitability and over capacity is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the school estate.

### **3.0 Preliminary Requirements**

Dumfries and Galloway Council is required to consider the future of Hutton Primary School, as it has been mothballed for almost two years. Dumfries and Galloway Council have considered the reasons for making this proposal, and have also considered other viable alternatives, the likely effect on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements as a consequence of this proposal. Financial implications have also been considered.

Dumfries and Galloway Council considered how the implementation of this proposal would impact on the education of the children affected. The Council also considered the impact on the children who currently live in the catchment area but attend other schools, as well as children who may potentially live in the catchment area in the future.

The place of the school in the community was also considered, in terms of the impact this proposal would have on the sustainability of the community itself. Since the mothballing of Hutton Primary School, the community has not formally used the school or the school grounds. Boreland Village Hall is actively used by the community, it is situated to one end of Boreland village and is well equipped and appointed, with refurbishment works completed in 2012.

Impact on the environment was taken into account during the initial community engagement process. This included a consideration of the transport implications if this proposal were to be implemented, as children would have to travel by school transport (ordinarily taxi or bus but some families are paid per mile to transport their own children) to attend Applegarth Primary School. Eleven children are currently entitled to school transport from the Hutton Primary School catchment area to Applegarth Primary School. In 2019/20 when the school was last open five pupils had been in receipt of school transport. Seven of the current Hutton Primary School catchment children in attendance at Applegarth Primary School live within a mile radius of Hutton Primary School. It is noted and acknowledged that the mothballing of Hutton Primary School has led to increased use of school transport and increased journey times for pupils particularly for those children living closest to Hutton Primary School.

Four options were presented to the local community by the Council for consideration during the pre-consultation phase, as required by section 12A of the 2010 Act. Of the four options which were considered by the community and the Council; c and d are the options favoured by Dumfries and Galloway Council, as they are considered to most adequately address the reasons for the proposal. The four options were:

- a. Re-open Hutton Primary School
- b. Continued Mothballing of Hutton Primary School with the temporary catchment of Applegarth Primary School

- c. Closure of Hutton Primary School and Realign the Catchment Area to Applegarth Primary School (the proposal)
- d. Closure of Hutton Primary School and Realign the Catchment Area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School (the proposal)

Increasing the catchment area was not considered as a reasonable alternative given the current size and scale of the Hutton Primary School catchment area, which has also included the historic catchment area of Eskdalemuir Primary School since its closure in approx. 2005/06.

When considering the above options during the Options Appraisal process, the following factors were key in arriving at options c and d as the most appropriate responses to the underlying reasons behind consideration of this proposal:

- the positive educational benefits of attendance at Applegarth Primary School or Langholm Primary School;
- projected low pupil numbers at Hutton Primary School, and the associated impact on pupils' educational progress and social development;
- the challenges in recruiting and retaining teaching staff;
- the considerable expenditure needed to bring the Hutton Primary School building up to the required standard for reopening;
- the lack of expressed local support for the continuation of mothballing of Hutton Primary School and the need to make a decision regarding the future of the school.

Following the community engagement, the preliminary requirement document was presented to Dumfries and Galloway Council's Education and Learning Committee on 14 August 2023. This satisfied the requirements of phase one of the Statutory Consultation timeline, Members agreed to the commencement of the Statutory Consultation process for the closure of Hutton Primary School in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

During the community engagement regarding the future options for Hutton Primary School, there were a range of viewpoints gathered from parents, staff and members of the community.

No one in the community felt that continuing to mothball the school was an option. The majority of responses 56% (19 respondents) to the survey were in favour of Hutton Primary School reopening. The families of three primary aged children and three pre school aged children expressed their preference for the school to reopen. The main reason predominantly focused around transport. A small number of respondents 18% (6 respondents) to the survey were in favour of Hutton Primary School closing, a further 15% did not specify they were in favour of closure however they wanted Hutton Primary School to have an alternative use, in order for the building to have an alternative use the school would need to go through the statutory consultation process in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. There were a small number of families with primary aged children who

were in favour of the closure of Hutton Primary School principally due to the viability of the school and social opportunities.

Closing the school would have no impact on staff or pupil travel arrangements in place since mothballing. There would be little or no alteration to the current environmental impact. If the decision was taken to split the catchment area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School, the current transport arrangements for those pupils attending Applegarth Primary School would be honoured including any subsequent siblings. Any pupils attending Langholm Primary School living within the proposed new catchment area would also become entitled to transport. This would have a financial impact on Dumfries and Galloway Council school transport however a small number of pupils are already making this journey, therefore the environmental impact would be neutral.

### **3.1 Alternatives to the Proposal**

The community engagement process prior to the drafting of this Proposal considered the views of members of the community and also considered any other alternatives to the closure of Hutton Primary School. Full details of the community engagement, and the findings from the fulfilling of preliminary requirements, are set out in Appendix 5.

After the community engagement, Dumfries and Galloway Council concluded that the proposal to close Hutton Primary School and realign its catchment area to Applegarth Primary School or Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School is the most reasonable means to address the underlying reasons for considering the future of Hutton Primary School. Further detail is provided below in relation to educational benefits, travel, environmental impact, community impact and financial impact.

### **4.0 School Roll/Changing Demographics**

Demographics and pupil numbers were considered as part of the Preliminary Requirement Document, Section 3.4 of Appendix 5.

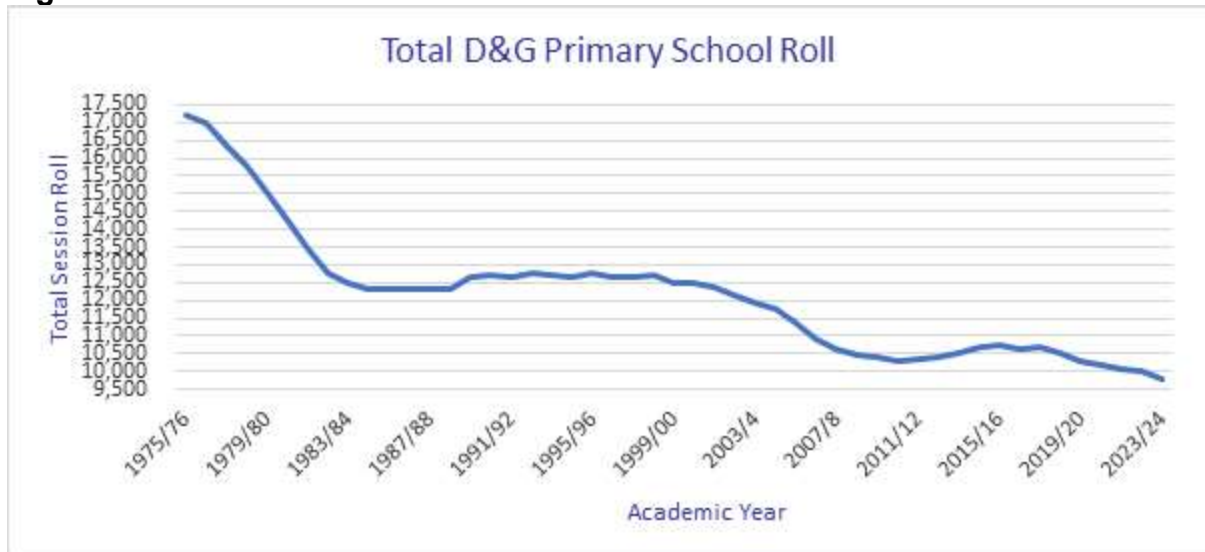
The information in relation to school rolls as shown below is drawn from the yearly pupil census which takes place in September each year. Past pupil numbers are historic data from past pupil censuses. Pupil projections are based on the NHS data. School rolls by their nature may fluctuate slightly on an ongoing basis due to changes in pupil numbers as a result of pupils moving to and from the catchment area and parents/carers exercising their right to make placing requests.

#### **4.1 Demographics of D&G**

Dumfries and Galloway Council holds electronic records of school rolls back to academic year 1975/76. Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18.2% fall in the 0-15 age group from 2018 to 2032. Hutton Primary Schools roll has not exactly mirrored that of Dumfries and Galloway as a

region, there has however been a steady decline since academic year 2014/15. These historical school rolls are detailed in Figures 1 and 2 below.

**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**



The most recent and noticeable decline began following academic year 2014/15.

There are currently nineteen children of P1-P7 age (academic year 2023/24) residing within the catchment area of Hutton Primary School (SEEMiS census data September 2023). The catchment children are detailed in Figure 3 below. These children of primary school age all attend other schools in the area, some through placement when the school was temporarily relocated to Applegarth Primary School and the subsequent mothballing, others through parental choice. The majority attend Applegarth Primary School, with seven attending other primary schools in the region.

**Figure 3**

Academic Year	N2	N3	N4	N5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
2023/24	2	4	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	19
2024/25					2	3	2	3	4	3	2	19
2025/26					1	2	3	2	3	4	3	18
2026/27					4	1	2	3	2	3	4	19
2027/28					2	4	1	2	3	2	3	17

## 4.2 School Roll

The school roll of Hutton Primary School has seen a steady declining trend since 2014/15. Figure 4 shows the historic and current pupil numbers for Hutton Primary School, Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School. Figure 5 shows the predicted roll for the three schools until 2027/28. It should be noted that the projected roll figures for Hutton Primary School are based on the number of primary aged children that transfer forms were received for and thereafter the projected number of primary age children to be within the catchment area from NHS birth data. It is acknowledged that the total number of primary aged children living in the Hutton Primary School catchment area for academic year 2023/24 is nineteen. The Adjusted roll takes into account the movement of pupils to/from other schools, this adjustment is based on a seven year average.

**Figure 4**

	Hutton Primary School	Applegarth Primary school	Langholm Primary School
Capacity	47	50	221
	Roll	Roll	Roll
2013/14	18	30	174
2014/15	21	32	178
2015/16	19	32	176
2016/17	16	34	174
2017/18	14	37	176
2018/19	11	30	166
2019/20	6	38	156
2020/21	7	33	161
2021/22	9	36	168
2022/23	0	42	165
2023/24	0	39	155

Pupils were still entered into Hutton Primary School's SEEMiS data as this was the school they were enrolled at until the formal mothballing of the school in September 2022 despite being in attendance at Applegarth Primary School.

## 4.3 Projected Roll

Enrolment for academic session 2024/25 has taken place prior to the publication of this report, therefore figures for 2024/25 are assumed to be accurate.

**Figure 5**

	Hutton Primary School		Applegarth Primary school		Langholm Primary School	
Capacity	47		50		221	
	Projected	Adjusted	Projected	Adjusted	Projected	Adjusted
2024/25	0 (4)*		38		160	
2025/26	5	4	36	40	159	160
2026/27	9	6	31	38	146	148
2027/28	10	6	22	33	126	129

\*Four transfer requests were received from three catchment families.

Since the initial temporary arrangement families were directly approached to establish the desire of families to return to Hutton Primary School. The most recent of which being an online survey in September 2023 as part of the pre-engagement which asked families desire in enrolling or transferring to Hutton Primary School, followed by the formal P1 enrolment and mothballed schools transfer opportunity in January 2024. Both resulted in a maximum school roll of four pupils. Pupil enrolments were considered as part of the Preliminary Requirement Document, Section 3.5 of Appendix 5.

#### **4.4 Housing Development**

The Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) 2019 does not identify any sites within Boreland Village or the wider catchment area for housing development. The LDP2 Housing Development in Villages (Supplementary Guidance – February 2020) <https://tinyurl.com/2bz94bpf> covers the villages of Boreland and Eskdalemuir.

The document states;

*Policy H2: Housing Development in Villages The Council will support housing development proposals in villages, subject to other policies in the plan where:*

- *the number of units proposed relates to the scale and size of the existing village; and*
- *it does not on its own or in combination with other developments in the housing market area undermine the overall objective of the spatial strategy; and*
- *it relates to the layout, density and design of the character and form of the existing village; and*
- *it would not lead to ribbon development; and*
- *the proposal would not result in the loss of open space shown in the Open Space Supplementary Guidance.*

Any development particularly within the communities of the Hutton Primary School catchment area would need to meet the requirements of the bullet points as detailed above.

## **5.0 Teacher Numbers**

Teacher numbers remain fairly consistent nationally, with a 0.5% decrease in the number of teachers nationally from 2021 to 2023. In Dumfries and Galloway there has been a 3% reduction in the FTE number of teachers from 2021 to 2023.

Hutton Primary School has been officially mothballed for approx. 19 months, during this period staff recruitment to many schools has continued to be a challenge. Schools within the area have struggled to recruit and retain staff, particularly in relation to Head Teachers and supply staff. Despite a sustained effort to secure staff, there is reason to think that staffing would continue to be a considerable challenge for Hutton Primary School as with all schools across Dumfries and Galloway.

At the current time, if the proposal was to be accepted, there would be no impact on staffing levels at Applegarth Primary School or Langholm Primary School.

## **6.0 Condition and Suitability of the Building**

In June 2020 the condition of Hutton Primary School was graded a B performing adequately but showing minor deterioration. However, whilst the overall condition is B, there are some internal areas, for example the ceilings and internal walls and doors were graded as C, poor – showing major problems and not operating optimally. The suitability of Hutton Primary School was carried out in 2014, the school was graded as C. Outlined in the Preliminary Requirement Document Appendix 5 – section 6.3 and 7.3 are the full financial details of costs relating to the re-opening the building or continuing to retain the building in mothballed status. Full financial information is detailed in Section 9.3 and Appendix 3 of this Proposal Paper.

## **7.0 Factors for Rural School Closures**

Hutton Primary School is classified as a remote rural school. The Dumfries and Galloway Council is therefore required, under the terms of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014), to assess the likely effects of school closure in terms of the following three factors:

- The likely educational benefits;
- The likely effect on the local community (assessed in accordance with section 12 (4)); and
- The likely effects of different travel arrangements (assessed in accordance with section 12 (5)).

These factors are covered in Sections 8-10 below.

## **8.0 Educational Benefits Statement**

Assessment of likely educational benefits for pupils.

Should this proposal be implemented, the Council believes that there will be considerable educational benefits. These centre around:

- Learning and teaching;
- Educational Outcomes;
- Experiences and opportunities;

- The environment for learning.

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) recognises the unique communities and contexts in which all our schools sit. It recognises the professionalism of Head Teachers and their teams and allows them the flexibility to design a coherent curriculum that develops the knowledge, skills and attributes that their young learners need to adapt, think critically and flourish in an ever-changing global society. Individual Headteachers and schools are empowered to design and provide an enriched curriculum that is flexible, adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of individual learners and one which reflects the uniqueness of their local community and their context.

Applegarth Primary School and Hutton Primary School are both accessible rural schools (Scottish Government classification) and within eight miles of their local secondary school, Lockerbie Academy. Children from Hutton Primary School, attending Applegarth Primary School continue to benefit from a curriculum design which supports their rural location and the skills and attributes to meet their individual needs and rural context. Outdoor learning is a key feature of curricular design at Applegarth Primary School.

Langholm Primary School is also an accessible rural school (Scottish Government classification). Langholm Primary sits within the Langholm Academy 2-18 campus. The campus also incorporates its own Early Learning and Childcare setting (ELC). The 2-18 campus, ELC, Primary and Secondary, are overseen by a single Head Teacher supported by a leadership team of Depute Head Teachers, Principal Teachers and School Support Manager. All-through schools like Langholm Academy are recognised as supporting highly effective transitions at every stage of a young person's educational journey. They are well placed to ensure pace, challenge and progression through a consistent, well-planned curriculum and approach to learning and teaching. The cross-sectoral working supports the learning of all young people, and the curriculum is responsive to their geographical, cultural and social contexts.

Pupils from Hutton Primary School who are currently attending Applegarth Primary School are benefitting from learning with and alongside a greater number of peers of the same age and stage as themselves. These larger numbers allow pupils to benefit from increased friendship groups and to develop their social skills through building relationships. These relationships help them to become 'Confident Individuals' and Responsible Citizens' by allowing them to overcome the challenges and exercise responsibilities as a member of a larger social group, within a supportive educational environment. They are able to work as part of a team, take part in team activities, exercise their responsibilities and have their voice heard on a range of school-based committees. The establishment of a larger friendship group can also support their transition to secondary school.



## 8.1 Learning and Teaching

The following focuses on learning and teaching and the curriculum at Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School. Children from Hutton Primary School catchment area currently attend both schools, as well as four other schools in the Annandale and Eskdale area through parental choice. Children who have previously attended Hutton Primary School now attend Applegarth Primary School. Langholm Primary School and Applegarth Primary School would be the future receiving schools depending on the outcome of this consultation for current and future primary aged children living within the Hutton Primary catchment area.

The curriculum at both Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School includes a broad range of planned experiences that allow all young people to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

In both Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School children are encouraged to lead their learning and be active participants who are highly motivated, enthusiastic and engaged in their learning and the life of the school. The views of young people in both schools are actively sought and acted upon. Pupils play a genuine part in school improvement and change. Learning in both schools is planned within the four contexts of learning – curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary learning, the ethos and life of the school and opportunities for personal achievement. This planning supports young people to achieve their full potential, whilst providing them with a wide range of experiences and opportunities.

In Applegarth Primary School pupils are divided into two multi-composite classes where children are with peers from more than one year group. Langholm Primary School currently has 159 pupils divided between seven class bases. Within both of these schools children benefit from being part of a social context in which they can build relationships, develop resilience and skills for life, learning and work. They are able to collaborate with peers in a variety of situations and learning activities, which allow them to exercise responsibility. They are provided with opportunities to work as part of a team and to represent their school at local, regional and national events.

The National Improvement Framework for Scottish education sets out the expectation and priorities for the education system to raise attainment for all and to close the attainment gap between the most and least advantaged children. Schools must deliver this improvement within the principles and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence, a curriculum for Scotland.

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence acknowledge the unique contexts in which all our schools sit and allows Headteachers and their teams the flexibility to design a coherent curriculum that meets the needs of their learners and communities. Headteachers and their teams are empowered to exercise their professionalism and autonomy to create an innovative curriculum within the broader guidance of CfE. The Headteachers of Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School support their staff through an annual Professional Review and

Development process. This in turn leads into professional development opportunities which support effective school improvement and pupil outcomes. The school teams work together to support and challenge their professional thinking. Applegarth Primary School sits within Lockerbie Academy cluster, alongside nine other primary schools. Langholm Primary School sits within the Langholm and Canonbie cluster which comprises of the 2-18 Langholm campus and Canonbie Primary School. These cluster arrangements provide an opportunity for staff to plan and work together on improvement priorities with stage partners, across stages and indeed sectors. They support effective moderation and positively affect learning and teaching, effective transitions, pupil progression pathways and positive, sustained destinations.

Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School have achieved their bronze Rights Respecting Schools accreditation and are working towards their silver. They have committed to a Children's Rights based approach and engaged all stakeholders in planning what this will look like within their contexts. The focus of bronze is to develop children's understanding of their rights and to plan the journey towards silver accreditation. Applegarth Primary School have made pupil voice a key priority this session. The aim of which is to ensure that pupils will feel empowered to shape sustained change and improvement in their school. Langholm Primary School is focusing on pupils taking increased ownership of their learning through the development of metacognitive skills and self-regulation. The use of digital technologies permeates both school's improvement priorities. The aim of which is to ensure that all staff have an enhanced understanding of pedagogy and learning theories in relation to digital technology and digital skills. These practices will support learners to become digital literate and equipped to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School have developed their curriculum to include outdoor learning and learning through play. They have engaged with Local Authority Principal Teachers of Play to incorporate play as a tool to support their pupil's cognitive development and help them to gain a better understanding of concepts which enhance their wider development. Through their programmes of outdoor learning both schools are enhancing their pupil's health and wellbeing, wider achievements and personal developments. Outdoor learning is allowing their pupils to make connections across the curriculum and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in meaningful contexts. Using the outdoors as a stimulus provides opportunities for critical thinking, enquiry, challenge and reflection as well as boosting self-esteem, self-confidence and respect for each other and the natural environment.

Applegarth Primary School is situated four miles outside of Lockerbie and is classed as an accessible rural school. Langholm Primary is situated within the town of Langholm and is also classed as an accessible rural school. The Headteacher in Langholm Academy has been in post for a number of years and has a strong understanding of the rural community that the school serves. The newly appointed

Headteacher of Applegarth Primary School is engaging with parents, carers and community partners to develop a robust understanding of their context.

Langholm Academy campus, of which the primary is part, incorporates its own Early Learning and Childcare setting. This allows for close working between school staff and ELCC practitioners as well as effective transitions. Primary 7 pupils from Langholm Primary School transition into the secondary which is situated within the same building and has the same Headteacher. Pupils at Applegarth Primary School come from a variety of Local Authority and partner childcare providers. The school liaises closely with these partners to ensure a smooth transition for its pupils.

## **8.2 Educational Outcomes**

Teachers at both Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School plan, assess and track pupil progress in order to ensure that every child has the challenge, support and opportunity to reach their full potential. Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) in both school is a key priority for the whole staff team. Professional discussions, classroom observations, peer collaboration, learning conversations, moderation and careful tracking of attainment progress as well as wellbeing and wider achievement ensures appropriate interventions and support can be harnessed when a child needs it. This support, alongside close working with parents and carers, helps to ensure the needs of every young person are met.

The number of pupils at each stage in Applegarth Primary School is relatively low. However, they have a consistently strong picture of attainment at Primary 1 in Listening and Talking, Reading, Writing and Numeracy, with 100% of pupils achieving the expected CfE level from 2021-2023. With small numbers the attainment picture can be variable year on year, with attainment well above regional and national averages in some measures at some stages. Langholm Primary Schools larger number of pupils per stage gives a more consistent picture of attainment at Primary 1, 4 and 7. 2021-2023 achievement of a CfE level data was consistently above the Dumfries and Galloway average. Data also shows that they are above their virtual comparator in all Primary 4 and 7 measures and above in Numeracy, Reading and Listening and Talking at Primary 1.

Rights Respecting Schools and Nurture are a key focus at both Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary school. This focused approach has supported the development of positive relationships across the whole school communities. The larger number of staff and parent/carer body, alongside a greater number of community partners, naturally gives both schools an increased breadth of talent, interests and opportunities to harness and share within each school. This applies across both schools in terms of the wider curriculum opportunities afforded to young people, as well as the enhancement by staff individual expertise, such as within Physical Education opportunities and STEM (Science, technology, engineering and maths).

## **8.3 Experiences – Broadening the Range of Opportunities**

Children at both Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School are afforded a wide range of planned activities and experiences which allow them to

develop their knowledge, skills, understanding and attributes. These in turn, support their physical, social and emotional wellbeing for both now and in the future. This, combined with strong community links, allows young people to develop skills for learning life and work and supports positive learning pathways.

Sitting within a 2-18 campus with one Head Teacher, affords Langholm Primary School pupils a relatively unique opportunity when it comes to transitions. Work is carefully planned across all sectors in order to ensure smooth curricular and pastoral transition. Applegarth Primary School is one of several schools that feed into Lockerbie Academy. Cluster working has afforded opportunities for clear transition planning and events, which in turn provides further opportunities for pupils to make new connections and to ensure appropriate support at each step of their educational journey.

Children at both Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School are provided with a variety of experiences that develop their self-management, social intelligence and innovation skills.

Across both schools, children are becoming successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. They are engaged in their learning and contribute well during lessons and wider school activities. Positive relationships at all levels are evident within the ethos of both schools. Children enjoy good relationships with their peers and feel supported when things are not going as well. Pupils feel that they are listened to and that they have an active voice that can enact change.

#### **8.4 Environment for Learning**

Applegarth Primary School is situated 3 miles outside of the town of Lockerbie. The school was built in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century but was extensively renovated in 1994. It now provides a modern, well-equipped space for children to learn. The school has access to a wooded area as well as its own Multi Use Games Area. The building has facilities for pupils and visitors with specific access needs.

Langholm Primary School and Nursery was established in 1883. However, the current Langholm Primary School is a new build addition to the Secondary School and opened in 2016. It therefore provides a modern learning environment for all its young people, access to the specialist facilities across the wider campus and has appropriate facilities for pupils and visitors with specific access needs.

Children attending Applegarth Primary School or Langholm Primary School from Hutton Primary School are able to maintain links with children who live in their own village and surrounding area, as well as creating friendships across the wider Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School catchment areas. These relationships extend beyond the school day to activities and clubs taking place in the wider Annandale and Eskdale area and beyond. The positive relationships developed supports and enhances experiences and learning in school.

To summarise, were the closure of Hutton Primary School to be implemented, there would be a wide range of educational benefits for pupils, as identified in the

paragraphs above. These benefits would range from the children receiving a more diverse curriculum and wider range of high- quality learning experiences, to the development of self-management, social intelligence and innovation skills. The learning environments at both Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School would also offer pupils the opportunity to experience the broader life of the school, through a wider range of committees and community links, to be involved in project based and interdisciplinary learning within and across stages, as well as wider opportunities for personal achievement and involvement.

### **8.5 Assessment of likely educational benefits on other users of the school's facilities - Implications for staff**

Should this proposal be implemented, there will be no new implications for teaching and ancillary staff at either Applegarth Primary School or Langholm Primary School.

Should this proposal be implemented Dumfries and Galloway Council does not envisage any adverse effects from the proposal in respect of staffing. Should any arise, these would be dealt with in line with Council policy.

The benefits for staff from Hutton Primary School would be the inclusion as part of a larger team. They would have colleagues to work alongside share professional ideas, support and challenge. Effective collaboration of staff can support moderation, better meet pupil needs, enhance professional development and improve learning and teaching. Staff can feel more supported when they are working as part of a larger team and professional learning community.

### **8.6 Implications for Early Learning and Childcare**

Hutton Primary School does not have ELC provision within the school. Therefore, pre-five children attend other local authority and private providers across the local authority. Langholm Primary School does have an ELC which pupils from the Hutton Primary School catchment area can attend if they wish. Therefore, there would be no change to the current arrangements for ELC across the Hutton catchment area. Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School have positive relationships with ELC providers and transition is strong.

### **8.7 Educational benefits for any future children who would be likely to enrol at Hutton Primary School (but for implementation).**

Children who may live in the Hutton Primary School catchment area in the future will benefit from the wide range of educational experiences and opportunities outlined above.

Through the proposal the rolls of both Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School would be maintained, depending on parental choice of receiving school. This would be particularly beneficial for the smaller Applegarth Primary School, as it would extend the peer group for all pupils both now and in the future. This in turn would support a wider range of social interactions, extra-curricular activities, clubs and committees. Langholm Primary School would also benefit from the potential additional pupils and greater diversity in its pupil body.

Pupils who would have otherwise attended Hutton Primary School, benefit from the improved educational experience as outlined above. They also benefit from daily interactions with a large number of peers and wider range of shared experiences and opportunities for friendships. This in turn will support a successful transition into secondary education and provide greater opportunity to develop and sustain friendships.

### **8.8 Educational benefits likely for pupils in any other school in the Local Authority.**

The current mothballing of Hutton Primary School has an indirect positive effect on pupils across Dumfries and Galloway. The reduction in running costs of the school effectively means a saving to the Council. If Hutton Primary School were to close, the current mothballing costs would be redirected back into the Council. As a result, they would indirectly benefit the wider pupil body across Dumfries and Galloway.

There would be no other significant impacts, positive or negative, from this proposal on pupils with the local authority who attend other schools.

### **8.9 Placing Requests**

In line with the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, the proposal for the closure of Hutton Primary School would not affect the rights of parents and carers to request that their child attend a school of their choice, rather than the designated school in whose catchment area the family lives.

### **8.10 Consideration of how to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the implementation of this proposal**

Throughout the pre-consultation process the main concern arising from parents and carers was the distance pupils from Hutton Primary catchment area would have to travel to attend school. The travel distance from Hutton Primary School to Applegarth Primary School is 6.2 miles via the B723. Travel time is approximately 11 minutes (Source: Google Maps). Children who previously attended Hutton Primary School prior to 2020 have been travelling this distance and families have not expressed any adverse effects. School transport would continue to be provided for pupils should this proposal be implemented in line with Dumfries and Galloway Council's transport policy.

### **8.11 Educational benefits statement summary**

The ability of pupils from Hutton Primary Schools attending either Applegarth Primary School or Langholm Primary School as a consequence of this proposal, to participate in a wider range of educational experiences and opportunities is of significant educational benefit. The broader, more diverse pupil body would allow for greater social and emotional development and opportunities to develop friendships.

The educational benefits of children attending either Applegarth Primary School or Langholm Primary School from Hutton Primary are numerous and wide ranging. The main negative affect identified was the children having to travel by car, taxi or bus to school. However, due to the rural nature of Hutton Primary catchment area, many of

the children had to travel to and from school by car prior to mothballing. It is therefore considered that the positive impacts of this proposal outweigh the negative aspect of travel.

## 9.0 Community Impact

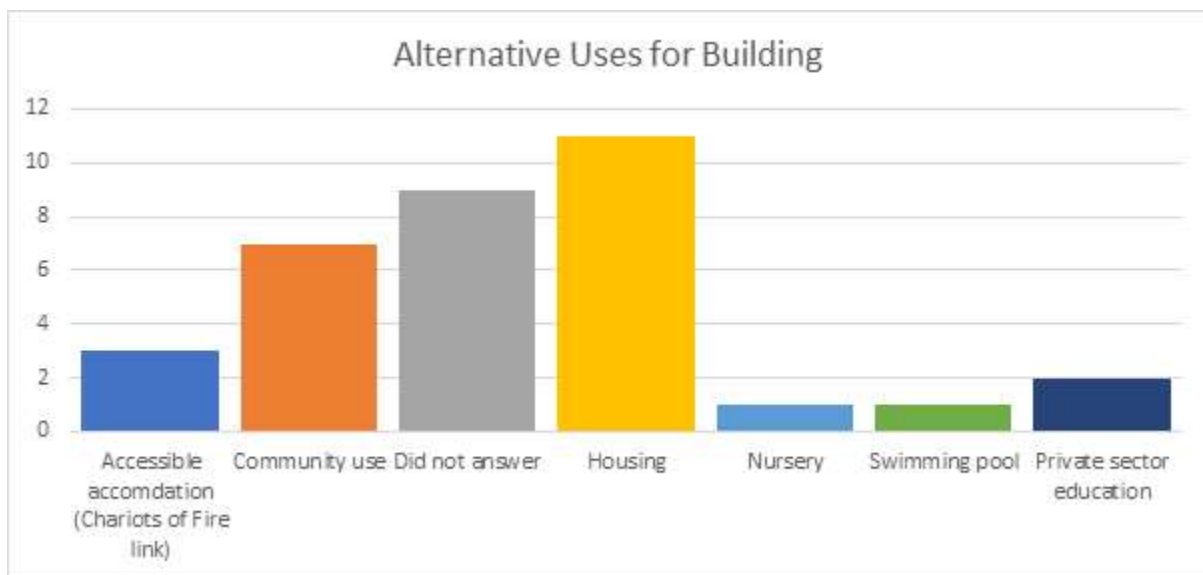
Formal closure of the school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community.

During the pre-consultation phase, members of the community had varying opinions on the closure of the school but all were clear the continuation of mothballing and the uncertainty this brought for the community was not a viable option that should be allowed to continue. It was also raised that the community were facing (at the time) the potential closure of their local church, Hutton and Corrie Parish Church. The closure of the church was progressed at the end of 2023, the community through the pre-engagement stage were clear that taking responsibility for the Village Hall, Church and Hutton Primary School would not be a viable option.

As part of the pre-engagement survey, respondents were asked on their thoughts around the potential future use of the building.

Question: If a decision was taken to close Hutton Primary School, do you have any suggestions on the future of Hutton Primary School, including potential alternative uses for the building?

The respondents to this question, suggested a range of alternative uses as can be seen below –



The suggestions detailed would require the formal closure of Hutton Primary School through the statutory consultation to allow the building to be repurposed.

It is accepted that a school closure may have an adverse effect on a community, however within the village of Boreland is Boreland Village Hall which is used for

community events and activities. This hall refurbishment works completed in 2012, it is well equipped and is provides a focus for the community, the facilities meet the needs of the community in ways that the school building could not. The closure of Hutton Primary School would not have a negative impact on the community in terms of its capacity to meet, plan, collaborate and implement initiatives and activities meeting the needs to the benefit of the immediate and wider communities.

Further North in the catchment area is the Eskdalemuir Hub & Old School Café (The Hub), this was once a primary school, which was formally closed in academic year 2005/06. The Hub opened on 28th September 2014 and provides the local and wider community with a shop, café, library, exhibition space, classes, events as well as spaces for hire/rent.

In rural communities, the challenges and opportunities are largely defined by the local area and can often best be met by community-led response. Strong community leadership is vital to articulating local priorities and driving forward change and growth. Both Boreland Village Hall and The Hub are prime examples of what can be achieved to meet the needs of the local and wider communities.

It is therefore considered that formal closure of this school could have a neutral impact on the wider community, with the Village Hall remaining as the focus for community events and the potential for the repurposing of the Hutton Primary School property and site.

### **10.0 The likely effect caused by any different travel arrangements**

The travel distances from Hutton Primary School to Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School are detailed in Figure 6 below;

Figure 6

	Distance	Journey Time
Applegarth Primary School	6.2 miles	11 mins
Langholm Primary School	20.1 miles	31 mins

It is important to note that the geography of the catchment area means that travel distances/times will be different for all pupils, which is why the information listed above is from Hutton Primary School to Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School. The travel distance from Eskdalemuir to Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School are detailed in Figure 7 below for comparison.

Figure 7

		Distance	Journey Time
Eskdalemuir	Applegarth Primary School	13.4 miles	22 mins
Eskdalemuir	Langholm Primary School	12.9 miles	22 mins



Due to the similarities in travel distance and time from the northern part of the catchment area, two options have been tabled as part of this proposal paper. The maps for the catchment area realignment options can be found in Appendix 2.

Implementation of the proposal to close Hutton Primary School would have no effect on the current travel arrangements on staff and pupils that have been in place since the temporary arrangements and subsequent official mothballing of the school, or the environmental impact of travel. However, as noted in Section 3.0 seven of the current Hutton Primary School catchment children in attendance at Applegarth Primary School live within a mile radius of Hutton Primary School. It is noted and acknowledged that the mothballing of Hutton Primary School has led to increased use of school transport and increased journey times for pupils particularly for those children living closest to Hutton Primary School. Appendix 1 details the current Hutton Primary School catchment area and where the current catchment pupils live in relation to the school.

If the preference was to split and realign the catchment area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School this would incur additional cost for Dumfries and Galloway Council as those pupils from the current Hutton catchment area already in attendance at Langholm would be entitled to transport in line with Dumfries and Galloway Council's transport policy. The current transport arrangements to Applegarth Primary School would be honoured for current pupils and any subsequent siblings that currently live within the area identified in Option B for Langholm Primary School.

## **11.0 Financial Impact**

The full breakdown of the financial analysis is detailed in Appendix 3. This information gives details on the estimated cost if Hutton Primary School were still an occupied and operational establishment, the figures are taken from financial year 2019/20 as this was the last full year the school was fully occupied. As Hutton Primary School is currently mothballed, the cost for the mothballing is at £5,380 per year. Should the school be reopened, occupied and operational, the running costs per year are estimated at £170,392 (based on 2019/20 costs), this equates to £28,398.67 per pupil per year based on the school roll of 6 (census roll academic year 2019/20). In addition, the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is approximately £245,000.

Column 2 of Table 1 at Appendix 4 shows the projected annual running costs of Hutton Primary School whilst Column 3 shows the additional impact on Applegarth Primary School as the receiving school. The annual recurring savings (or costs) are shown in Column 4.

Applegarth Primary School is detailed as the receiving school, this is due to the greater number of pupils being in attendance at Applegarth Primary School from the Hutton Primary School catchment area and forms the current temporary catchment arrangements. Those children already in attendance at Langholm Primary School from the Hutton Primary School catchment area have chosen to attend through choice, there would ultimately be an additional cost with regard to Langholm Primary

School and this would relate to Row 30 of table 1. Additional transport costs to Langholm Primary School would be approx. £28,500 per annum based on the current pupils in attendance, assuming the proposal was implemented and Option B (catchment area split and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School) was the preferred option.

Table 1, School Costs. There are no figures included for column 3 as the receiving school does not require additional staffing to accommodate the additional pupils from Hutton Primary School. During the initial temporary arrangements all staff transferred to Applegarth Primary School, this over staffing has been modelled out with staff redeployed as per Dumfries and Galloway Council's policies and included as part of the annual staffing exercise.

Table 1, Building Costs. There are no figures included for column 3 as the receiving school does not require additional requirement to accommodate the additional pupils from Hutton Primary School. Property insurance and rates are set at zero throughout the financial template as there is a rate relief applied and all Dumfries and Galloway Council properties are insured collectively, there is no single payment attributed to individual properties.

Table 1, School Operational Costs. There are no additional costs on the receiving school as during the temporary arrangements the Headteacher had the discretion to use the devolved school management budget (DSM) from both Hutton Primary School and Applegarth Primary School. The roll of Applegarth Primary School is now lower than when the two schools came together and as a result the DSM has been updated to reflect the current arrangements and the current pupil roll. Catering costs have also been marked as zero for the receiving school, once again this is due to the lower pupil roll and the removal of transport of meals to the servery at Hutton Primary School.

Table 1, Transport Costs. As previously mentioned, depending on the outcome and implementation of the proposal there may be additional transport costs to Langholm Primary School, these currently total approx. £28,500 per annum based on the current pupils in attendance and are not detailed on the financial template.

Table 3 in Appendix 3 details the annual running costs during mothballing of Hutton Primary School and these are £5,380 per year, which would constitute an immediate saving on closure. If the school were to be formally closed, this would allow the Council to take steps towards selling the school to a third party or transferring ownership to the local community.

Table 5 in Appendix 3 details the impact on Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE). The GAE is not impacted by this proposal as most children from the Hutton Primary School catchment area and those in attendance at the time of the temporary arrangements and subsequent mothballing all transferred to Applegarth Primary School which has a roll fewer than 70.

Implementation of the proposal would see an increase in transport costs to Dumfries and Galloway Council, however these are offset by the costs of maintaining and operating Hutton Primary School for a small number of pupils.

## **12.0 Impact Assessment**

Dumfries and Galloway Council will undertake an impact assess during the consultation process in respect of this proposal, to ensure that due regard is given to whether the decisions we make are likely to impact on different groups of people across the region. The result of the impact assessment should highlight any barriers or discrimination that might affect the communities of Hutton Primary School, ensuring we meet our statutory duties under the Equality Act including the Fairer Scotland Duty.

## **13.0 Preliminary Requirements**

Prior to formulating a rural school closure proposal under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended, the Education Authority must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act. Dumfries and Galloway Council has previously identified its reasons for formulating a possible proposal, has considered whether there were any reasonable alternatives to the possible proposal as a response to those reasons, and has assessed each of the options in accordance with Section 12A(2)(c) of the 2010 Act. After considering a paper addressing these preliminary requirements, on 14 March 2024 Education and Learning Committee agreed to the commencement of the Statutory Consultation process for the closure of Hutton Primary School in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

No decision will be taken by Dumfries and Galloway Council on the proposal contained in this paper until after the end of the consultation period. Education and Learning Committee will then receive a report on the consultation and will reach a view on the proposal.

## **14.0 Consultees**

A summary of this document will be issued free of charge to all of the consultees listed at page 3 of this document and it will also be published on the Council's website: [www.dumgal.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/consultations)

## **15.0 Consultation Period**

As part of a consultation process, the Education Authority must publish the proposal paper, advertise it and notify Education Scotland and all of the relevant consultees as prescribed by Schedule 2 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended, inviting them to make representations on the proposal. The consultation period will be from 24 April 2024 until 5pm on 7 June 2024, which includes at least 30 school days.

## 16.0 Public Meeting

A public meeting will be held on Tuesday 21 May 2024 at 6pm in Boreland Village Hall. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting and participate is welcome to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Education and Learning Directorate and Officers will present reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions to be asked and comments to be made. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.

## 17.0 Responses to the Proposal

Representations may be made on the following;

- the proposal;
- alternatives to the proposal as listed above; and
- suggestions of other alternatives.

Dumfries and Galloway Council will consider all representations and these should be received no later than 5.00pm on Friday 7 June 2024 by one of the methods detailed below;

Online Survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/50gPBB4yUp>



Letter to: Statutory Consultation – Hutton Primary School  
Dumfries and Galloway Council  
Militia House  
109/111 English Street  
DG1 2HR

Email to: [statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk)

Respondents are required to clearly state the capacity in which they are expressing their views and agree to their name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report (all other personal information will be redacted).

## **18.0 Meetings with Pupils and Staff**

School staff will arrange to discuss proposals with pupils (who are considered to be of a suitable age and maturity) in the affected schools. A record of questions, responses and views will be taken, and this will be published in the Consultation Report.

## **19.0 Involvement of Education Scotland (HMle)**

Following the close of the consultation, Dumfries and Galloway Council will provide Education Scotland with copies of the written representations submitted, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting and any other relevant documentation. This will allow Education Scotland to prepare a report on the proposal within a period of three weeks.

## **20.0 Consultation Report and Time for Further Consideration**

After receiving Education Scotland's report, Dumfries and Galloway Council will then prepare and publish a Consultation Report in accordance with Sections 9, 10 and 13 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. Dumfries and Galloway Council Education and Learning Committee on 10 October 2024 will thereafter make its final decision on whether to implement the proposal. The decision will be made a minimum of three weeks after publication of the Consultation Report. If Education and Learning Committee makes a closure decision, Dumfries and Galloway Council shall notify the Scottish Ministers within six working days of that decision and publish the fact that the Scottish Ministers have been notified, and that representations can be made to them. The Education Authority would also be required to publish a notice on its website of the decision to implement the proposal and why it has been satisfied that closure is the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal.

## **21.0 Explanation of Approach**

The Proposal is advanced within the context of all applicable legislation. Amongst other duties, education authorities are required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (S.1 of the Education Act 1980); and to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education in schools that are managed by them (S.3 of The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000).

## **22.0 Designation of Rural Schools**

Hutton Primary School is a rural school within the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended (the school is classed as "remote rural") and Dumfries and Galloway Council has had regard to the provisions of the Act, in particular the special regard required for rural school closures. The Council has considered the school roll projections for Hutton Primary School (see Section 4.2); has given detailed consideration to the viable alternatives to closure (Sections 3.0 and 3.1); to the effect of closure on the community (Section 9.0); and to the

impact of travel arrangements on children who are not yet of school age but who live in the Hutton Primary School catchment (Section 10.0). At present the pupils who live within the Hutton Primary School catchment attend Applegarth Primary School, Johnstonebridge Primary School, Langholm Primary School, Lochmaben Primary School, Lockerbie Primary School and St Mungo Primary School.

### **23.0 Call-in of Closure Proposal and Determination of Case**

The Scottish Ministers will have a maximum of eight weeks to call in any closure decision made by Dumfries and Galloway Council in certain circumstances. This eight week timeframe would consist of an initial three weeks from the date of decision, during which representations can be made to the ministers, and a further five weeks for the Scottish Ministers to decide whether to issue a call in notice. During this period the Education Authority will not proceed to implement any closure decision.

If the Scottish Ministers call in a closure proposal, it is referred to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels. The Convener must constitute a School Closure Review Panel within seven days for determination. The Education Authority may not implement a closure decision in whole or in part until the Panel has made its determination. It will usually issue a decision within eight weeks of the Panel being constituted.

If the School Closure Review Panel refuses to consent to the closure decision, or following publication of the Consultation Report Dumfries and Galloway Council decides not to implement the closure proposal, a further closure proposal cannot be published in relation to the school for five years, unless there is a significant change in the school's circumstances.

### **24.0 Grounds for Call-In etc**

The Scottish Ministers may issue a call-in notice where it appears to the Scottish Ministers that Dumfries and Galloway Council may have failed;

- (a) in a significant regard to comply with the requirements imposed on it by (or under) the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended so far as they are relevant in relation to the closure proposal, or
- (b) to take proper account of a material consideration relevant to its decision to implement the proposal.

### **25.0 Conclusion**

It is proposed that education provision at Hutton Primary School be discontinued with effect from 1 January 2025. The catchment area of Hutton Primary School shall be;

- re-aligned to Applegarth Primary School or
- split and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

It has been assessed that the proposal is the most appropriate means of addressing the underlying reasons for formulating it, which are:

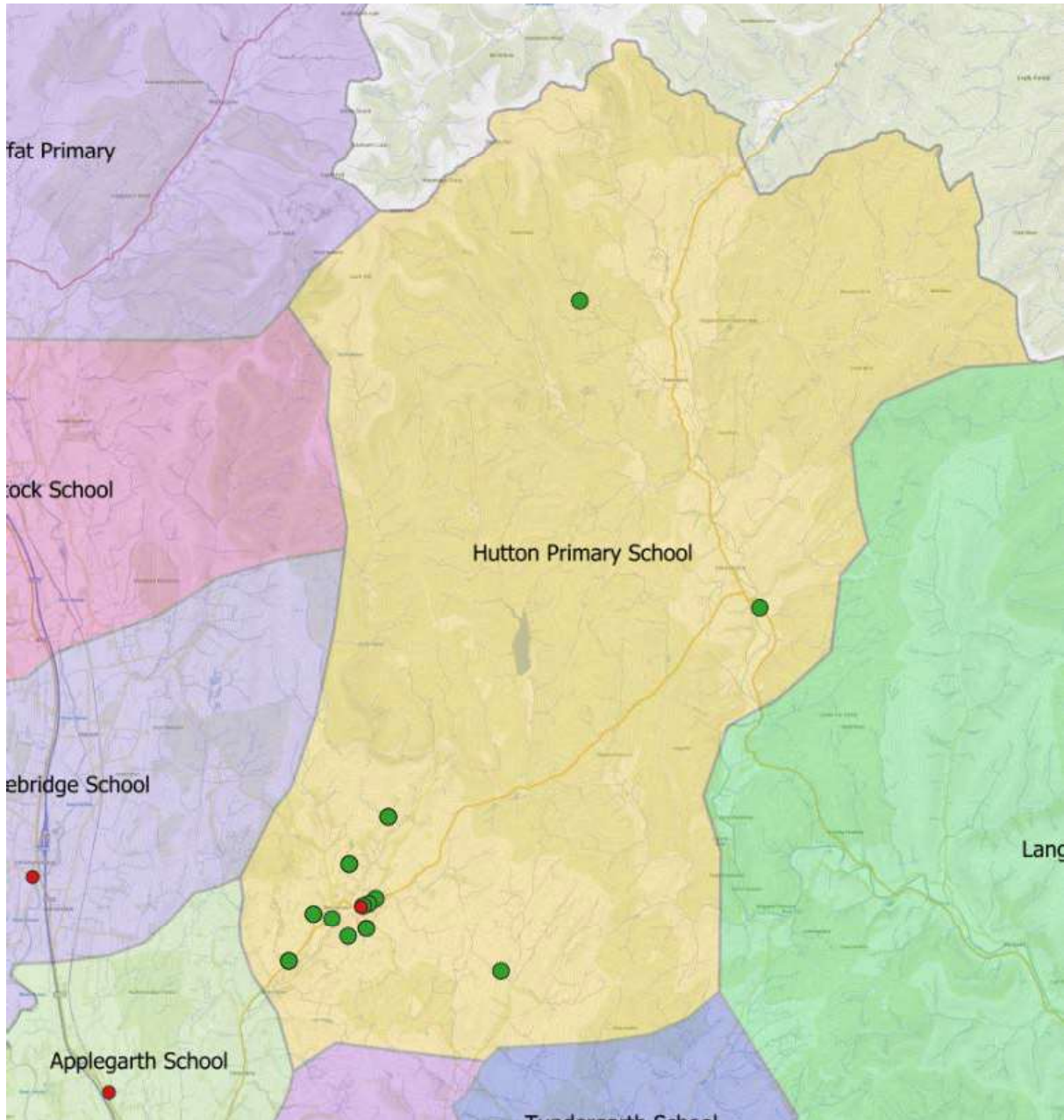
- Hutton Primary School has been formally mothballed for seventeen months, with no pupils in attendance since August 2020, almost 3.5 years. The school roll is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18.2% fall in the 0-15 age group from 2018 to 2032.
- Along with several other rural councils, Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment. The annual cost of mothballing the building is £5,380.

### **Other Considerations**

- The education benefits as set out in Section 8 to current and future primary aged children within the Hutton Primary School catchment area.
- Councils have a statutory duty, introduced in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003, to make arrangements to secure Best Value.
- On 30 November 2023, Elected Members approved the 10 School Model Principles to be used as a basis for a sustainable School Estate. Applying these Principles will help ensure 'best-value' and sustainable settings, resulting in an improved learning environment for all our children and young people, whilst considering the needs and wishes of people and communities. These Principles are detailed in the Preliminary Requirements document at Appendix 5
- Dumfries and Galloway Council currently has in excess of 4,400 (31%) spaces within its current primary school estate. It must be acknowledge that the costs-per-pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high and that underutilised schools are expensive to maintain and operate. The current condition, suitability and over capacity is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the school estate.

## APPENDIX 1 – Hutton Catchment Area Map

The map below shows the current Hutton Primary School catchment area, the green dots mark the location of the primary aged pupils living within this area. Red dots mark the location of the Primary Schools.

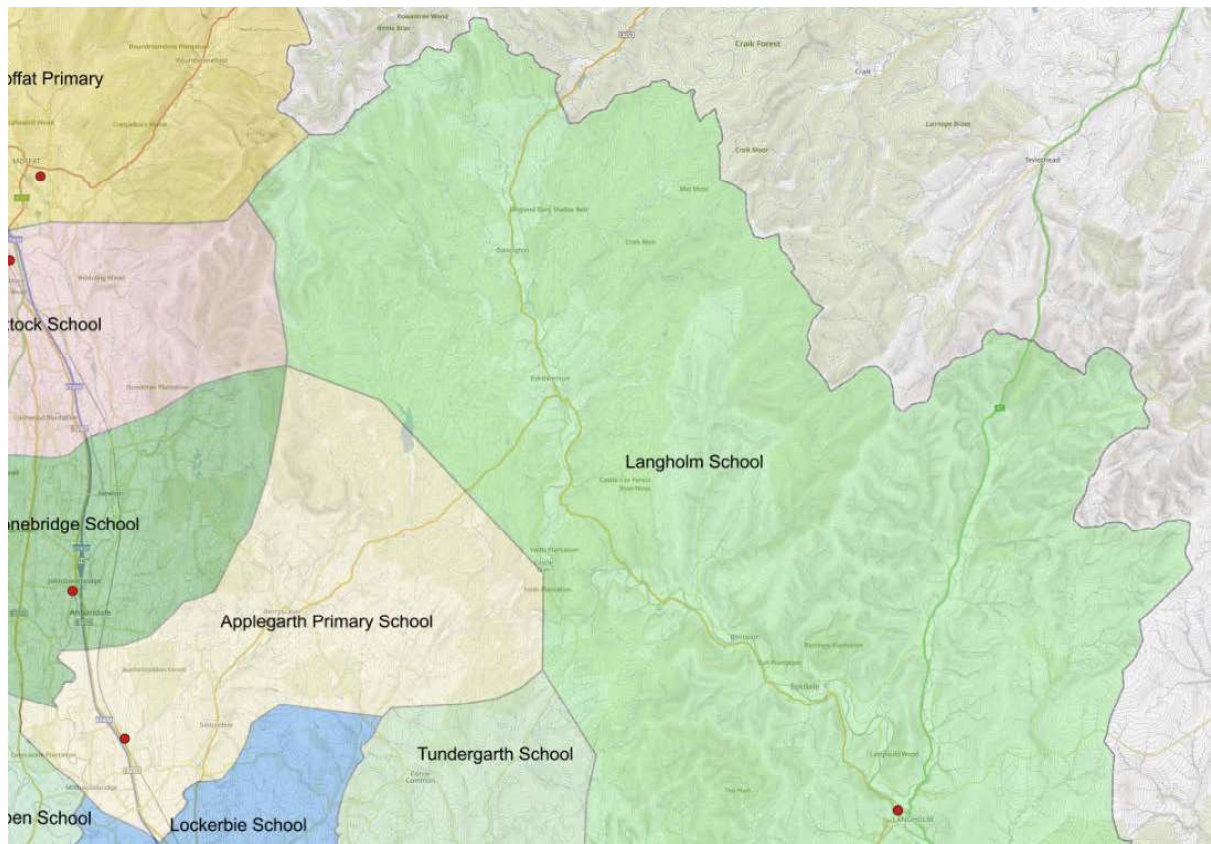






**Option B** – Catchment area split and realigned to Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

Red dots mark the location of the Primary Schools.



**Financial Template**

Table 1

Row 1	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	Current revenue costs for school proposed for closure	Costs for full financial year (projected annual costs)	Additional financial impact on receiving school [Applegarth Primary School]	Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)
Row 2	Name of School [enter name of school]			
Row 3	<b>School costs</b>			
Row 4	Employee costs - note 1	81,597	-	81,597
Row 5	teaching staff	12,539	-	12,539
Row 6	support staff	-	-	-
Row 7	teaching staff training (CPD etc)	-	-	-
Row 8	support staff training	-	-	-
Row 9	Supply costs - note 2	257	-	257
Row 10				
Row 11	<b>Building costs:</b>			
Row 12	property insurance	-	-	-
Row 13	non domestic rates	-	-	-
Row 14	water & sewerage charges	860	-	860
Row 15	energy costs	3,309	-	3,309
Row 16	cleaning (contract or inhouse)	5,810	-	5,810
Row 17	building repair & maintenance	1,298	-	1,298
Row 18	grounds maintenance	226	-	226
Row 19	facilities management costs - note 6	7,821	-	7,821
Row 20	revenue costs arising from capital	-	-	-
Row 21	other - H&S items servicing and maintenance, waste	2,158	-	2,158
Row 22				
Row 23	<b>School operational costs:</b>			
Row 24	learning materials	2,178	-	2,178
Row 25	catering (contract or inhouse)	9,355	-	9,355
Row 26	SQA costs	-	-	-
Row 27	other school operational costs (e.g. licences)	155	-	155
Row 28				
Row 29	<b>Transport costs: note 3</b>			
Row 30	home to school	42,218	82,764	40,546
Row 31	other pupil transport costs	-	-	-
Row 32	staff travel	611	-	-
Row 33	<b>SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>170,392</b>	<b>82,764</b>	<b>87,628</b>
Row 34				
Row 35	Income:			
Row 36	Sale of meals	-	-	-
Row 37	Lets	-	-	-
Row 38	External care provider	-	-	-
Row 39	Other Free School Meals	-	-	-
Row 40	<b>SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL</b>			
Row 41				
Row 42	<b>TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL</b>	<b>170,392</b>	<b>82,764</b>	<b>87,628</b>
Row 43				
Row 44	<b>UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR</b>	28,398.67	-	-

Table 2

Capital costs	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7
Capital Life Cycle cost - note 7	-	-	-
Third party contributions to capital costs	-	-	-
		School proposed for closure	Receiving school

Table 3

	Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal
property insurance	-
non domestic rates	-
water & sewerage charges	396
energy costs	3,208
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	-
security costs	-
building repair & maintenance	1,550
grounds maintenance	226
facilities management costs	-
other	-
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL</b>	<b>5,380</b>

Table 4

Non-recurring revenue costs
<b>TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS</b>

Table 5

Impact on GAE - note 5
<b>GAE IMPACT</b>

Statutory Consultation – Hutton Primary  
School  
Dumfries and Galloway Council  
Militia House  
109/111 English Street  
DG1 2HR

24 April 2024

E-mail [statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk)

Dear Consultee,

## **Review of Education Provision Notice and Summary of Proposal for closing Hutton Primary School, Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.**

Dumfries and Galloway Council is consulting on the proposal to close Hutton Primary School. This notice provides a summary of the proposal; it is a requirement for you to be notified of the consultation as a consultee, in accordance with Schedule 2 Section 1 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is conducting a public consultation from Wednesday 24 April to Friday 7 June 2024. This is the period in which you will be able to make representation to Dumfries and Galloway Council in respect of the proposal. It is important that everyone we are consulting with tells us about their thoughts on the proposal. This summary provides further information on where a full copy of the proposal can be obtained and also advises as to how you can make representation.

### **The Proposal**

Dumfries and Galloway Council is proposing, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process, to discontinue education provision at Hutton Primary School which is currently mothballed and:

- realign its catchment area to Applegarth Primary School or
- split and realign the catchment area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

It is proposed that education provision at Hutton Primary School be discontinued with effect from 1 January 2025.

### **Reasons for this Proposal**

This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposal which are;

- Hutton Primary School has been formally mothballed for seventeen months, with no pupils in attendance since August 2020, almost 3.5 years. The school roll is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18.2% fall in the 0-15 age group from 2018 to 2032.

- Along with several other rural councils, Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment. The annual cost of mothballing the building is £5,380.

### **Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023-2028**

Councils, as an Education Authority, have a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand. This is reflected in Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023-2028, Education and Learning Directorate.

The Council will improve education and learning opportunities to help all our children, young people and citizens fulfil their potential. This starts with pre-school, then school, before progressing into further or higher education or transition into work. We will work with our partners to create and promote lifelong learning opportunities so everyone in the region can live a meaningful and fulfilling life and contribute to their community.

Strategic Outcomes:

- Places of learning are inclusive, sustainable and meet the needs of local communities
- We get it right for every child
- Children, young people and adults transition successfully through all life stages
- Young people and adults succeed in what they want to achieve
- Participation in creativity and play is part of early and lifelong learning experiences
- Local people can build their skills and confidence

### **Alternatives to the Proposal (Including the Proposal)**

The proposal and alternatives to the proposal were considered as part of the preliminary requirement and are detailed below;

- a. Re-open Hutton Primary School
- b. Continued Mothballing of Hutton Primary School with the temporary catchment of Applegarth Primary School
- c. Closure of Hutton Primary School and Realign the Catchment Area to Applegarth Primary School (the proposal)
- d. Closure of Hutton Primary School and Realign the Catchment Area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School (the proposal)

Representations may be made on the following;

- the proposal;
- alternatives to the proposal as listed above; and
- suggestions of other alternatives.

### **What we will do –**

We will consult by:

- Providing a notice of the consultation and a summary of the proposal to the relevant consultees **this is that notice and summary**
- Placing an advert in the local press
- Putting information on our website - [www.dumgal.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/consultations)
- Holding a public meeting to explain the proposal
- Ask all consultees to tell us what they think of the proposal

### What to do now –

- Please read the full proposal document
- Please attend the public meeting which will be held on Tuesday 21 May 2024 at 6pm in Boreland Village Hall
- Let us know what you think by 5pm on Friday 7 June 2024 by:

Online Survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/50gPBB4yUp>



Letter to: Statutory Consultation – Hutton Primary School  
Dumfries and Galloway Council  
Militia House  
109/111 English Street  
DG1 2HR

Email to: [statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk)

Respondents are required to clearly state the capacity in which they are expressing their views and agree to their name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report (all other personal information will be redacted).

### What Next?

Dumfries and Galloway Council is seeking your views on the proposal during the consultation period, it does not assume that the proposal will go ahead. All points raised during the consultation period will be included in the final consultation paper before being presented to Elected Members at Education and Learning Committee on 10 October 2024 where a decision will be taken as to the outcome of this process.

If the proposal goes ahead, any children current and future from the Hutton Primary School catchment area would be educated at Applegarth Primary School or Langholm Primary School.

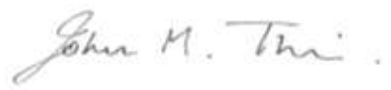
Please note that this summary document is for convenience only. Copies of the Proposal Paper can be obtained from:

- Applegarth Primary School
- Langholm Primary School
- Boreland Village Hall
- Eskdalemuir Community Hub
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Headquarters

And published on Dumfries and Galloway Council website:

[www.dumgal.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/consultations)

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John M. Thin".

John Thin  
Head of Education Resources

## **Hutton Primary School – Phase One – Preliminary Requirement**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Dumfries and Galloway Council are committed to giving all local children and young people an equal chance to fulfil their potential. Our ambition is to be a successful region, with a growing economy, based on fairness, opportunity and quality public services, where all citizens prosper. For our children and young people, raising attainment in schools is key to who they may become and how they will contribute to society. This will require a sustainable school estate that works for everyone and is able to secure 'best-value' to the public.

The Dumfries and Galloway Learning Estate Strategy was agreed by the Education and Learning Committee on 26 January 2023. The Learning Estate Strategy (LES) sets out a holistic, long-term view to ensure all schools are well designed, maintained and managed and most importantly that this view is shared between all stakeholders and decision makers.

On 30 November 2023, Elected Members approved the 10 School Model Principles listed below to be used as a basis for a sustainable School Estate. Applying these Principles will help ensure 'best-value' and sustainable settings, resulting in an improved learning environment for all our children and young people, whilst considering the needs and wishes of people and communities.

To meet current and future demand, we must continue to transform services, reduce spend in unsustainable areas and be prepared to think differently about how services are delivered to make the most effective use of resources. The Principles are weighted, with the priority for review starting at the top of the list.

#### **School Estate Principles**

1. Pupils should be educated in facilities which are rated at least category B for each of Condition and Suitability.
2. Primary pupils should not ordinarily be required to travel for longer than 30 minutes from the nearest classified road pick-up point to school.
3. Secondary pupils should not ordinarily be required to travel for longer than 45 minutes from the nearest classified road pick-up point to school.
4. To enhance high quality social and educational experiences, primary schools should ordinarily support 3 classes and have composite classes of no greater than 3-year groups.
5. To enhance high quality social and educational experiences, secondary schools should ordinarily support a 2-form entry (2 registration classes in S1).
6. Teachers should be members of a professional learning community comprising of at least 3 FTE members based at the same school.
7. Schools should have an occupancy rate where possible greater than 60% utilisation of the capacity of the school, and ideally should be operating at 80% utilisation.
8. All schools should be adaptable to children, staff, and visitors with disabilities.



9. All schools should support community use where required in the local context.
10. All schools should have key facilities including a hall, dining area, staff room, school office and grass playing fields as appropriate to the size and scale of the school.

Maintaining the engagement of stakeholders and keeping them informed is an important part of successful change. The co-operation of a variety of stakeholders will be needed, and we know that good consultation means better outcomes, and the benefits of engaging with, consulting and involving stakeholders at this early stage helps to highlight expectations and identify all the options.

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended requires that educational benefits should be at the forefront of any proposal to make a significant change to schools. It specifies that the local authority must, for all consultations, prepare an Educational Benefits Statement and publish it within the proposal paper. Only through a close partnership with our schools and stakeholders can a proposal be produced that will benefit both current and future learners.

On 29 June 2023 the Education and Learning Committee agreed that Officers engage with local families and the wider community of Hutton Primary School to further consider future options for the school.

## **2.0 Reason for the Proposal**

An authority that is formulating a rural school closure proposal must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended before starting to prepare its proposal paper.

The authority has to:

1. Identify its reasons for formulating the proposal.
2. Consider whether there are any reasonable alternatives to the proposal as a response to those reasons.
3. Assess, for the proposal and each of the alternatives, the likely educational benefit; the likely effect on the local community; and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements.
4. Decide, in light of this assessment, whether or not implementation of the closure proposal would be the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal. If the authority concludes that closure is the most appropriate response it should proceed to Phase Two. (Phase Two: An Education Authority consults on a closure proposal)

In particular, it must identify the underlying reasons why the future of the School is being considered, which are as follows:

1. Hutton Primary School has been formally mothballed for seventeen months, with no pupils in attendance since August 2020, almost 3.5 years. The school roll is not predicted to rise in the near future.
2. Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18% fall in the 0-15 age group over the next 10 years.

3. Along with several other rural councils, Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff.
4. Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is therefore considering the future of Hutton Primary School. The various options are explored within this paper.

### **3.0 Background**

Following the initial Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, staff acknowledged that Applegarth and Hutton Primaries would have increased capacity to support both schools by amalgamating them into one setting, therefore reducing pupil and staff isolation and ensuring continuity of education delivery. Both schools shared the same partnership Headteacher. Following engagement with parents/carers, it was agreed that all pupils within the partnership would be taught at Applegarth Primary School from the start of session 2020/21; this was planned to be in place initially for a few weeks however extended over 2 years and provided a greater degree of stability during the unprecedented circumstances faced by the schools. As time progressed, the advantages of being on one site was shown to have enhanced pupils' learning experiences, whilst extending the opportunities to socialise with a much wider range of peers. The management of shared resources was a further advantage where pupils were able to access the range of facilities available at Applegarth Primary School, whilst staff were able to share their skills and expertise more effectively.

In May 2022, following the Primary 1 enrolment process, Officers discussed with the Headteacher the likely number of children due to enrol for the following session (2022/23) as parents from Hutton Primary School catchment area indicated that they wished their children to remain at Applegarth Primary School. Parents/ carers of Hutton Primary pupils were surveyed to ascertain their preference of continuing at Applegarth Primary School or returning to Hutton Primary School. A small number of the parents/ carers expressed their preference to return to Hutton Primary School.

At the beginning of session (2022/23) three pupils were due to commence at Hutton Primary School. The Headteacher and an Officer of the Council met with the parents/ carers of those pupils to discuss their views that the pupils would be better served in terms of educational and social outcomes, to remain at Applegarth Primary School for session 2022/23. The parents/carers agreed to this; therefore arrangements were made for all of the pupils in the Hutton and Applegarth Primary Schools Partnership to be educated at Applegarth Primary School.

Hutton Primary School was officially 'mothballed' for session 2022/23 at Education and Learning Committee on 20 September 2022. The term 'mothballing' is used, according to Scottish Government guidance, where the school roll has fallen to very low pupil numbers, and in some cases zero. Mothballing, rather than closing a school, gives the opportunity for it to reopen should circumstances change. There is no legal process for mothballing.

The decision to mothball was reviewed in March 2023 following the Primary 1 enrolment process. Parents/ carers of Hutton Primary pupils were surveyed to

ascertain their preference of continuing at Applegarth Primary or returning to Hutton Primary School. A small number of the parents/carers expressed their preference to return to Hutton Primary School. Officers met with families at Hutton Primary School and whilst there was a desire to retain a school in Boreland most families were happy remaining at Applegarth Primary School.

Education and Learning Committee were updated regarding the further mothballing of Hutton Primary School for session 2023/24 on 29 June 2023.

All pupils enrolled at Applegarth Primary who reside in the Hutton Primary School catchment have had transport provided and this will continue for any family moving into the Hutton Primary School catchment.

### **3.1 Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023-2028**

Councils, as an Education Authority, have a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand. This is reflected in Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023-2028, Education and Learning Directorate.

The Council will improve education and learning opportunities to help all our children, young people and citizens fulfil their potential. This starts with pre-school, then school, before progressing into further or higher education or transition into work. We will work with our partners to create and promote lifelong learning opportunities so everyone in the region can live a meaningful and fulfilling life, and contribute to their community.

Strategic Outcomes:

- Places of learning are inclusive, sustainable and meet the needs of local communities
- We get it right for every child
- Children, young people and adults transition successfully through all life stages
- Young people and adults succeed in what they want to achieve
- Participation in creativity and play is part of early and lifelong learning experiences
- Local people can build their skills and confidence

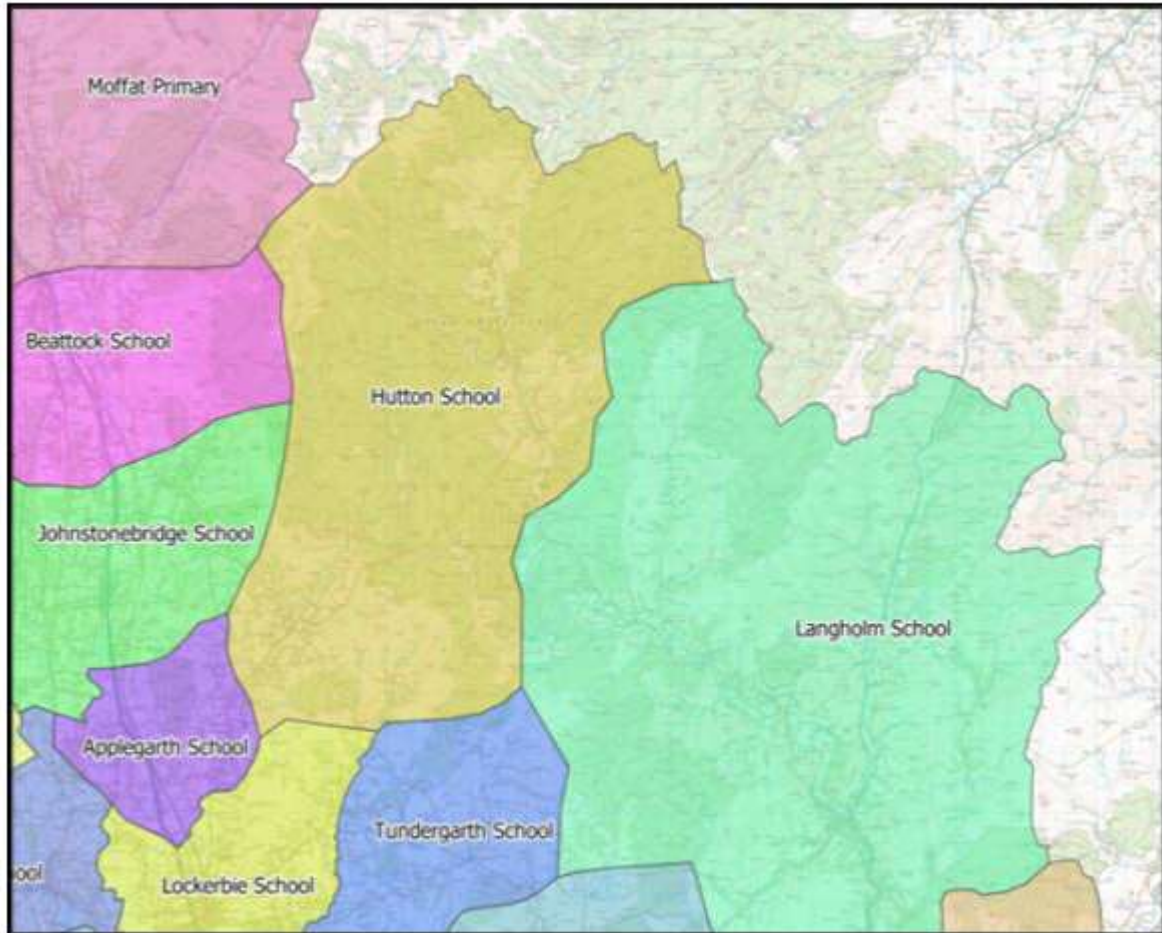
### **3.2 Hutton Primary School**

Hutton Primary School is classified as a being in a remote rural area, Scottish Government defines a remote rural area as – areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes but less than or equal to 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more. Hutton Primary School is located within the village of Boreland, 7 miles from the town centre of Lockerbie.

Hutton Primary School catchment borders the catchment areas of Langholm Primary School, Tundergarth Primary School (currently mothballed), Lockerbie Primary

School, Applegarth Primary School, Johnstonebridge Primary School, Beattock Primary School, Moffat Primary School and the neighbouring authority of the Scottish Borders. The catchment area of Hutton Primary School covers a wide area partially due to the closure of Eskdalemuir Primary School in 2006.

**Figure 1**



Distance between Hutton Primary School and surrounding schools sourced from Google Maps are listed below:

Applegarth Primary School	6.2 miles
Lockerbie Primary School	6.5 miles
Tundergarth Primary School*	8.2 miles
Johnstonebridge Primary School	10 miles
Beattock Primary School	11.1 miles
Moffat Primary School	11.8 miles
Langholm Primary School	20.1 miles

\*Tundergarth Primary School is currently mothballed for academic year 2023/24 due to very low numbers.

It is important to note that the geography of the catchment area means that travel distances/times will be different for all pupils, which is why the information listed above is from Hutton Primary School to surrounding schools. A pupil in Eskdalemuir

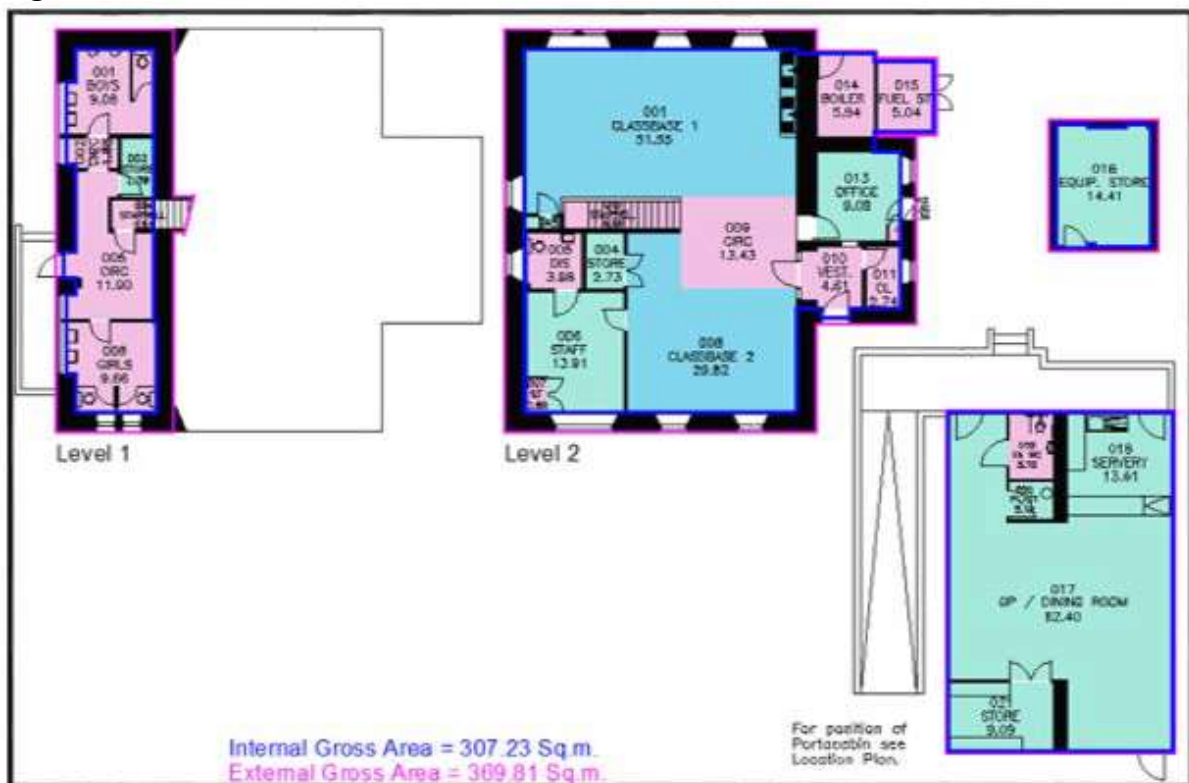
for example will have a longer journey time than those listed above but may choose to attend Langholm Primary School which is 12.9 miles (22 minutes) (Source: Google Maps).

Hutton Primary School site and school building are owned by Dumfries and Galloway Council. Confirmation of any title restrictions are currently with legal services, there is no record of the building, or any part of the building being listed with Historic Environment Scotland.

The school has a capacity of 47 pupils. It is a two-storey building, with cloaks area and boys and girls toilets to the lower ground floor. The ground floor accommodation comprises of entrance foyer, office, double classroom open plan area, shared Head Teacher office and staffroom and an accessible toilet. Externally there is an outbuilding predominately used for storage and a modular building designated to dining with a servery. Although the school utilised the public hall for PE, this facility is not in the school grounds and located approximately 0.3 miles from the school.

The school floorplan is shown below:

**Figure 2**



The school has a servery which provides meals that are prepared daily at nearby Lockerbie Academy and Primary School and transported to the school.

The outside areas which wrap around the school are predominately hard standing. Hutton Primary School delivered primary education from P1 to P7. There is no nursery on site and local children attended nursery at other nearby schools or partner provider nurseries in the wider area.

Information relating to the Extent, Condition, Sufficiency and Suitability of the school estate is reported by Dumfries and Galloway Council to the Scottish Government on an annual basis, this is known as the Core Facts Return.

Condition is concerned with the current state of the fabric of the school and with safety and security, it is undertaken by external surveyors impartial to Dumfries and Galloway Council and follows scoring methodology defined by Scottish Government for all schools. Hutton Primary School was assessed in June 2020 and the overall condition rating for the property was B, satisfactory – performing adequately but showing minor deterioration. However, whilst the overall condition is B, there are some internal areas, for example the ceilings and internal walls and doors were graded as C, poor – showing major problems and not operating optimally.

Suitability is a measure of whether a school building and its grounds are fit for the purpose of delivering the education curriculum. The suitability of Hutton Primary School was carried out in 2014, the school was graded as C.

The school has been operating as a single teacher school since academic year 2016/17. The threshold for a second teacher in Dumfries and Galloway is 19 pupils or above.

### **3.3 Housing Development**

The Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) 2019 does not identify any sites within Boreland Village or the wider catchment area for housing development. The LDP2 Housing Development in Villages (Supplementary Guidance – February 2020) <https://tinyurl.com/2bz94bpf> covers the villages of Boreland and Eskdalemuir.

The document states;

*Policy H2: Housing Development in Villages The Council will support housing development proposals in villages, subject to other policies in the plan where:*

- *the number of units proposed relates to the scale and size of the existing village; and*
- *it does not on its own or in combination with other developments in the housing market area undermine the overall objective of the spatial strategy; and*
- *it relates to the layout, density and design of the character and form of the existing village; and*
- *it would not lead to ribbon development; and*
- *the proposal would not result in the loss of open space shown in the Open Space Supplementary Guidance.*

Any development particularly within the communities of the Hutton Primary School catchment area would need to meet the requirements of the bullet points as detailed above.

### 3.4 Demographics and Pupil Numbers

Dumfries and Galloway Council holds electronic records of school rolls back to academic year 1975/76. Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18% fall in the 0-15 age group over the next 10 years. Hutton Primary Schools roll has not exactly mirrored that of Dumfries and Galloway as a region, there has however been a steady decline since academic year 2014/15. These historical school rolls are detailed in figures 3 and 4 below.

Figure 3

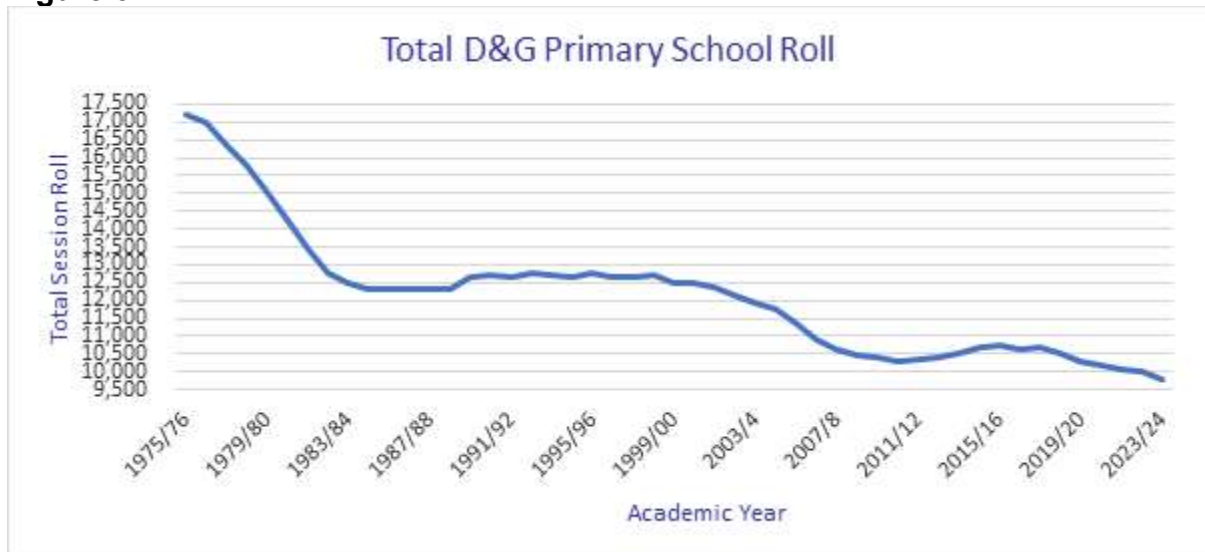
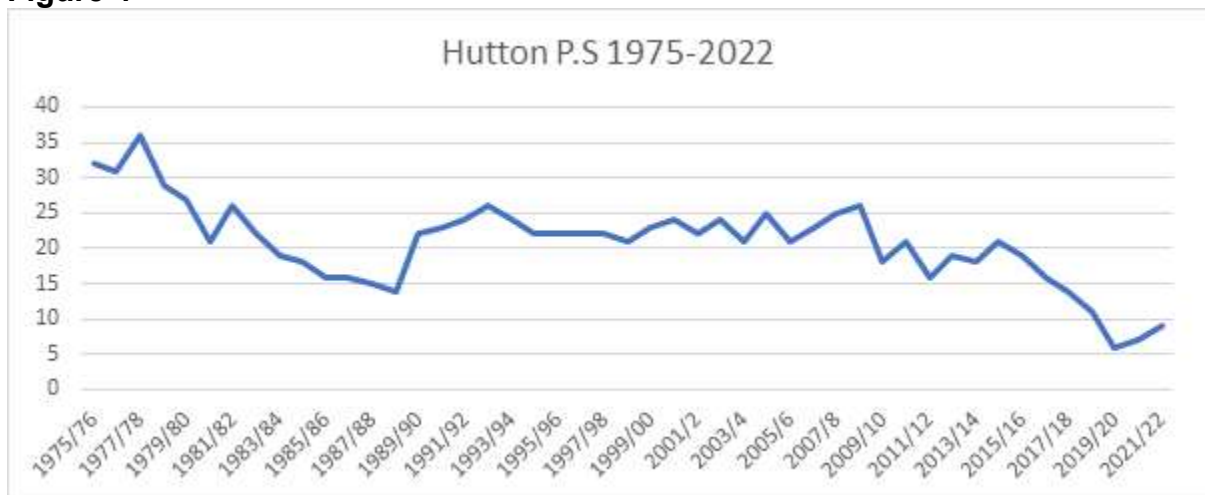


Figure 4



The most recent and noticeable decline began following academic year 2014/15.

There are currently 19 children of P1-P7 age (academic year 2023/24) residing within the catchment area of Hutton Primary School (SEEMiS census data September 2023). The catchment children are detailed in figure 5 below. These children of primary school age all attend other schools in the area, some through placement when the school was temporarily relocated to Applegarth Primary School

and the subsequent mothballing, others through parental choice. The majority attend Applegarth Primary School, with 7 attending other primary schools in the region.

**Figure 5**

Academic Year	N2	N3	N4	N5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
2023/24	2	4	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	19
2024/25					2	3	2	3	4	3	2	19
2025/26					1	2	3	2	3	4	3	18
2026/27					4	1	2	3	2	3	4	19
2027/28					2	4	1	2	3	2	3	17

A school roll of 19 children in a school with a capacity of 47 would result in an occupancy level of 40%. Such a low occupancy level is unsustainable. This is also dependant on all catchment children attending the school which historic trends show that Hutton Primary School has lost more children than it gained through placing requests. The historical average loss versus gain of pupil's results in a negative value of -7.7 (across P1-P7), applying this loss to the above totals would result in a school roll of:

**Figure 6**

Academic Year	Total
2023/24	11
2024/25	11
2025/26	10
2026/27	11
2027/28	9

In addition to the numbers listed above there were 2 non-catchment children that attended Hutton Primary School prior to mothballing, these children are not included in the above figures.

From SEEMiS and NHS data (which includes all births up to the end of February 2023) we know that there are (for academic year 2024/25), 3 nursery aged children and 6 children pre-nursery living within the catchment.

### 3.5 Pupil Enrolments

The decision to mothball was reviewed in March 2023 following the Primary 1 enrolment process. Parents/ carers of Hutton Primary pupils were surveyed to ascertain their preference of continuing at Applegarth Primary or returning to Hutton Primary School. A small number of the parents/carers expressed their preference to return to Hutton Primary School. Officers met with families at Hutton Primary School and whilst there was a desire to retain a school in Boreland most families were happy remaining at Applegarth Primary School.

Following the public meeting and survey, it was clear that there was no support in the community for the continuation of mothballing with the majority of survey respondents stating reopening Hutton Primary School as their preferred outcome.



During the second public meeting and following the presentation of the survey results by Dumfries and Galloway Council Officers, it was agreed that there would be the opportunity as per the communities wishes for families to enrol or transfer their child(ren) to Hutton Primary School in January 2024 for academic year 2024/25, a threshold of more than 10 catchment pupils would need to be realised to exceed the threshold for schools to be mothballed in Dumfries and Galloway.

In January 2024 as part of the targeted press and social media campaign for Primary 1 enrolment, a press release was issued in the Eskdale & Liddesdale Advertiser, Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Dumfries and Galloway Courier. Targeted emails to all families living within the catchment area and Applegarth Primary School also shared the information in their newsletter, this informed all families that applications could be made for pupils to enrol or transfer to Hutton Primary School for academic year 2024/25.

Following this enrolment and transfer opportunity three families of four catchment children submitted transfer forms to attend Hutton Primary School, no enrolment forms were received. The catchment P1's submitted placing requests for alternative schools.

#### **4.0 Community Engagement**

Council Officers from the Education and Learning Directorate conducted the following engagements with the communities of Hutton Primary School to keep them fully informed and to explore potential options for the future of Hutton Primary School.

- 5 September 2023 – Public meeting at Boreland Village Hall 6pm – 8pm. A presentation was given by officers explaining the national and regional context, small group discussions were facilitated by officers and an online survey gathering the thoughts of the community was opened for responses. A summary of the meeting is appended to this report (Appendix 1)
- September 2023 – An online survey was made available from 5 September until 22 September 2023, paper copies were also made available as well as the option to write to the Education and Learning Directorate, contact information was made available and circulated at the public meeting. The survey questions and a summary of submitted feedback is appended to this report (Appendix 2)
- 10 October 2023 – Public meeting at Boreland Village Hall 6pm – 8pm. Opportunity to discuss the findings of the survey/feedback received and discuss the next steps. A summary of the meeting is appended to this report (Appendix 3)
- 26 February 2024 – Public meeting at Boreland Village Hall 6pm – 7pm. Officers to discussed with the community the engagement to date and the agreed next steps. The outcome of the enrolment and transfer opportunity was discussed and the low roll of four pupils that had completed transfer forms. Those present were made aware that officers will be taking a recommendation Education and Learning Committee on 14 March 2024 for members to agree the commencement of the statutory consultation process for the closure of Hutton Primary School in line with the Schools

(Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. A summary of the meeting is appended to this report (Appendix 4)

## 5.0 The Proposal and Reasonable Alternatives to the Proposal

There have been no children in attendance at Hutton Primary School since August 2020, members of Education and Learning Committee on 20 September 2022 agreed to mothball Hutton Primary School for academic year 2022/23. The school roll was low prior to its relocation to Applegarth Primary School and following yearly communication with families this has not resulted in sufficient numbers to reopen the school.

Whilst the building is mothballed it continues to deteriorate, the community and Dumfries and Galloway Council would like to find a resolution to the current mothballing arrangement.

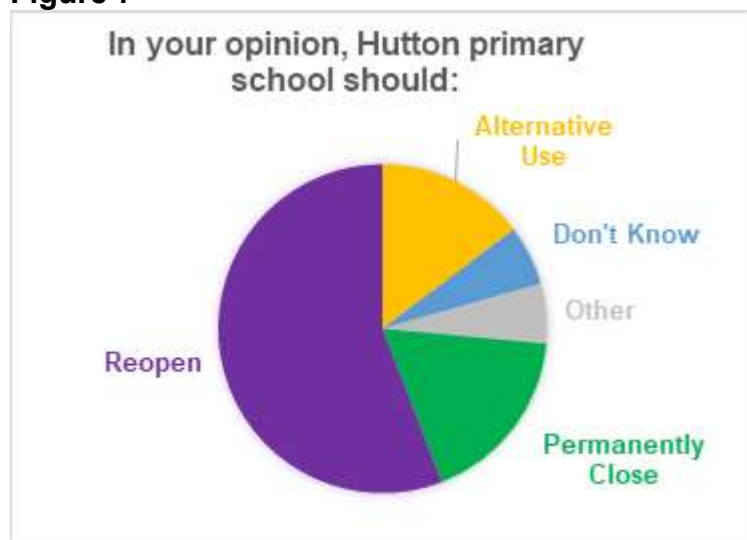
Dumfries and Galloway Council along with several other rural authorities is facing increasing challenges recruiting staff. Alongside this the pupil roll across the region continues to fall, with less primary age year on year as detailed in Figure 3.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is required to consider the future of Hutton Primary School. The following options are explored further within this paper:

- a. Re-open Hutton Primary School
- b. Continued Mothballing of Hutton Primary School with the temporary catchment of Applegarth Primary School
- c. Closure of Hutton Primary School and Realign the Catchment Area to Applegarth Primary School
- d. Closure of Hutton Primary School and Realign the Catchment Area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

Following the community engagement and as part of the online survey, consideration was given the future of Hutton Primary School, the communities of Hutton Primary School were asked “In your opinion should Hutton Primary School?” the responses are as below –

**Figure 7**



56% want Hutton to reopen  
18% want Hutton to permanently close  
15% want Hutton to have an alternative use  
6% don't know  
6% other  
0% Continue Mothballing

## **6.0 Option A: Re-open Hutton Primary School**

### **6.1 Community Feedback**

The majority of responses 56% (19 respondents) to the survey were in favour of Hutton Primary School reopening. The families of three primary aged children and three pre school aged children expressed their preference for the school to reopen. The main reasons were focused around transport:

*“Easier for transport”*

*“It's the closest primary school and I don't want my children travelling further if they don't have to.”*

*“It was the school I went to when I was young and I love the idea of a smaller school with a good sense of community.”*

There were a small number of families with primary aged children who were not in favour of Hutton Primary School reopening:

*“Not enough pupils for it to be viable”*

*“I prefer my kids to have a larger amount of kids to play with. They need a break from each other and wouldn't want them to not get that.”*

### **6.2 Pupil Numbers**

Families of Hutton Primary School were given the opportunity during the P1 enrolment process (29 January – 2 February 2024) for academic year 2024/25 to enrol or transfer their children to Hutton Primary School. All families living within the Hutton Primary School catchment area were contacted via email, as well as a press release in the Eskdale and Liddesdale Advertiser, Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Dumfries and Galloway Courier to inform families of the opportunity. Applegarth Primary School also shared the information in their January newsletter. Following this enrolment and transfer opportunity three families of four catchment children submitted transfer forms to attend Hutton Primary School, no enrolment forms were received.

If the school was to reopen for academic year 2024/25 the roll would be four. This is not a viable school roll and not in the best interest of the pupils or staff.

### **6.3 Financial Information**

The total recurring revenue cost to reopen Hutton Primary School would amount to £160,112.00.

The capital one-off cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open Hutton Primary School would be approximately £245,000.00.

The transport costs for those pupils living within Hutton Primary School's catchment area would be £21,888.00. This figure includes pupils who were in attendance when the school was last open and are of primary school age and those who have indicated they would attend the school if it were to reopen.

## **6.4 Assessment of Rural Factors**

### **6.4.1 Community Impact**

The reopening of the school would enable the premises to be used by the community however the community has a well-supported village hall, which is the main focus for most of the community activities. The presence of a school may make the area a more attractive place to live, therefore encourage families with school aged children or pre-school aged children to move to the area. Section 3.3 of this report details the housing development, respondents to the survey spoke of the lack of affordable housing in the area:

*“There isn't the housing to encourage more people to move into the village. I think people would come to live in Boreland if there was available housing.”*

*“Allow the building of affordable, rented housing in the hamlet and surrounding area.”*

*“Affordable housing to buy is rare in this area. Most of it is rented or expensive to buy.”*

If the school were to reopen as an educational establishment there would be an economic impact with respect to the considerable expenditure needed to bring the building up to an acceptable standard. There would also be costs relating to staffing, and ongoing maintenance. The reopening of the school and the potential relocation of families may have a positive effect on the wider economy of the community.

### **6.4.2 Travel arrangements**

The travel distance from Hutton Primary School to Applegarth Primary School is 6.2 miles via the B723. Travel time is approximately 11 minutes (Source: Google Maps). The travel arrangements have been in place since August 2020. If Hutton Primary School was to reopen there could be a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of pupils who are able to walk or cycle to school, of the current catchment children six live within the village and immediate area, the rest are in outlying settlements and farms. Staff would either travel to the school by car, or if they lived locally could walk or cycle. There may be a positive environmental impact as the use of vehicles to transport pupils may decrease. Conversely, there could be increased car usage by staff which may mean these travel arrangements have a negative environmental impact. Further to this, the pupils currently attending Applegarth Primary School from the Hutton Primary School catchment area would lose their entitlement to transport in line with Dumfries and Galloway Council school transport policy, this would have a significant impact of those families particularly if their preference was to remain at Applegarth Primary School.

## **6.5 Educational Benefits**

Curriculum for Excellence recognises the unique communities and contexts in which all our schools sit. It recognises the professionalism of Headteachers and their teams and allows them the flexibility to design a coherent curriculum that develops the knowledge, skills and attributes that their learners need to adapt, think critically and flourish in an ever-changing global society. Individual Headteachers and schools are empowered to design and provide an enriched curriculum that is flexible,

adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of individual learners and one which reflects the uniqueness of their local community and their context.

There are no specific educational benefits to reopening Hutton Primary School as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of the children.

There would be issues with respect to the current suitability as mentioned in section 3.4 of this report, which would negatively impact on learning and teaching.

## **6.6 Summary**

The greater percentage of responses 56% (19 respondents) to the survey were in favour of the school reopening. If the school were to reopen for academic year 2024/25 the school roll would be four based on the latest data gathered through the opportunity for families to enrol or transfer.

There are financial implications if the school is to be reopened. The total values are detailed in section 6.3 of this report.

The reopening of the school may encourage families with school age children to move to the community, which may make the community more sustainable, however with a lack of affordable properties to rent or purchase, opening the school alone will not remove this barrier to young family's aspiration to move into the area.

The travel distance from Hutton Primary School to Applegarth Primary School is 6.2 miles via the B723. Travel time is approximately 11 minutes (Source: Google Maps). The travel arrangements have been in place since August 2020. Adverse weather can be a factor; however, this is the same for other local schools and areas. Should the school reopen, there may be a positive environmental impact as the use of vehicles to transport pupils may decrease. Conversely there could be increased car usage by staff and those families wishing to remain at Applegarth Primary School, which may mean these travel arrangements have a negative environmental impact. The positive and negative impact may balance.

When considering the above alongside projected low numbers, the challenges in recruiting staff and the investment required to bring the building up to an acceptable standard, the preference of families to remain or chose other schools in the area, reopening Hutton Primary School is not a reasonable option.

## **7.0 Option B: Continued Mothballing of Hutton Primary School with the temporary catchment of Applegarth Primary School**

The Statutory Guidance for the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended, in relation to mothballing states "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."

Hutton Primary School was officially mothballed in August 2022 however pupils have not been in attendance at the school since August 2020 as discussed in section 3.0.

## **7.1 Community Feedback**

There were no responses to the survey in favour of the continuation of mothballing. The community was clear that the continuation of mothballing is not in anyone's best interests.

*“To continue to mothball the school in the hope that future increase in community would change the demographics isn't a medium-term option that is based on reality.”*

*“It should not be left unoccupied/mothballed.”*

## **7.2 Pupil Numbers**

Families of Hutton Primary School were given the opportunity during the P1 enrolment process (29 January – 2 February 2024) for academic year 2024/25 to enrol or transfer their children to Hutton Primary School. All families living within the Hutton Primary School catchment area were contacted via email, as well as a press release in the Eskdale and Liddesdale Advertiser, Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Dumfries and Galloway Courier to inform families of the opportunity. Applegarth Primary School also shared the information in their January newsletter. Following this enrolment and transfer opportunity three families of four catchment children submitted transfer forms to attend Hutton Primary School, no P1 enrolment forms were received.

Pupil numbers are not projected to rise over the next 4 years as detailed in figures 5 and 6 above.

## **7.3 Financial Information**

The current annual revenue cost (2022/23) to Dumfries and Galloway Council of the mothballed Hutton Primary School is £5,380. This includes water and sewerage charges, energy costs, repairs and maintenance and waste.

The capital one-off cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open Hutton Primary School would be approximately £245,000.00.

The current annual transport costs of taking Hutton Primary School pupils to Applegarth Primary School is £82,764.00.

## **7.4 Assessment of Rural Factors**

### **7.4.1 Community Impact**

If pupils are to continue their education in other primary schools whilst Hutton Primary School is mothballed there would be no change to the current impact on the community. Whilst some families are satisfied with the current arrangements, other highlight the significant rural transport challenges facing the communities of Hutton Primary School particularly for those who do not/cannot drive and are reliant on public transport, taxis or the goodwill of friends and neighbours.

The continued mothballing of Hutton Primary School was not supported by the community, whilst the school grounds are accessible to the community, the building has not been during mothballing. There have been no requests to utilise the building since it was mothballed and the community commented as part of the survey on the

high standard of the village hall and how this meets the community's requirements. There is little community interest in the school transferring to community ownership. Appendix 2 details the survey response with alternative uses of the building suggested by the community.

Dumfries and Galloway Council recognises that Hutton and Corrie church was recently closed with the proposal to move the building from closure to disposal and the community impact combined with the further mothballing of the school this has on the community.

*“Bus transport is only four times a day, so it can be socially isolating for young families to live here if they don't have a car.”*

*“The Church is also under threat of closure. The village hall has a high standard of repair and meets most of the community's requirements. The local community could not support three similar buildings.”*

#### **7.4.2 Travel arrangements**

There is no change to the travel arrangements that are currently in place nor to the environmental impact from these. The travel distance from Hutton Primary School to Applegarth Primary School is 6.2 miles via the B723. Travel time is approximately 11 minutes (Source: Google Maps). The travel arrangements have been in place since August 2020. The continued mothballing would have little effect on current staff travel.

#### **7.5 Educational Benefits**

Curriculum for Excellence recognises the unique communities and contexts in which all our schools sit. It recognises the professionalism of Headteachers and their teams and allows them the flexibility to design a coherent curriculum that develops the knowledge, skills and attributes that their learners need to adapt, think critically and flourish in an ever-changing global society. Individual Headteachers and schools are empowered to design and provide an enriched curriculum that is flexible, adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of individual learners and one which reflects the uniqueness of their local community and their context.

Applegarth and Hutton Primary Schools are both accessible rural schools (Scottish Government classification) and within eight miles of their local secondary school, Lockerbie Academy. Children from Hutton Primary, attending Applegarth Primary continue to benefit from a curriculum design which supports their rural location and the skills and attributes to meet their individual needs and rural context. Outdoor learning is a key feature of curricular design at Applegarth Primary School.

Applegarth Primary School consists of two multi-composite classes where children are with peers from more than one year group. The children benefit from a social context where they can build relationships, develop social skills, exercise responsibilities, meet challenges and develop resilience as members of a wider social group. They have the opportunity to influence the direction of the school and their learning experiences through a range of groups and pupil committees. At each stage in Applegarth Primary School there is more than one pupil. As a result, they

are able to build relationships with peers which in turn can support their transition into secondary education.

## **7.6 Summary**

The members of the communities of Hutton Primary School that completed the survey were clear that there was no support for the continuity of mothballing.

Whilst there are sufficient children in the catchment area with a very small decline over the next few years, the numbers do not indicate a rise that would support the continuation of mothballing.

On the basis that pupil numbers are not expected to increase and the schools mothballing is not of benefit to the community or Dumfries and Galloway Council, therefore continued mothballing is not viewed as a reasonable option.

## **8.0 Option C: Closure of Hutton Primary School and Realign the Catchment Area to Applegarth Primary School**

### **8.1 Community Feedback**

A small number of respondents 18% (6 respondents) to the survey were in favour of Hutton Primary School closing, a further 15% did not specify they were in favour of closure however they wanted Hutton Primary School to have an alternative use, in order for the building to have an alternative use the school would need to go through the statutory consultation process in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. There were a small number of families with primary aged children who were in favour of the closure of Hutton Primary School:

*“Not enough pupils for it to be viable”*

*“I prefer my kids to have a larger amount of kids to play with. They need a break from each other and wouldn’t want them to not get that.”*

The families of three primary aged children and three pre-school aged children expressed their preference for the school to reopen. The main reasons were focused on transport:

*“Easier for transport”*

*“It’s the closest primary school and I don’t want my children travelling further if they don’t have to.”*

*“It was the school I went to when I was young and I love the idea of a smaller school with a good sense of community.”*



## 8.2 Pupil Numbers

Pupil numbers are not projected to rise over the next 4 years as detailed in figures 5 and 6 above. It is however recognised that the numbers living within the catchment area are greater than the anticipated school roll.

The anticipated roll of Applegarth Primary School, including those pupils currently living in the Hutton Primary School catchment area are detailed in Figure 8 below.

**Figure 8**

	N2	N3	N4	N5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
2023/24	3	5	4	4	4	3	5	10	6	4	6	38
2024/25					4	4	3	5	10	6	4	36
2025/26					4	4	4	3	5	10	6	36
2026/27					5	4	4	4	3	5	10	35
2027/28					3	5	4	4	4	3	5	28

Please note the figures do not make adjustment for placing requests, Applegarth receives approximately 2 placing requests per year. P1 – P7 numbers are an accurate figure of the pupils currently enrolled at the school.

## 8.3 Financial Information

The current annual transport costs of taking Hutton Primary School catchment pupils to Applegarth Primary School is £82,764.00. This transport cost would remain in the event the school closed. The total cost may vary depending on the location of the pupils and the total number attending Applegarth Primary School.

## 8.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

### 8.4.1 Community Impact

The community had differing opinions on the closure of Hutton Primary School. Some would like to see the school reopen, some accepted that numbers were so low that the school may not be viable in the long term. All agreed that a decision needed to be made and the continuation of mothballing was not an option, during this time period the building continues to deteriorate.

Respondents to the survey highlighted the lack of investment and available housing in the area as a significant factor for the reason there are fewer families living within the catchment area. In the absence of affordable housing for purchase or rent there are limitations to the number of families that can afford to live in Boreland and the surrounding communities.

Whilst the school grounds are accessible to the community, the building has not been during mothballing. There have been no requests to utilise the building since it was mothballed and the community commented as part of the survey on the high standard of the village hall and how this meets the community's requirements. There is little community interest in the school transferring to community ownership appendix 2 details the survey response with alternative uses of the building suggested by the community.

Dumfries and Galloway Council recognises that Hutton and Corrie church was recently closed with the proposal to move the building from closure to disposal and the community impact combined with the further mothballing of the school this has on the community.

*“Bus transport is only four times a day, so it can be socially isolating for young families to live here if they don't have a car.”*

*“Affordable housing to buy is rare in this area. Most of it is rented or expensive to buy. If sadly the school closed, it would be nice to see it used in this way. We already have a village hall so to turn it into a community hub would be nugatory.”*

*“The Church is also under threat of closure. The village hall has a high standard of repair and meets most of the community's requirements. The local community could not support three similar buildings.”*

#### **8.4.2 Travel arrangements**

There is no change to the travel arrangements that are currently in place nor to the environmental impact from these. The travel distance from Hutton Primary School to Applegarth Primary School is 6.2 miles via the B723. Travel time is approximately 11 minutes (Source: Google Maps). The travel arrangements have been in place since August 2020. The closure of Hutton Primary School would have little effect on current staff travel.

#### **8.5 Educational Benefits**

Curriculum for Excellence recognises the unique communities and contexts in which all our schools sit. It recognises the professionalism of Headteachers and their teams and allows them the flexibility to design a coherent curriculum that develops the knowledge, skills and attributes that their learners need to adapt, think critically and flourish in an ever-changing global society. Individual Headteachers and schools are empowered to design and provide an enriched curriculum that is flexible, adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of individual learners and one which reflects the uniqueness of their local community and their context.

Applegarth and Hutton Primary Schools are both accessible rural schools (Scottish Government classification) and within eight miles of their local secondary school, Lockerbie Academy. Children from Hutton Primary, attending Applegarth Primary continue to benefit from a curriculum design which supports their rural location and the skills and attributes to meet their individual needs and rural context. Outdoor learning is a key feature of curricular design at Applegarth Primary School.

Applegarth Primary School consists of two multi-composite classes where children are with peers from more than one year group. The children benefit from a social context where they can build relationships, develop social skills, exercise responsibilities, meet challenges and develop resilience as members of a wider social group. They have the opportunity to influence the direction of the school and their learning experiences through a range of groups and pupil committees. At each stage in Applegarth Primary School there is more than one pupil. As a result, they

are able to build relationships with peers which in turn can support their transition into secondary education.

## **8.6 Summary**

Respondents to the survey had differing opinions to the closure of Hutton Primary School. The majority, 19 respondents (56%) wanted the school to reopen for their families and the community; others accepted that such low numbers did not make the school viable now and into the future. A small number of respondents 18% (6 respondents) to the survey were in favour of Hutton Primary School closing, a further 15% did not specify they were in favour of closure however they wanted Hutton Primary School to have an alternative use, in order for the building to have an alternative use the school would need to go through the statutory consultation process in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. Five current families were split in their preference over the future of Hutton Primary School, with two in favour of closure and three in favour of reopening.

The community has mixed views on the future use of the building but are clear that there is little appetite to take on an additional building over and above the current village hall, which meets most of the needs of the community.

The travel distance from Hutton Primary School to Applegarth Primary School is 6.2 miles via the B723. Travel time is approximately 11 minutes (Source: Google Maps). Applegarth Primary School currently accommodates pupils from Hutton Primary School, the school roll of Applegarth Primary School is not expected to rise and therefore has the capacity to continue to accommodate the projected pupil numbers from Hutton Primary Schools catchment area.

At Applegarth Primary School, children benefit from a curriculum design which supports their rural location and the skills and attributes to meet their individual needs and rural context. Outdoor learning is a key feature of curricular design at Applegarth Primary School. In addition there are more opportunities for personal and social development.

This has been identified as a reasonable option for further consideration.

## **9.0 Option C: Closure of Hutton Primary School, Realign the Catchment Area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School**

### **9.1 Community Feedback**

A small number of respondents 18% (6 respondents) to the survey were in favour of Hutton Primary School closing, a further 15% did not specify they were in favour of closure however they wanted Hutton Primary School to have an alternative use, in order for the building to have an alternative use the school would need to go through the statutory consultation process in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. There were a small number of families with primary aged children who were in favour of the closure of Hutton Primary School:

*“Not enough pupils for it to be viable”*

*“I prefer my kids to have a larger amount of kids to play with. They need a break from each other and wouldn't want them to not get that.”*

The families of three primary aged children and three pre school aged children expressed their preference for the school to reopen. The main reasons were focused around transport:

*“Easier for transport”*

*“It’s the closest primary school and I don’t want my children travelling further if they don’t have to.”*

*“It was the school I went to when I was young and I love the idea of a smaller school with a good sense of community.”*

## 9.2 Pupil Numbers

Pupil numbers are not projected to rise over the next 4 years as detailed in figures 5 and 6 above. It is however recognised that the numbers living within the catchment area are greater than the anticipated school roll.

The anticipated roll of Applegarth Primary School, including those pupils currently living in the Hutton Primary School catchment area south of Eskdalemuir are detailed in Figure 9 below.

**Figure 9**

	Age 1	N3	N4	N5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
<b>2023/24</b>	2	4	4	4	4	3	5	10	6	4	6	<b>38</b>
<b>2024/25</b>					4	4	3	5	10	6	4	<b>36</b>
<b>2025/26</b>					4	4	4	3	5	10	6	<b>36</b>
<b>2026/27</b>					4	4	4	4	3	5	10	<b>34</b>
<b>2027/28</b>					2	4	4	4	4	3	5	<b>26</b>

Please note the figures do not make adjustment for placing requests, Applegarth receives approximately 2 placing requests per year. P1 – P7 numbers are an accurate figure of the pupils currently enrolled at the school.

The anticipated roll of Langholm Primary School, including those pupils currently residing from Eskdalemuir and further north in the catchment area in the Hutton Primary School catchment area are detailed in Figure 10 below.

**Figure 10**

	Age 1	N3	N4	N5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
<b>2023/24</b>	11	12	21	21	22	18	18	30	24	22	25	184
<b>2024/25</b>					21	22	18	18	30	24	22	180
<b>2025/26</b>					21	21	22	18	18	30	24	179
<b>2026/27</b>					12	21	21	22	18	18	30	167
<b>2027/28</b>					11	12	21	21	22	18	18	148

Both Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School have sufficient capacity to be able to accommodate the potential additional pupils from the Hutton catchment area.

### **9.3 Financial Information**

The annual cost to transport pupils to alternative schools, assuming the catchment area was split between Hutton Primary School and Langholm Primary School, would be £111,264.00. This figure is based on the current pupils remaining at Hutton Primary School and the pupils that currently attend Langholm Primary School living in or north of Eskdalemuir becoming eligible for transport due to the realignment of the catchment area.

### **9.4 Assessment of Rural Factors**

#### **9.4.1 Community Impact**

The community had differing opinions on the closure of Hutton Primary School. Some would like to see the school reopen, some accepted that numbers were so low that the school may not be viable in the long term. All agreed that a decision needed to be made and the continuation of mothballing was not an option, during this time period the building continues to deteriorate.

Respondents to the survey highlighted the lack of investment and available housing in the area as a significant factor for the reason there are fewer families living within the catchment area. In the absence of affordable housing for purchase or rent there are limitations to the number of families that can afford to live in Boreland and the surrounding communities.

Whilst the school grounds are accessible to the community, the building has not been during mothballing. There have been no requests to utilise the building since it was mothballed and the community commented as part of the survey on the high standard of the village hall and how this meets the community's requirements. There is little community interest in the school transferring to community ownership appendix 2 details the survey response with alternative uses of the building suggested by the community.

Dumfries and Galloway Council recognises that Hutton and Corrie church was recently closed with the proposal to move the building from closure to disposal and the community impact combined with the further mothballing of the school this has on the community.

*“Bus transport is only four times a day, so it can be socially isolating for young families to live here if they don't have a car.”*

*“Affordable housing to buy is rare in this area. Most of it is rented or expensive to buy. If sadly the school closed, it would be nice to see it used in this way. We already have a village hall so to turn it into a community hub would be nugatory.”*

*“The Church is also under threat of closure. The village hall has a high standard of repair and meets most of the community’s requirements. The local community could not support three similar buildings.”*

### 9.4.2 Travel arrangements

There is no change to the travel arrangements that are currently in place nor to the environmental impact from these. If consideration was given over splitting the catchment area due to the scale and the rurality there would be alternative arrangements made in line with Dumfries and Galloway Council school transport policy. The travel distance from Hutton Primary School to Applegarth Primary School is 6.2 miles via the B723. Travel time is approximately 11 minutes (Source: Google Maps).

The travel distance from Eskdalemuir to Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School are detailed in Figure 11 below for comparison.

**Figure 11**

		Distance	Journey Time
Eskdalemuir	Applegarth Primary School	13.4 miles	22 mins
Eskdalemuir	Langholm Primary School	12.9 miles	22 mins

(Source: Google Maps)

It is recognised that there is a significant portion of the catchment area north of Eskdalemuir. Splitting the catchment area between Hutton Primary School and Applegarth Primary School does not mitigate against the journey times, families in this area are currently split in terms of numbers attending Applegarth Primary School or Langholm Primary School.

The travel arrangements have been in place since August 2020. The closure of Hutton Primary School would have little effect on current staff travel.

If the catchment area was split between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School, the current transport arrangements that are in place for Hutton Primary School catchment pupils in attendance at Applegarth Primary School would be honoured along with any subsequent siblings.

## **9.5 Educational Benefits**

Curriculum for Excellence recognises the unique communities and contexts in which all our schools sit. It recognises the professionalism of Headteachers and their teams and allows them the flexibility to design a coherent curriculum that develops the knowledge, skills and attributes that their young learners need to adapt, think critically and flourish in an ever-changing global society. Individual Headteachers and schools are empowered to design and provide an enriched curriculum that is flexible, adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of individual learners and one which reflects the uniqueness of their local community and their context.

Applegarth and Hutton Primary Schools are both accessible rural schools (Scottish Government classification) and within eight miles of their local secondary school, Lockerbie Academy. Children from Hutton Primary School, attending Applegarth Primary School continue to benefit from a curriculum design which supports their rural location and the skills and attributes to meet their individual needs and rural context. Outdoor learning is a key feature of curricular design at Applegarth Primary School.

Applegarth Primary School consists of two multi-composite classes where children are with peers from more than one year group. The children benefit from a social context where they can build relationships, develop social skills, exercise responsibilities, meet challenges and develop resilience as members of a wider social group. They have the opportunity to influence the direction of the school and their learning experiences through a range of groups and pupil committees. At each stage in Applegarth Primary School there is more than one pupil. As a result, they are able to build relationships with peers which in turn can support their transition into secondary education.

Langholm Primary School sits within the Langholm Academy 2-18 campus. Langholm Primary Schools is classified as remote rural (Scottish Government classification). It currently has 159 pupils divided between its seven classes. The school also incorporates its own Early Learning and Childcare setting. The 2-18 campus, Nursery, Primary and Secondary, are overseen by a single Headteacher supported by a leadership team of Depute Head Teachers, Principal Teachers and Managers. All-through schools like Langholm Academy are recognised as supporting highly effective transitions at every stage of a young person's educational journey. They are well placed to ensure pace, challenge and progression through a consistent, well-planned curriculum and approach to learning and teaching. The cross-sectoral working supports the learning of all young people, and the curriculum is responsive to their geographical, cultural and social contexts.

## **9.6 Summary**

Respondents to the survey had differing opinions to the closure of Hutton Primary School. The majority, 19 respondents (56%) wanted the school to reopen for their families and the community; others accepted that such low numbers did not make the school viable now and into the future. A small number of respondents 18% (6 respondents) to the survey were in favour of Hutton Primary School closing, a further 15% did not specify they were in favour of closure however they wanted Hutton Primary School to have an alternative use, in order for the building to have an alternative use the school would need to go through the statutory consultation process in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

Five current families were split in their preference over the future of Hutton Primary School, with two in favour of closure and three in favour of reopening.

The community has mixed views on the future use of the building but are clear that there is little appetite to take on an additional building over and above the current village hall, which meets most of the needs of the community.

The travel distance from Hutton Primary School to Applegarth Primary School is 6.2 miles via the B723. Travel time is approximately 11 minutes (Source: Google Maps). Whilst the travel distance from Hutton Primary School to Langholm Primary School is a greater distance, for those living in or north of Eskdalemuir there are similar travel times to both Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School. Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School currently accommodate pupils from Hutton Primary School, the school rolls of both Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School are not expected to rise and therefore have the capacity to continue to accommodate the projected pupil numbers from Hutton Primary Schools catchment area.

At Applegarth Primary School, children benefit from a curriculum design which supports their rural location and the skills and attributes to meet their individual needs and rural context. Outdoor learning is a key feature of curricular design at Applegarth Primary School. In addition, there are more opportunities for personal and social development. Whilst Langholm Primary School provides a larger Primary School it is recognised that all-through schools like Langholm Academy are highly effective transitions at every stage of a young person's educational journey. They are well placed to ensure pace, challenge and progression through a consistent, well-planned curriculum and approach to learning and teaching.

This has been identified as a reasonable option for further consideration.

## **10.0 Conclusion**

Four alternative options have been reviewed in considering the future of Hutton Primary School. For each option, information was collated, and consideration given to:

- Community feedback;
- Pupil numbers;
- Financial Information;
- Assessment of rural actors, including community impact, and travel arrangements, and
- Educational benefits.

An authority that is formulating a rural school closure proposal must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended before starting to prepare its proposal paper.

After consideration of the preliminary requirements, as set out in the Act, and the options, and having regard to the specific reasons identified in this report closing Hutton Primary School and realigning its catchment area is the most reasonable option in order to address the reasons for the possible proposal. Given the travel times and distances from Eskdalemuir to both Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School and that families in this area are split as to which school



their children attend, the options for realigning the catchment area will be explored further as part of the Statutory Consultation process.

Members are asked to:

- Note the community engagement undertaken.
- Note the outcome of academic session 2024/25 enrolment and transfer opportunity.
- Agree to the commencement of the Statutory Consultation process for the closure of Hutton Primary School.

These recommendations will go to Education and Learning Committee on 14 March 2024.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Public Meeting 1: Summary**

On 5 September 2023, a public meeting was held at Boreland Village Hall.

The meeting was an open meeting with catchment families, community councils and elected members directly contacted to advise them in advance of the meeting, the local community councils also posted information on social media.

The meeting was facilitated by 5 Education and Learning Council Officers and attended by 17 community members, including 4 parents. 2 elected members, 1 ward officer and the current head teacher for the partnership were also in attendance.

Following introductions a presentation was given covering the following areas:

- Outline of Engagement
- Background Information
  - National and regional context
  - Demographics
- Hutton Primary School
  - Catchment Area
  - Pupil Projections
- Survey Questions
  - Demographics
  - The future of Hutton Primary School

Three small groups were formed and discussions were facilitated by Education and Learning Directorate Officers.

The meeting was brought to a close.

## Appendix 2

### Online Survey Summary

An online survey was available between 5 September until 22 September 2023, paper copies were made available at the public meeting as well as information on how to write directly to Education and Learning Directorate.

All comments have been analysed and redacted to prevent identification of any individuals and are summarised below:

#### **Demographics**

- 34 responses total, 31 living in Hutton Catchment
  - 24 community members/former Hutton Primary parents
  - 8 parent/carers with school/pre school age children (including unborn children)
  - 1 former staff member
  - 1 Community Council representative

#### **Parent/carers with school/pre school age children**

- 8 parent/carers responded, representing 11 school/pre-school children, and 2 babies due in the next few months
- Of these children and expected babies, 8 pupils would enroll at Hutton, giving a maximum roll of 5 pupils in 2028/29
- Of these children and expected babies, 5 pupils would not be enrolled at Hutton.
- It is recognised that this response does not represent all children/babies living in the catchment area. A survey of all known primary aged pupils living in the catchment area, as well as children who were enrolled in Hutton (non-catchment) at the point of mothballing was carried out in Spring 2023. 3 returns were received, all indicating preferred enrollment in Hutton. These families have also returned this survey, also indicated preferred enrollment in Hutton, and are therefore already included in these numbers.

Academic Year	Age 0	Age 1	Age 2	N4	N5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
2024/25	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	4
2025/26		2	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3
2026/27			2	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3
2027/28				2	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	4
2028/29					2	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	4
2029/30						2	0	2	0	0	0	1	5

Of those who indicated they would enrol their child/children at Hutton, the following reasons were given:

- Easier to transport children/attend school (non-driving family)
- Desires a small, village primary school with strong community and pupil/staff relationships

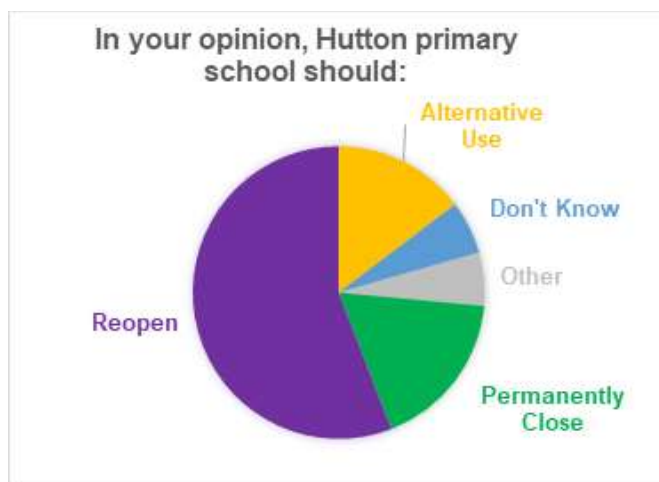
- School attended by parents
- Closest school so reduced travel times

Of those who indicated they would not enroll their child/children at Hutton, the following reasons were given:

- Prefer children to have a larger number of children to play with, so they can get a break from each other.
- Not enough pupils for it to be viable.

## Stakeholder Views on the Future of Hutton Primary School

Question: In your opinion should Hutton Primary School?



56% want Hutton to reopen  
 18% want Hutton to permanently close  
 15% want Hutton to have an alternative use  
 6% don't know  
 6% other  
 0% Continue Mothballing

Question: Is there anything you think Dumfries and Galloway Council could do to encourage families to enroll at Hutton Primary School and help the school to reopen?

There were a range of comments to this question, which are listed below –

- Show an interest for the school and show family's how good the school is
- A head teacher who cares about each child and listens also work with the village and treat all school the same
- They could use this as an opportunity to look at rural education and how best to provide it. Look at other models of education, like steiner schools. Perhaps make Hutton an exception. and investigate a new and exciting model of education. Or engage families to get involved. If this was a dynamic and forward thinking example of education then it would draw families in. Eskdalemuir is already categorised as remote rural. It has 2 home schooled children. Due to issues of schooling. The distances children have to travel to school especially in winter. It is not idea. Eskdalemuir is trying to develop its community and it needs a local school and that is Hutton. So please investigate an alternative education model might attract more forward thinking parents to the area. Make the school an attraction for families.
- Deliver enough social housing for families to be able to raise their families

- The currently enrolled children's parents have indicated that they want their children to be enrolled at Applegarth rather than re-open Hutton. On that basis trying to re-open Hutton school in the short term would be difficult. To continue to mothball the school in the hope that future increase in community would change the demographics isn't a medium term option that is based on reality. Unfortunately closure of the school is the only realistic option based on the current situation.
- Clear communication to families - taxi arrangements - support for staff so two members of teaching staff on permanent contracts with a teaching assistant rota. Fridays at Applegarth for STEM/PE as was the previous arrangement
- The pupils could go to Applegarth school once or twice a week if necessary, so the children get to mix with another school, more children to interact with and build their social skills and they get the use of the woodland area that Applegarth have as part of school grounds.
- I think all the local kids would enroll as country schools are great for the community.
- To work with the wind farms to provide affordable housing for families
- Hire teachers that are willing and able to stay at the school to create some stability and put money into resources for the school (for example, new books, playground equipment)
- Employ a headteacher who is there for a long term not the ones looking to further their careers by starting out as a headteacher of a small school then moving on to a larger one
- Local families already want the school to reopen!
- Allow people to enroll if they are out of catchment, recruit enough staff and include ASN children/staff
- If it doesn't reopen it encourages more families to homeschool because of the distance which in turn may lead to more school closures. Perhaps parents in the Applegarth catchment area could be offered a choice.
- Not to provide free transportation to Applegarth
- Times have moved on - people can travel easier now and there aren't enough pupils to justify it. Children need socialisation and peers as well as a sense of stability. Having different experiences and staff is essential.
- Parents must feel they cannot choose Hutton School as it is not open. A decision to open gives a full choice. Dumgal could say 'yes, its open, how many will enrol?' then they would know.
- Why shut 1 that is in the heart of a village to keep 1 where every 1 has to drive to. Question is Hutton has about 10 living in walking distance and with in the catchment how many is in catchment for Applegarth I hear it's only 4 so why not close Applegarth and then kids can go to other local schools with in their catchment
- I don't think there is much Council can do, there's not jobs or houses available to encourage younger people to the area.
- Its time has passed
- To ask for expressions of interest within the community as an alternative option to Lockerbie Primary which can be often full to capacity. Some parents/carers want their children to have a village school experience (it was certainly one of the main reasons we moved into the area as)
- I don't think so

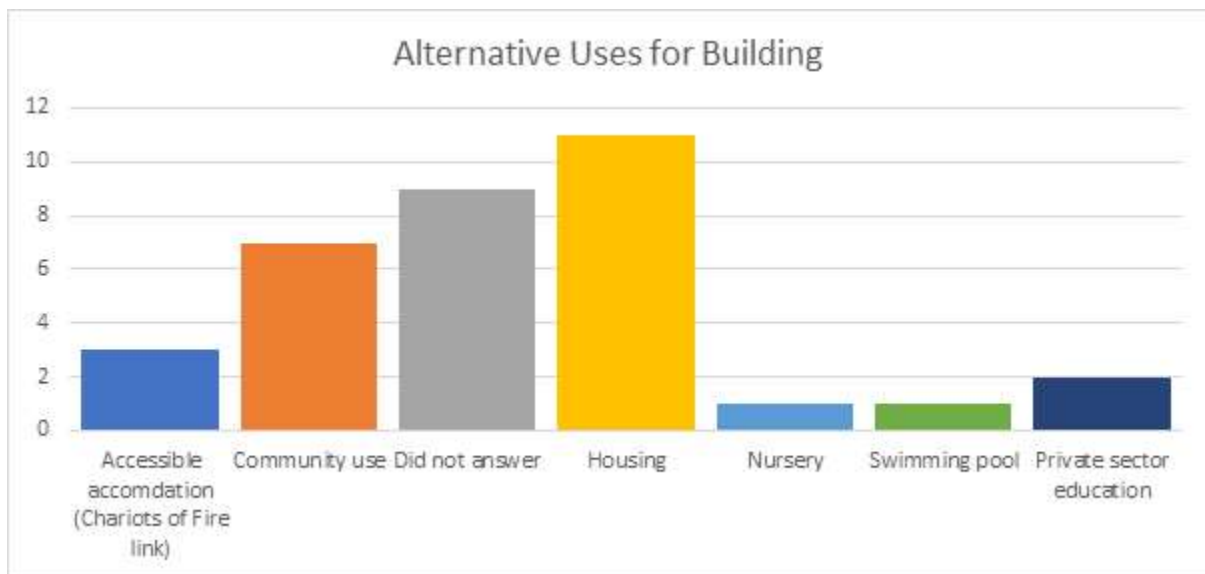
- Redo of all interior decor to freshen it up. Arrange open days. Get extra curricular activities in place for the children.
- Have an active engaging open event for school age families at the school.
- As there are only 3 children registered to attend Hutton and only 3 or 4 possible pupils, that is not feasible.

Question: If a decision was taken to close Hutton Primary School, where should the Hutton Primary School catchment be realigned to?

- Most (44%) respondents indicated a split between Applegarth/Langholm would be their preference, with Applegarth Primary being the next most popular option (29%).
- Lockerbie Primary was suggested by 9% of respondents.
- One stakeholder suggested that an Applegarth/Johnstonebridge split should be considered.

Question: If a decision was taken to close Hutton Primary School, do you have any suggestions on the future of Hutton Primary School, including potential alternative uses for the building?

The respondents to this question, suggested a range of alternative uses as can be seen below –



Question: Please detail below any other significant factors impacting the local communities of Hutton Primary School that Dumfries and Galloway Council should be made aware of.

Responses to this question were as follows –

- The closure of Hutton and Corrie church is ongoing.
- The impact of traffic on the village, lots of lorries for the forestry projects.
- There has been little investment in housing recently. The Forestry Commission built housing in Boreland in 60/70/80s for their workers.

- There are numerous windfarms in the planning stage which may bring funding to the local communities – however, we have been down this track numerous times before and nothing has happened.
- There is a lack of parking in the village – this would need to be carefully considered if the school building was designated for an alternative use.
- Eskdalemuir / Davington children have a long commute to school (Applegarth) and back home - which is a lot of P3-6 children.
- Ongoing transport issues to Applegarth
- There is planning for another 6 homes at Fir View.
- Other local closures should be considered to address the large catchment area.
- The village hall is a high quality community facility – it would be difficult to support another one.
- Bus transport is only 4 times a day. There is a lack of transportation opportunities for parents to attend Applegarth school for emergency collections/appointments.
- If the school were to reopen it would reduce the transport costs.
- The community is static as it is mostly farms which are passed on. It is easier to take children into Lockerbie as this is an established transport route and is in the town.

## Appendix 3

### Public Meeting 2: Summary

On 10 October 2023, a public meeting was held at Boreland Village Hall.

The meeting was an open meeting with catchment families, community councils and elected members directly contacted to advise them in advance of the meeting, the local community councils also posted information on social media.

The meeting was facilitated by 4 Education and Learning Council Officers and attended by 17 community members, including 4 parents. 1 elected member was also in attendance.

Following introductions, a presentation was given detailing the responses received to the survey.

Officers sought clarification as to a housing development of 6 units, but no additional information was established.

Next Steps – Officers proposed 2 options:

- Open enrolment/transfer in January 2024 for academic year 2024/25
- Statutory Consultation on closure

One option was progressed in agreement with those present at the meeting, open enrolment and transfer, the subsequent steps in this process are as follows;

- Open enrolment/transfer in January 2024 (for August 2024 start) – parents can submit enrolment forms for new P1s, as well as transfer forms for pupils currently attending elsewhere.
  - If more than 10 catchment pupils enrol, the process to staff the school and reopen the building for August 2024 will commence.
  - If 10 or fewer catchment pupils enrol, the school will not meet the threshold to reopen. At this point, a move to a consultation on Permanent Closure will be considered.

Comments from the community that were subsequently followed up by Education and Learning Directorate Officers:

- The Rag Bag Collection Box adjacent to Boreland Village Hall used to return monies for Hutton Primary School and no one in the community is aware of where the monies are now going – Officers confirmed that the monies are now received by Applegarth Primary School and if the community wishes to change this, further discussion will be required between the community, Applegarth Primary School (and/or Parent Council) and Rag Bag.
- 20 MPH flashing school sign continues to flash despite the school being mothballed – issue escalated to the roads department – Officers update d the community and thanked them for bringing this to the attention of Officers.

The meeting was brought to a close.



## Appendix 4

### Public Meeting 3: Summary

On 10 October 2023, a public meeting was held at Boreland Village Hall.

The meeting was an open meeting with catchment families, community councils and elected members directly contacted to advise them in advance of the meeting.

The meeting was facilitated by 2 Education and Learning Council Officers and attended by 11 community members, including 7 primary and pre-school parents. 2 elected members were also in attendance along with the Head Teacher from Applegarth Primary School and Nethermill Primary School.

Following introductions, a presentation was given detailing the engagement to date and the next steps agreed at the meeting on 10 October 2023.

The next steps were:

- Open enrolment/transfer in January 2024 for academic year 2024/25
- Statutory Consultation on closure

The outcome from the enrolment and transfer opportunity was discussed, with a roll of four pupils for August 2024, with no Primary 1 enrolments.

Those present were made aware that officers will be taking a recommendation Education and Learning Committee on 14 March 2024 for members to agree the commencement of the statutory consultation process for the closure of Hutton Primary School in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. Officers explained the process and the steps Dumfries and Galloway Council must take in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

Officers opened up the meeting for questions.

Q - How long will the consultation process last?

A – Approx 7 months depending on committee cycles and the requirements of the act.

Q – Why are all families in the Hutton Primary School catchment area entitled to transport even those that chose to go there prior to the school being closed?

A – When a school is temporarily closed a temporary catchment school is identified and as a result all families become entitled to transport.

Q – Why are not all families in receipt of transport?

A – All families in the Hutton Primary School catchment area that are attending Applegarth Primary School are entitled to transport, if anyone is not, please speak to officers.

Q – Why do I have to enrol into Hutton Primary School every year? I didn't know I had to; can you just assume all families want to go back?

A – Because Hutton Primary School is temporarily closed all the pupils have transferred to Applegarth Primary School's SEEMiS data. Over the years families have been approached by the previous Head Teacher, through targeted surveys and this year through various communication channels to establish the preference for returning. It is not assumed that all families want to return as some have expressed that they do not want to. We cannot make the assumption either way.

Q – What is the roll at Applegarth Primary School?

A – 39

Q – Please can the flashing 20 mph lights be turned off?

A – Education and Learning Officers previously escalated this but will do so again as will the Head Teacher of Applegarth Primary School.

Q – Please can the hedge be cut between the school and my property?

A – Education and Learning Officers will escalate this to the grounds maintenance team.

Q – Does anyone here want the school to close?

A - Officers suggested that those present may not feel comfortable answering this question in a public forum. It was shared that as part of the survey a number of respondents supported the closure.

Q – What reason did they give for wanting the school closed?

A – Viability, number of families in the area, wanting children to attend a larger school, more social interactions.

Information was shared regarding the Scottish Government guide for families and communities in relation to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

The meeting was brought to a close.

## SUMMARY SHEET SUMMARY OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IA)

Policy	Review of Education Provision – Hutton Primary School	Date of process	April 2024
Lead service	Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing	Contact person for process	Louise Rae – School Estate Specialist

### Names of those involved in process

John Thin – Head of Education Resources  
 Louise Rae – School Estate Specialist  
 Steven Wylie – Ward Worker

### Summary of IA

The Council is required to publish the findings and results of all IAs conducted. The publication should include a summary of the following:

<p><b>Research and data (section 3)</b>          What was used to assess the impact of the policy and a summary of the findings? Who was involved and consulted during the assessment stage? What were the findings from the consultation and how was this information used to develop the policy?</p>	<p>There has been extensive pre-engagement with the communities of Hutton Primary School. A report was presented to Education and Learning Committee on 14 March 2024 with regard to this and the findings of this process - <a href="https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/ie/ListDocuments.aspx?CId=549&amp;MId=5909&amp;Ver=4">https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/ie/ListDocuments.aspx?CId=549&amp;MId=5909&amp;Ver=4</a> Item 8.</p> <p>The consultation period in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended will run from 24 April 2024 – 7 June 2024. In this time period consultees are invited to make representation (an online survey is also available) and attend a public meeting held on 21 May 2024 Borland Village Hall at 6pm.</p>
<p><b>Impact Assessment (section 4)</b>          From the summary table at number 25 list the impacts.</p>	<p>Positive Impact(s) – 3 (Disability, Human Rights and Health &amp; Wellbeing &amp; Health Inequalities)          No Impact(s) – 9 (Age, Sex, Gender reassignment and Transgender, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sexual orientation and Environmental Sustainability, Climate Change and Energy Management)          Negative Impact(s) – 1 (Economic &amp; Social Sustainability)</p>
<p><b>Monitoring and review (section 5)</b>          How is the policy to be monitored - how often and by whom?</p>	<p>Pupil demographics are monitored on a twice-yearly basis (census and Primary 1 enrolment).          If the proposal is implemented there will be no review.</p>

### Summary of actions arising from the Impact Assessment

Transfer details from table at number 26

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
There would be a reduction in a small amount of employment and volunteering opportunities in the village. Access to a Council facility would also be removed, the community asset transfer process has been explained to the community and there is at this stage no appetite for this. This is noted for future reference and action if required.	Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing	January 2025

**Hutton Primary School Statutory Consultation – Response Form**

Dumfries and Galloway Council is proposing, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process, to discontinue education provision at Hutton Primary School which is currently mothballed and:

- re-align its catchment area to Applegarth Primary School or
- split and realign the catchment area between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

It is proposed that education provision at Hutton Primary School be discontinued with effect from 1 January 2025.

The consultation period is from 24 April until 5pm on 7 June 2024

This part of the form must be completed for a valid response:	
Do you agree to your name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report? (Please note all other personal information will be redacted)	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Name: (please print)	Address:
	Post Code:
Signature:	Date:
Please select from the following:	
Parent/Carer <input type="checkbox"/>	Community Organisation <input type="checkbox"/>
Pupil <input type="checkbox"/>	Community Member <input type="checkbox"/>
Member of Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Other: .....

Do you have a primary aged pupil or younger child(ren) affected by the changes to Hutton Primary School in your family?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please detail their year group (or month and year of birth) and the school or nursery (where applicable) they attend below.	

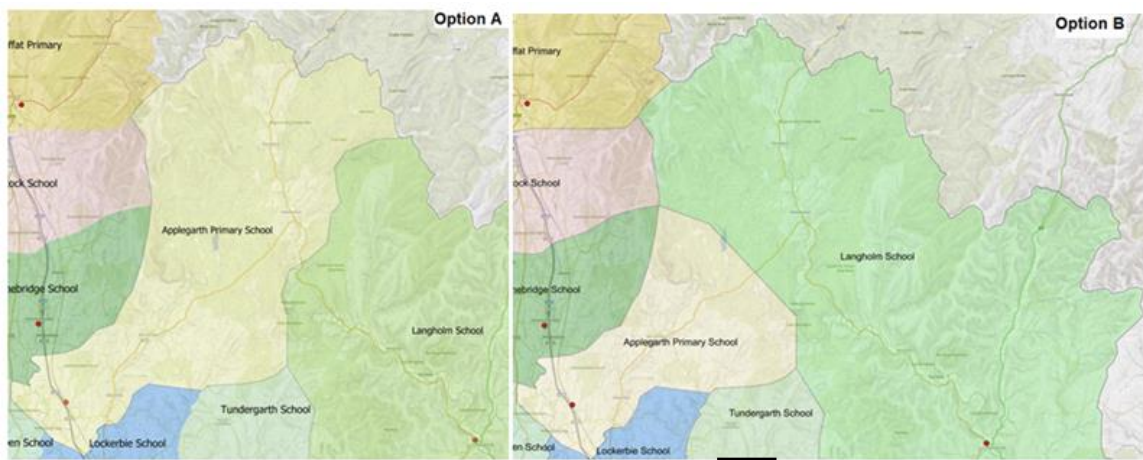
Do you support the closure of Hutton Primary School?

Yes  No

If the closure on Hutton Primary School goes ahead, which option do you prefer for the realignment of the current Hutton Primary School catchment area.

Option A - The existing Hutton Primary School catchment area is realigned in totality to Applegarth Primary School.

Option B - The existing Hutton Primary School catchment area is split (as per the Option B map) and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School.



Option A

Option B

Please state your reasons why this is your preferred option.

Do you have an alternative suggestion for the realignment of the Hutton Primary School catchment area that Dumfries and Galloway Council should take into consideration, if yes, please detail it below.

Please detail below any comments you may have regarding the proposal for the closure of Hutton Primary School (please continue on the reverse if you require additional space).

Please leave your email address below if you would like us to include you in our distribution list regarding the Statutory Consultation of Hutton Primary School.

Please hand any completed forms to a member of Dumfries and Galloway Council staff or return by post or email to:

Statutory Consultation – Hutton Primary School  
Dumfries and Galloway Council  
Militia House  
109/111 English Street  
DG1 2HR

[statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk)

Let us know what you think by 5pm on Friday 7 June 2024.



## View results

Respondent

1

Anonymous

06:09

Time to complete

1

Do you agree to your name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report? (Please note all other personal information will be redacted) \*

Yes

No

2

Please detail your name below. \*

3

Please detail your full address including postcode below. \*

4

Do you live in any of the following catchment areas (please choose one option)?

You can check your catchment area using the Near Me link below and inserting your postcode into the interactive map.

<https://nearme-dumgal.hub.arcgis.com/> \*

- Applegarth Primary School catchment area
- Hutton Primary School catchment area
- Langholm Primary School catchment area
- Elmvale/Cummertrees catchment area

5

Are you \*

- Parent/Carer
- Pupil
- Member of Staff
- Community Organisation
- Community Member
- Other

6

Do you support the closure of Hutton Primary School? \*

Yes

No

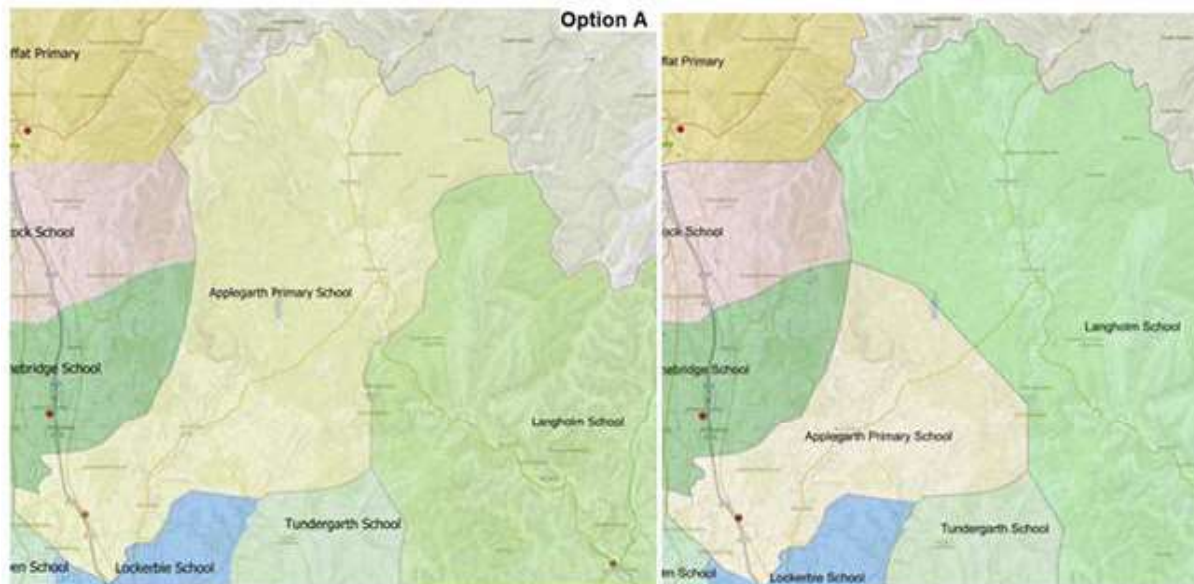
7

If the closure on Hutton Primary School goes ahead, which option do you prefer for the realignment of the current Hutton Primary School catchment area.

Option A - The existing Hutton Primary School catchment area is realigned in totality to Applegarth Primary School.

Option B - The existing Hutton Primary School catchment area is split (as per the Option B map) and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School.

\*



Option A - catchment area realigned to Applegarth Primary School

Option B - catchment area is split and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

8

Please state your reasons why this is your preferred option. \*

To support the social relationships of pupils in the Boreland area without splitting them further. The current delegation works well for pupils.

9

Do you have an alternative suggestion for the realignment of the Hutton Primary School catchment area that Dumfries and Galloway Council should take into consideration, if yes, please detail it below.

10

Please detail below any comments you may have regarding the proposal for the closure of Hutton Primary School.

I believe the pupils of Hutton have benefitted from being part of a bigger school both emotionally, socially and academically. Spanning such small numbers without peers in a year group is not beneficial to the children of Hutton.

11

Please leave your email address below if you would like us to include you in our distribution list regarding the Statutory Consultation of Hutton Primary School.

[REDACTED]

## View results

Respondent

2 Anonymous

03:31

Time to complete

1

Do you agree to your name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report? (Please note all other personal information will be redacted) \*

Yes

No

2

Please detail your name below. \*

3

Please detail your full address including postcode below. \*

4

Do you live in any of the following catchment areas (please choose one option)?

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<https://nearme-dumgal.hub.arcgis.com/> \*

Applegarth Primary School catchment area

Hutton Primary School catchment area

Langholm Primary School catchment area

Other

5

Are you \*

- Parent/Carer
- Pupil
- Member of Staff
- Community Organisation
- Community Member
- Other

6

Do you have a primary aged pupil or younger child(ren) affected by the changes to Hutton Primary School in your family? \*

- Yes
- No

7

Do you support the closure of Hutton Primary School? \*

- Yes
- No

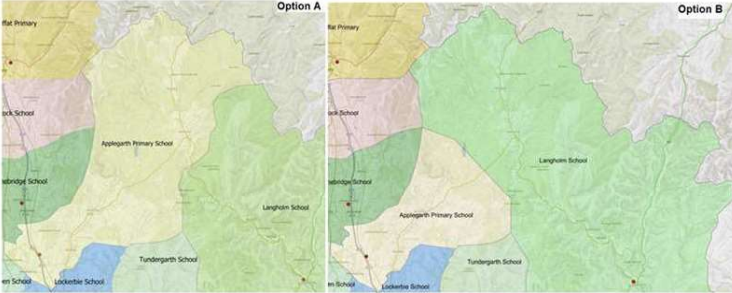
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\*



- Option A - catchment area realigned to Applegarth Primary School
- Option B - catchment area is split and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

9

Please state your reasons why this is your preferred option. \*

The school doesn't need more change.

10

Do you have an alternative suggestion for the realignment of the Hutton Primary School catchment area that Dumfries and Galloway Council should take into consideration, if yes, please detail it below.

11

Please detail below any comments you may have regarding the proposal for the closure of Hutton Primary School.

12

Please leave your email address below if you would like us to include you in our distribution list regarding the Statutory Consultation of Hutton Primary School.

## View results

Respondent

5 Anonymous

08:27

Time to complete

1

Do you agree to your name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report? (Please note all other personal information will be redacted) \*

Yes

No

2

Please detail your name below. \*

3

Please detail your full address including postcode below. \*

4

Do you live in any of the following catchment areas (please choose one option)?

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<https://nearme-dumgal.hub.arcgis.com/> \*

Applegarth Primary School catchment area

Hutton Primary School catchment area

Langholm Primary School catchment area

Other



5

Are you \*

- Parent/Carer
- Pupil
- Member of Staff
- Community Organisation
- Community Member
- Other

6

Do you have a primary aged pupil or younger child(ren) affected by the changes to Hutton Primary School in your family? \*

- Yes
- No

7

Please detail their year group (or month and year of birth) and the school or nursery (where applicable) they attend below. \*

8

Do you support the closure of Hutton Primary School? \*

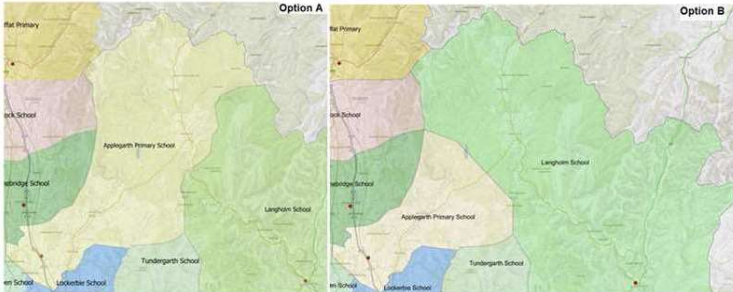
- Yes
- No

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\*



- Option A - catchment area realigned to Applegarth Primary School
- Option B - catchment area is split and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

10

Please state your reasons why this is your preferred option. \*

This option creates social connections between Applegarth and Langholm which is good but I am hesitant about it it splits us local children too and will be more awkward for travel and carpool for parents. It's important for kids to have their school friends nearby if possible. I would like Hutton to stay open, there is enough children coming into the village to do so and more people will move and need a school!

11

Do you have an alternative suggestion for the realignment of the Hutton Primary School catchment area that Dumfries and Galloway Council should take into consideration, if yes, please detail it below.

Keep Hutton open, encourage families to move to the village and bring some life here. Furthermore the wind farm money is not accessible to the school groups at Applegarth and Langholm; this is such a waste of funds which could be used by Hutton children for a wide array of exciting and horizon expanding opportunities and adventures! Putting local kids in catch 22 without access to these funds or friendly support to access Lockerbie or Langholm equivalent funding pots is such a shame and drags enthusiasm down.

12

Please detail below any comments you may have regarding the proposal for the closure of Hutton Primary School.

I attended the school myself and would be heartbroken if it closed for good. It's a resource to have a local school, it would be sad for Boreland just to function as a retirement village, the place has more to give than that! It would be amazing for social housing to be built here and a boom in community spirit.

Please leave your email address below if you would like us to include you in our distribution list regarding the Statutory Consultation of Hutton Primary School.

## View results

Respondent

6 Anonymous

07:42

Time to complete

1

Do you agree to your name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report? (Please note all other personal information will be redacted) \*

Yes

No

2

Please detail your name below. \*

3

Please detail your full address including postcode below. \*

4

Do you live in any of the following catchment areas (please choose one option)?

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<https://nearme-dumgal.hub.arcgis.com/> \*

Applegarth Primary School catchment area

Hutton Primary School catchment area

Langholm Primary School catchment area

Other

5

Are you \*

- Parent/Carer
- Pupil
- Member of Staff
- Community Organisation
- Community Member
- Other

6

Do you have a primary aged pupil or younger child(ren) affected by the changes to Hutton Primary School in your family? \*

- Yes
- No

7

Please detail their year group (or month and year of birth) and the school or nursery (where applicable) they attend below. \*

8

Do you support the closure of Hutton Primary School? \*

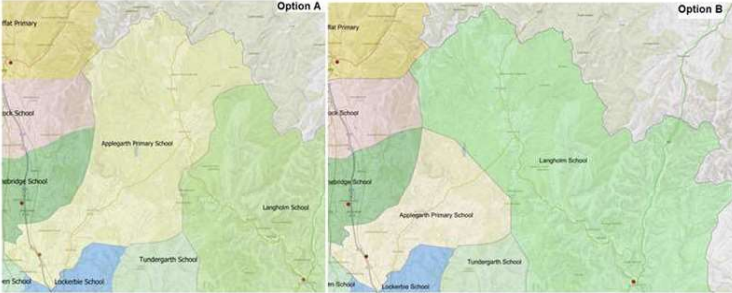
- Yes
- No

If the closure on Hutton Primary School goes ahead, which option do you prefer for the realignment of the current Hutton Primary School catchment area.

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\*



- Option A - catchment area realigned to Applegarth Primary School
- Option B - catchment area is split and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

10

Please state your reasons why this is your preferred option. \*

Langholm is closer for us over Applegarth and the catchment area for Eskdalemuir used to be Langholm before Lockerbie. Langholm is our postal town. I also think it's always better to give as many options as possible especially when we are so far from the towns.

11

Do you have an alternative suggestion for the realignment of the Hutton Primary School catchment area that Dumfries and Galloway Council should take into consideration, if yes, please detail it below.

I would have thought Lockerbie would be closer over Applegarth for children in the Hutton district.

12

Please detail below any comments you may have regarding the proposal for the closure of Hutton Primary School.

Good that you are having this consultation

13

Please leave your email address below if you would like us to include you in our distribution list regarding the Statutory Consultation of Hutton Primary School.

[Redacted]

## View results

Respondent

7 Anonymous

03:36

Time to complete

1

Do you agree to your name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report? (Please note all other personal information will be redacted) \*

Yes

No

2

Please detail your name below. \*

[Redacted]

3

Please detail your full address including postcode below. \*

[Redacted]

4

Do you live in any of the following catchment areas (please choose one option)?

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<https://nearme-dumgal.hub.arcgis.com/> \*

Applegarth Primary School catchment area

Hutton Primary School catchment area

Langholm Primary School catchment area

Other

5

Are you \*

- Parent/Carer
- Pupil
- Member of Staff
- Community Organisation
- Community Member
- Other

6

Do you have a primary aged pupil or younger child(ren) affected by the changes to Hutton Primary School in your family? \*

- Yes
- No

7

Please detail their year group (or month and year of birth) and the school or nursery (where applicable) they attend below. \*

8

Do you support the closure of Hutton Primary School? \*

- Yes
- No

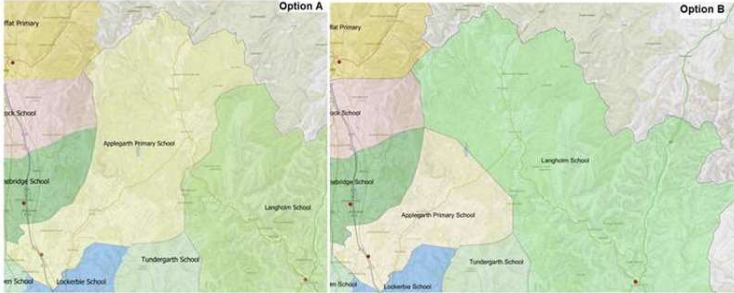


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\*



- Option A - catchment area realigned to Applegarth Primary School
- Option B - catchment area is split and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

10

Please state your reasons why this is your preferred option. \*

Personal reasons that I would prefer my children to go to Lockerbie for childcare etc

11

Do you have an alternative suggestion for the realignment of the Hutton Primary School catchment area that Dumfries and Galloway Council should take into consideration, if yes, please detail it below.

I think Lockerbie Primary should be considered due to better road, and more options in and around Lockerbie

12

Please detail below any comments you may have regarding the proposal for the closure of Hutton Primary School.

N/a

13

Please leave your email address below if you would like us to include you in our distribution list regarding the Statutory Consultation of Hutton Primary School.

## View results

Respondent

9 Anonymous

03:58

Time to complete

1

Do you agree to your name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report? (Please note all other personal information will be redacted) \*

Yes

No

2

Please detail your name below. \*

3

Please detail your full address including postcode below. \*

4

Do you live in any of the following catchment areas (please choose one option)?

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Applegarth Primary School catchment area

Hutton Primary School catchment area

Langholm Primary School catchment area

Other

5

Are you \*

- Parent/Carer
- Pupil
- Member of Staff
- Community Organisation
- Community Member
- Other

6

Do you have a primary aged pupil or younger child(ren) affected by the changes to Hutton Primary School in your family? \*

- Yes
- No

7

Please detail their year group (or month and year of birth) and the school or nursery (where applicable) they attend below. \*

8

Do you support the closure of Hutton Primary School? \*

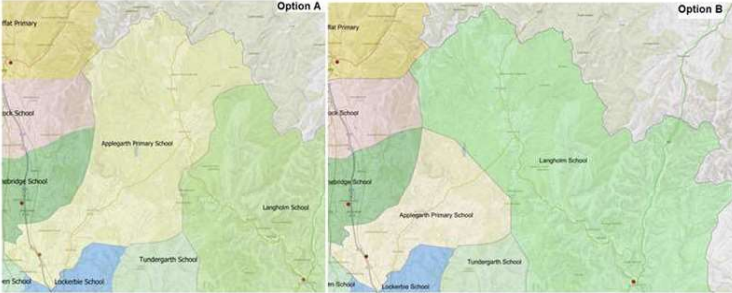
- Yes
- No

If the closure on Hutton Primary School goes ahead, which option do you prefer for the realignment of the current Hutton Primary School catchment area.

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\*



- Option A - catchment area realigned to Applegarth Primary School
- Option B - catchment area is split and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

10

Please state your reasons why this is your preferred option. \*

Because it is like that now and no need to change what is working

11

Do you have an alternative suggestion for the realignment of the Hutton Primary School catchment area that Dumfries and Galloway Council should take into consideration, if yes, please detail it below.

No

12

Please detail below any comments you may have regarding the proposal for the closure of Hutton Primary School.

Should never have shut the school in the first place during covid

13

Please leave your email address below if you would like us to include you in our distribution list regarding the Statutory Consultation of Hutton Primary School.

[Redacted email address]

## View results

Respondent

10

Anonymous

09:16

Time to complete

1

Do you agree to your name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report? (Please note all other personal information will be redacted) \*

Yes

No

2

Please detail your name below. \*

3

Please detail your full address including postcode below. \*

4

Do you live in any of the following catchment areas (please choose one option)?

You can check your catchment area using the Near Me link below and inserting your postcode into the interactive map.

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Applegarth Primary School catchment area

Hutton Primary School catchment area

Langholm Primary School catchment area

Other

5

Are you \*

- Parent/Carer
- Pupil
- Member of Staff
- Community Organisation
- Community Member
- Other

6

Do you have a primary aged pupil or younger child(ren) affected by the changes to Hutton Primary School in your family? \*

- Yes
- No

7

Please detail their year group (or month and year of birth) and the school or nursery (where applicable) they attend below. \*

8

Do you support the closure of Hutton Primary School? \*

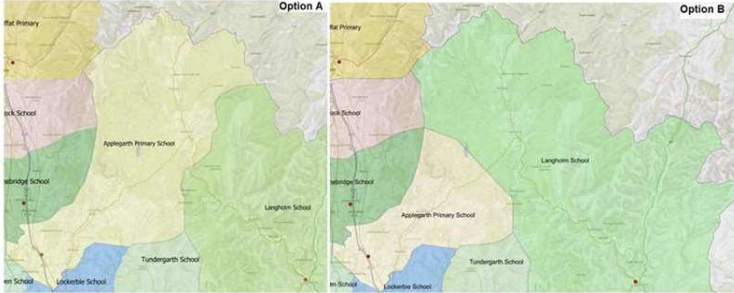
- Yes
- No

If the closure on Hutton Primary School goes ahead, which option do you prefer for the realignment of the current Hutton Primary School catchment area.

Option A - The existing Hutton Primary School catchment area is realigned in totality to Applegarth Primary School.

Option B - The existing Hutton Primary School catchment area is split (as per the Option B map) and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School.

\*



- Option A - catchment area realigned to Applegarth Primary School
- Option B - catchment area is split and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

10

Please state your reasons why this is your preferred option. \*

To keep school roll high

11

Do you have an alternative suggestion for the realignment of the Hutton Primary School catchment area that Dumfries and Galloway Council should take into consideration, if yes, please detail it below.

It working at present so why change it

12

Please detail below any comments you may have regarding the proposal for the closure of Hutton Primary School.

Applegarth is not accessible by public transport so parents who can't drive have NO way of getting to school other than asking for lifts every time there's an event on.

13

Please leave your email address below if you would like us to include you in our distribution list regarding the Statutory Consultation of Hutton Primary School.

## View results

Respondent

11 Anonymous

91:09

Time to complete

1

Do you agree to your name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report? (Please note all other personal information will be redacted) \*

Yes

No

2

Please detail your name below. \*

3

Please detail your full address including postcode below. \*

4

Do you live in any of the following catchment areas (please choose one option)?

You can check your catchment area using the Near Me link below and inserting your postcode into the interactive map.

<https://nearme-dumgal.hub.arcgis.com/> \*

Applegarth Primary School catchment area

Hutton Primary School catchment area

Langholm Primary School catchment area

Other



5

Are you \*

- Parent/Carer
- Pupil
- Member of Staff
- Community Organisation
- Community Member
- Other

6

Do you have a primary aged pupil or younger child(ren) affected by the changes to Hutton Primary School in your family? \*

- Yes
- No

7

Please detail their year group (or month and year of birth) and the school or nursery (where applicable) they attend below. \*

8

Do you support the closure of Hutton Primary School? \*

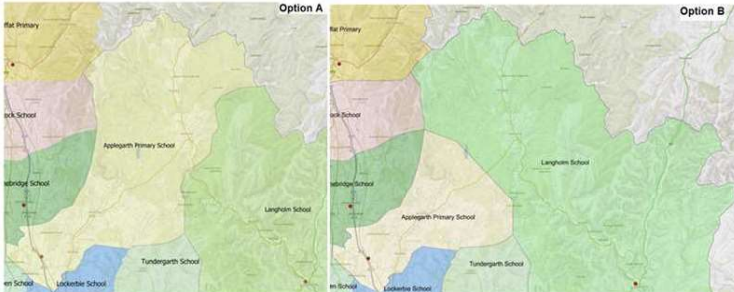
- Yes
- No

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Option B - The existing Hutton Primary School catchment area is split (as per the Option B map) and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School.

\*



- Option A - catchment area realigned to Applegarth Primary School
- Option B - catchment area is split and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

10

Please state your reasons why this is your preferred option. \*

I don't believe I have the right to answer this question as either way I fall in the Applegarth catchment area. I believe only parents of pupils in the Eskdalemuir area should have the right to answer this question. I do believe that pupils currently travelling from that area should be allowed to stay with their current classmates and not be forced to change schools because of transport arrangements.

11

Do you have an alternative suggestion for the realignment of the Hutton Primary School catchment area that Dumfries and Galloway Council should take into consideration, if yes, please detail it below.

If the realignment is split then the boundary should move closer to Eskdalemuir. I know there are currently no houses there but if houses were to be built in the future they should be aligned with Applegarth.

12

Please detail below any comments you may have regarding the proposal for the closure of Hutton Primary School.

Google map times given in the proposal are only accurate for part of the year. In late winter and spring the potholes are horrendous and add significantly to journey times. By closing the school you may be forcing some families to choose homeschooling as the travel times are so long. I would also like to highlight the lack of public transport to Applegarth school and that this may affect non driving parents significantly when it comes to parents evenings and sports days.

Please leave your email address below if you would like us to include you in our distribution list regarding the Statutory Consultation of Hutton Primary School.

## View results

Respondent

12 Anonymous

08:14

Time to complete

1

Do you agree to your name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report? (Please note all other personal information will be redacted) \*

Yes

No

2

Please detail your name below. \*

3

Please detail your full address including postcode below. \*

4

Do you live in any of the following catchment areas (please choose one option)?

You can check your catchment area using the Near Me link below and inserting your postcode into the interactive map.

<https://nearme-dumgal.hub.arcgis.com/> \*

Applegarth Primary School catchment area

Hutton Primary School catchment area

Langholm Primary School catchment area

Other

5

Are you \*

- Parent/Carer
- Pupil
- Member of Staff
- Community Organisation
- Community Member
- Other

6

Do you support the closure of Hutton Primary School? \*

- Yes
- No

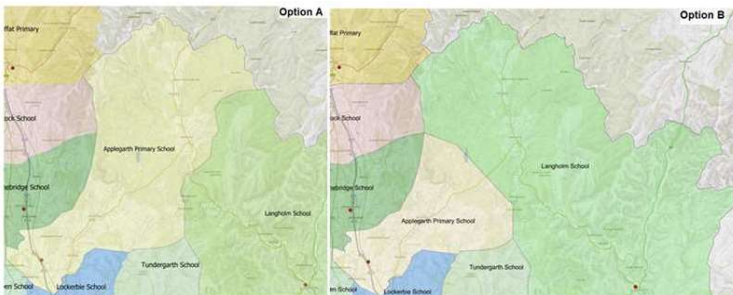
7

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Option B - The existing Hutton Primary School catchment area is split (as per the Option B map) and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School.

\*



- Option A - catchment area realigned to Applegarth Primary School
- Option B - catchment area is split and realigned between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School

8

Please state your reasons why this is your preferred option. \*

Eskdalemuir address is Langholm and years ago it was Langholm Academy that children went to after being at Eskdalemuir primary school.

9

Do you have an alternative suggestion for the realignment of the Hutton Primary School catchment area that Dumfries and Galloway Council should take into consideration, if yes, please detail it below.

Lockerbie Primary School?

10

Please detail below any comments you may have regarding the proposal for the closure of Hutton Primary School.

It's a shame when a primary school closes

11

Please leave your email address below if you would like us to include you in our distribution list regarding the Statutory Consultation of Hutton Primary School.

[Redacted email address]

**PUBLIC MEETING – HUTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL STATUTORY CONSULTATION**

Boreland Village Hall, 21 May 2024, 6pm

**Officers present:** John Thin – Head of Education Resources (JT), Andrea McFarlane Quality – Improvement Officer (AMcF), Louise Rae – School Estate Specialist (LR), Shona McCoy – Team Leader Developing Planning, Elliot Ferguson – Head Teacher Applegarth Primary School and Nethermill Primary School, Gillian Renwick (GR) (notes)

**HM Inspector Education Scotland:** Robert Hynd

**Local Councillor:** Carolyne Wilson

**Stakeholders:** 14

JT welcomed everyone to the meeting and covered housekeeping arrangements. JT introduced Dumfries and Galloway Council Officers present.

JT outlined the process and key aspects of the proposal highlighting the catchment options which were displayed.

LR shared two proposed catchment maps to be considered (these were projected onto the wall).

JT encouraged all stakeholders to make representation and that QR codes and paper copies of the survey at the sign in desk. The views of community members will be recorded through discussion this evening and survey submission available electronically and in paper format. The end of the consultation period was brought to everyone's attention - Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June at 5pm.

JT opened the conversation to the floor.

**Stakeholder:** Expressed frustration at not feeling listened to. It is felt proposed maps leave the catchment area for Applegarth Primary School too big.

**Officer response:** Both proposed catchment maps were explained advising of a two mile difference in travel for pupils.

**Stakeholder:** Said it makes no sense to shut the school in the middle of Applegarth Primary School and Johnstonebridge Primary School. It was questioned why not spread the catchment between Applegarth Primary School, Beattock Primary School and Johnstonebridge Primary School.

**Officer response:** Children who did attend Hutton Primary School have scattered between schools and have not all chosen to attend Applegarth Primary School.

**Stakeholder:** Parent expressed her reasons for their children attending Applegarth Primary School, with concerns around low numbers and social interaction.

**Stakeholder:** The following points were raised;

- There are twins on the boundary and making this journey adds an hour each way on to their day. The roads are not well maintained, this poses potential risk to young children.
- It is felt changes made to the catchment favour rich people who can afford to send children to other schools and attend events such as parents evening and sports days.
- Parents preferred Applegarth Primary School as their catchment, however, numbers do not reflect this .
- The question was raised, where will young blood come from, closing the village school will not attract new families to the area.

**Stakeholder:** Four children attend Applegarth Primary School that live in the catchment area. A local resident responded the reason for this is close links to the motorway. This raised the question around affordability for families to attend sports day and similar events.

**Officer response:** It is personal choice where a parent chooses to enrol their child. If parental choice does not cost the Local Authority resources the request is granted. Next year there are 380 less primary school pupils than this year. We are seeing an evaporation of school pupil numbers.

**Stakeholder:** If Tundergarth Primary is closing in the near future, is it not possible to save one or both of the schools.

**Officer response:** This is a good question, the real question is not about saving schools but are we giving our children the best school experience. Our School Estate Strategy asks the question what is sustainable and is a recommended read.

**Stakeholder:** What is the current role at Applegarth Primary School?

**Officer response:** Redirected the question to Mr Ferguson Head Teacher of Applegarth Primary School, Mr Ferguson confirmed that there are currently 41 children enrolled at Applegarth Primary School.

**Stakeholder:** What happens if Applegarth Primary School numbers reduce.

**Officer response:** Based on birth rate data from the NHS, and applying an adjustment to reflect parental choice, it is predicted there will be a slight reduction in numbers at Applegarth Primary School. By academic year 2027/28 we anticipate a roll of 33 but this does not include Hutton Primary School catchment pupils, which could potentially take this figure to 39.

**Stakeholder:** If the village does not have a school it makes it difficult to attract



young families.

**Officer response:** This is difficult as it is an unknown as to who may want to move to the area.

**Stakeholder:** If the trend continues seen since Covid-19 where employees work from home this could see an increase in families moving to rural locations. Are you prepared for an increase if you are closing rural schools.

**Officer response:** We have not seen the predicted increase in families moving to rural locations. There has been an increase in people buying second homes to renovate or use as AirBnB's.

**Stakeholder:** Explained they were bussed to school in the 70's and 80's and it was a horrible experience. I felt like an outsider, and I know there are four children under five who live at the top end of the bus route. Is this what Education has become, surely there is a better way to get this right for the children.

**Officer response:** Officer thanked member for their comment.

**Stakeholder:** The idea of socialisation in school is so important, but children should not have to travel to school every day for this length of time. If parents do not send their children they will be penalised.

**Officer response:** Flexible schooling is an option whereby 20% of schooling can be done at home.

**Stakeholder:** Do the children want to go to Applegarth Primary School rather than one in the neighbouring Local Authority.

**Officer response:** If it is the personal choice of a parent or carer to choose a school out with Dumfries and Galloway, travel costs would be the responsibility for the family. We have surveyed the children within the catchment and made numerous attempts to circulate a survey in September 2023. Families have been consulted in Applegarth, Hutton and Langholm Primary Schools including families with children due to start school in the next two years. We cannot predict new children but have surveyed all in these catchments enquiring around their choice. The additionality for children travelling is 6.2 miles, and if Hutton Primary School remained open travel time for children remains the same with the exception of 6.2 miles.

**Stakeholder:** Parents struggle to get to Applegarth Primary School by public transport for school events. Could Lockerbie Primary School be considered as an option as it is easier to travel to Lockerbie by public transport.

**Officer Response:** The two options displayed this evening are not set in stone, further options such as Lockerbie Primary School can be suggested through the consultation period. The pupils currently enrolled at Applegarth Primary School from the Hutton Primary School catchment area would continue to have their transport arrangements honoured.

**Stakeholder:** Query raised around the secondary school catchments attached to the maps displayed, where pupils attend either Lockerby Academy or Moffat Academy having previously attended Johnstonebridge Primary School.

**Officer response:** Children who attended a particular primary school, for example Johnstonebridge Primary School, may have requested an out of catchment space at this school. Secondary catchment is linked to your home address and not the primary school you attend.

**Stakeholder:** After everything discussed tonight do you think the school will be closing.

**Officer response:** The proposal paper is consulting on closure, once this phase is complete and Education Scotland have completed their report, a final consultation report will be circulated prior to a decision being made at Education and Learning Committee in October.

**Stakeholder:** The amount of money spent transporting children surely would pay for a teacher.

**Officer response:** It is not about the cost it is about the experiences for our children and young people.

**Stakeholder:** Can you tell us the budget for transporting children to Applegarth Primary School.

**Officer response:** Total cost to transport entitled children too and from Applegarth Primary School is £82,764.

**Stakeholder:** Is this figure mainly children from Hutton Primary School.

**Officer response:** Prior to Hutton Primary School closing the figure was £42,000, it has doubled.

**Stakeholder:** Surely this would pay for a teacher in the school.

**Officer response:** A teachers salary would be in excess of this value, all finances are detailed in the proposal paper.

**Stakeholder :** It is not just about money, we have to consider the environmental impact and the impact on the children transporting them. This is not what is best for our children.

JT confirmed there were no further statements or questions and thanked all for attending and their input. Those present were encouraged to complete the survey available by scanning the QR code or completing the paper copy of the survey, available at the sign in desk. The final date and time for completion is 5pm on Friday 7 June 2024.

LR explained the timeline following the end of the consultation period;

- 1 week following 7<sup>th</sup> June for Dumfries and Galloway Council to return all representations, meeting notes etc to Education Scotland
- Education Scotland have a three-week period to speak with pupils and visit schools/communities impacted and compile a report.
- The final consultation report will be published in early September a minimum of 3 weeks in advance of a final decision being made at Education and Learning Committee.
- Decisions around school closure can be called in by Scottish Ministers who can request a review. This is the reason January 2025 was set at the date of closure to allow time for this full process.

**Stakeholder:** If it is decided to close the school in January 2025 how long will the building lie empty for.

**Officer response:** Once Education declares the building surplus it is passed to Estate colleagues within Dumfries and Galloway Council; discussions can take place with the community regarding a community asset transfer (CAT), if there is a community use for the building this is the first option. It is clear the community have a great space in the hall, but it is worth considering if it could be used. If the building is not required by the community other potential uses for the building will be explored or advertised on the open market.

**Stakeholder:** Queried the boundary line on maps shared and which side of the line 'Twiglees' lies.

**Office response:** LR will clarify and communicate to all consultees.

**Stakeholder:** Hutton Primary School bank account had funds from the clothing bank situation in the village to collect money for the school.

**Officer response:** The clothing bank has been collected once since the school was Mothballed, funds from the clothing bank remain untouched in a bank account. If the decision is to permanently close the school a decision should be made by the community how they wish to spend the funds.

JT thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 6:43pm.



## **DUMFRIESSHIRE EAST COMMUNITY BENEFIT GROUP (DECBG)**

### **EWE HILL 16 WINDFARM COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND**

#### **GRANT INFORMATION SHEET**

This document contains the following information:	Page
• What is Dumfriesshire East Community Benefit Group (DECBG) SCIO?	1
• How is Dumfriesshire East Community Benefit Group (DECBG) managed?	1
• What does Dumfriesshire East Community Benefit Group (DECBG) do?	2
• The Ewe Hill 6 Fund	2
• Contact details for information and applying to the Ewe Hill 6 Fund	2
• The Ewe Hill 16 Fund	3
• Who can apply for funding from the Ewe Hill 16 Fund?	3
• What can be funded from the Ewe Hill Windfarm Funds?	4
• What will not be supported?	5
• What amounts of funding can be applied for?	6
• When and how can applications be made?	7
• Map of communities and surrounding areas eligible to apply for funding	8

#### **What is Dumfriesshire East Community Benefit Group (DECBG) SCIO?**

Dumfriesshire East Community Benefit Group (DECBG) was registered with OSCR, the Scottish Charity Regulator, as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) (registration no. SC047593) on 19 July 2017. The SCIO was set up by the five community groups surrounding ScottishPower Renewables' Ewe Hill Windfarm in order to receive Community Benefit Funds from Ewe Hill Windfarm to distribute to projects. Since then, DECBG has expanded to distribute Community Benefit Funds from other Windfarms in the area.

#### **How is Dumfriesshire East Community Benefit Group (DECBG) managed?**

DECBG currently has a Board of up to ten Trustees, comprising representatives elected by each of the five communities directly surrounding Ewe Hill Windfarm:

**Hutton and Boreland** (North Milk) (Hutton Community Fellowship);  
**Corrie** (North Milk) (Corrie Parish Hall);  
**Tundergarth** (North Milk) (Tundergarth Parish Hall Committee);  
**Middlebie and Waterbeck** (Community Council);  
**Langholm, Ewes and Westerkirk** (Community Council)

Governance and administrative support is currently provided by The Southern Uplands Partnership (SUP), Studio 2, Lindean Mill, Galashiels, TD1 3PE. The Southern Uplands Partnership is a Charity working across the South of Scotland, primarily in the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway.

### **What does Dumfriesshire East Community Benefit Group (DECBG) do?**

DECBG receives and distributes Community Benefit funding from Windfarms. It is currently distributing funds from Solwaybank Windfarm Community Benefit Fund (Solwaybank Energy Ltd) and **Ewe Hill Windfarm** (ScottishPower Renewables). There are two Funds – **Ewe Hill 6 Fund** and **Ewe Hill 16 Fund**.

Ewe Hill 6 was the first phase of the windfarm, with six turbines.

**The Ewe Hill 6 Fund** is for the inner group of five communities around Ewe Hill windfarm.

Ewe Hill 16 was the second phase of the windfarm, with sixteen turbines.

**The Ewe Hill 16 Fund** is for the above communities plus a wider distribution of communities (see page 3).

The total amount of funding expected over the lifetime of Ewe Hill Windfarm will be over £1.7 million for the Ewe Hill 6 Fund and over £4.6 million for the Ewe Hill 16 Fund. The Ewe Hill 6 and 16 Funds are separate 'pots' and applications are assessed in different ways, which is explained below.

### **THE EWE HILL 6 FUND**

**The Ewe Hill 6 Fund** will receive an annual contribution from ScottishPower Renewables of at least **£69,000** (index linked over the operational life). This will be shared between:

- North Milk area (50%), split between three local community groups:
  - Hutton Community Fellowship (16.66%)
  - Corrie Parish Hall Committee (16.66%)
  - Tundergarth Parish Hall Committee (16.68%)
- Middlebie and Waterbeck Community Council (28%)
- Langholm, Ewes and Westerkirk Community Council (22%)

for distribution to worthwhile projects to benefit the people who live and work in these communities. Each Group manages its own share of this Fund and applications from within these areas and closely surrounding areas should be made directly to the relevant Group, contact details for which are below:

**For information and to apply to the Ewe Hill 6 Fund, please contact:**

#### **Hutton and Boreland**

Theresa Parker

Email: [theresa@parkersaccounting.co.uk](mailto:theresa@parkersaccounting.co.uk)

**Corrie**

Frank Carruthers

Email: kennelbrae@yahoo.co.uk

**Tundergarth**

Katie Nairn

Email: katieanairn@gmail.com

**Middlebie and Waterbeck**

Anne Laird

Email: anne-mwcc@the-lairds.com

**Langholm, Ewes and Westerkirk**

Robert Dickson

Email: robertdickson47@yahoo.co.uk

**THE EWE HILL 16 FUND**

**The Ewe Hill 16 Fund** will receive an annual contribution from ScottishPower Renewables of at least **£184,000** (index linked over the operational life) to be distributed to worthwhile projects and initiatives which benefit the people living and working in the area of East Dumfriesshire, which is shown on the attached map and includes the following communities:

- North Milk area, including
  - Hutton and Boreland
  - Corrie
  - Tundergarth
- Middlebie and Waterbeck
- Langholm, Ewes and Westerkirk
- Canonbie and District
- Springfield and Gretna Green
- Gretna and Rigg
- Kirkpatrick Fleming
- Eastriggs, Dornock and Creca
- Kirtle and Eaglesfield
- Brydekirk and District
- Hoddom and Ecclefechan
- Lockerbie and District
- Eskdalemuir

and any other **surrounding community** where the project is deemed to be of significance to the communities of East Dumfriesshire. If your project lies just outwith the blue boundary line shown on the attached map, contact us to check if your project idea would be eligible for support.

The Ewe Hill 16 Fund will be awarded to projects through an Open Grant Application process. Application Forms are available to download from the DECBG website [www.decbg.org.uk](http://www.decbg.org.uk) or can be downloaded from SUP's website, [www.sup.org.uk](http://www.sup.org.uk), or obtained by emailing [decbgscio@gmail.com](mailto:decbgscio@gmail.com) or telephoning 01750 725154 or phoning or texting 07741 076997.

The Grants process is administered and initial assessments of applications made by The Southern Uplands Partnership. The SCIO Trustees make the decisions on all applications to the Ewe Hill 16 Fund.

## Who can apply for funding from the EWE HILL 16 FUND?

As well as being in the geographic area of East Dumfriesshire Community Fund, as shown on the map on page 7, applicants to the Ewe Hill 16 Fund must meet the following criteria to be eligible to apply:

- Applications must be from constituted groups (not individuals) and operate on a not-for-profit basis (copy of Constitution or governing document must be submitted).
- Applicants must have a Bank Account in the name of the Group with non-related signatories (copy of a Bank Statement must be submitted).
- Applicants must provide their latest set of accounts (or cashflow projections if accounts are not available within the first year of operation).
- To ensure fair distribution of the funds, only **one** application per organisation each calendar year will be considered, unless advertised to the contrary.

## What can be funded from the Ewe Hill Windfarm Funds?

Projects and initiatives that support the rural regeneration and sustainability of communities within the Ewe Hill Windfarm area and enhance the lives of those living and working in the area will be supported.

Applications are welcomed that fall into the following categories:

- Educational projects (but not something which is the responsibility of the Local Authority);
- Projects which enhance citizenship and community development and sustainability;
- Projects promoting and advancing the arts, heritage, culture or science;
- Provision of community facilities;
- Provision of recreational facilities, including public participation in sport, or the organisation of recreational activities with the object of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom the facilities or activities are primarily intended;
- Projects protecting or improving the environment.

Priority will be given to projects which can demonstrate:

- Local consultation – evidence that the local community has been consulted and is supportive of the project;
- Strategic projects - with longer term impacts and benefits;
- Partnership working – working with other organisations (e.g. voluntary, local, regional or national) to add value to a project.

- Local procurement – using local suppliers and providers for goods and services, where possible.
- Environmental considerations – consideration of the project’s carbon footprint and minimising the environmental impact.
- Match funding of at least 10% of the project cost will be required, but projects with more match funding to add to the value of the project and maximise the Community Benefit funding are preferred.

Consideration of the following types of projects will be made on a case by case basis, subject to availability of funding:

- Multi-year projects (up to a **maximum** of three years).
- Staff costs may be considered provided: there is a detailed Job Description; **specific** project outputs; a plan showing what will happen to the post once the project is completed (i.e. termination of post or details of how the post will become self-supporting and sustainable).

Applicants should be aware that projects supported through the Funds will be publicised on the DECBG website to promote and raise awareness of the Funds.

### **What will not be supported?**

Projects which include the following activity cannot be supported:

- Religious purposes (where one religious group would benefit over another or the promotion or activities of any religious group). Where a religious building (Church, Church Hall etc) is a community resource and the application is for the improvement of the community hub which would benefit the whole community, this would be acceptable.
- Political purposes (applications which promote political views or the activities of political groups cannot be supported);
- Entertainment or hospitality purposes (where funds would be used to offer a gift, hospitality or entertainment with the intention of achieving an advantage over others);
- Funding cannot be awarded to be spent at the discretion of a person or legal entity;
- Any purpose which is averse to ScottishPower Renewables, Windfarms, renewable energy industry or the electricity industry;
- Investment in any windfarm or windfarm site which does not belong to Scottish Power Renewables;
- Projects which cannot demonstrate a significant benefit to the local community;



- The funding or replacement of a service which is provided by, or is the legal responsibility of, the local authority or other public authority or a statutory responsibility;
- Projects whose primary benefit is not to residents of the communities of East Dumfriesshire, in the community areas listed on page 2 and shown on the attached map;
- Funding for the repayment of loans or debts or applications to the Fund for loans;
- Individuals or private businesses;
- Retrospective funding (costs which have already been incurred before a decision on an application to the Fund is made).
- Contingency amounts.
- Repeat applications for core funding / running costs of organisations.
- Activities likely to bring Dumfriesshire East Community Benefit Group SCIO, The Southern Uplands Partnership or ScottishPower Renewables into disrepute.

### **What amounts of funding can be applied for?**

The Ewe Hill 16 Fund will normally support projects with an award between £1,000 - £30,000. Requests for less than £1,000 should be directed to the Ewe Hill 6 Fund, through the relevant Community Group on Page 2.

Projects which fall outwith the area supported by the Ewe Hill 6 Fund and which require less than £1,000 may apply to the Ewe Hill 16 Fund and will be considered on a case by case basis, depending on the amount of funding available. Please contact The Southern Uplands Partnership at [decbgscio@gmail.com](mailto:decbgscio@gmail.com) for advice.

Where demand exceeds supply, it may not be possible to support your project, or you may be awarded a lesser amount than that requested.

Funding may be approved / committed but not available for payment until the next tranche of funding is received from ScottishPower Renewables.

The maximum that can be applied for is 90%, DECBG cannot fund 100% of project costs.

Please note that funding awards over £10,000 will be subject to staged payments.

Please note that you will be required to provide receipts as evidence of expenditure within **three months** of the completion date of your project.

## When and how can applications be made?

Applications must be submitted on the Ewe Hill 16 Grant Application Form and sent with supporting documents.

Funding rounds will be advertised. There are currently two funding rounds per year:

Applications for the September Board meeting should be submitted by: **31 July**

(Your project should not start before 1st October)

Applications for the March Board meeting should be submitted by: **31 January**

(Your project should not start before 1st April)

For pre-application enquiries or assistance, to request an application pack, or if you have any queries when completing the Application Form, please contact Pip Tabor or Sheila Adams at:

**Email: [decbgscio@gmail.com](mailto:decbgscio@gmail.com) or telephone 01750 725154 or 07741 076997**

or download an Application Pack from [www.decbg.org.uk](http://www.decbg.org.uk) or [www.sup.org.uk](http://www.sup.org.uk)

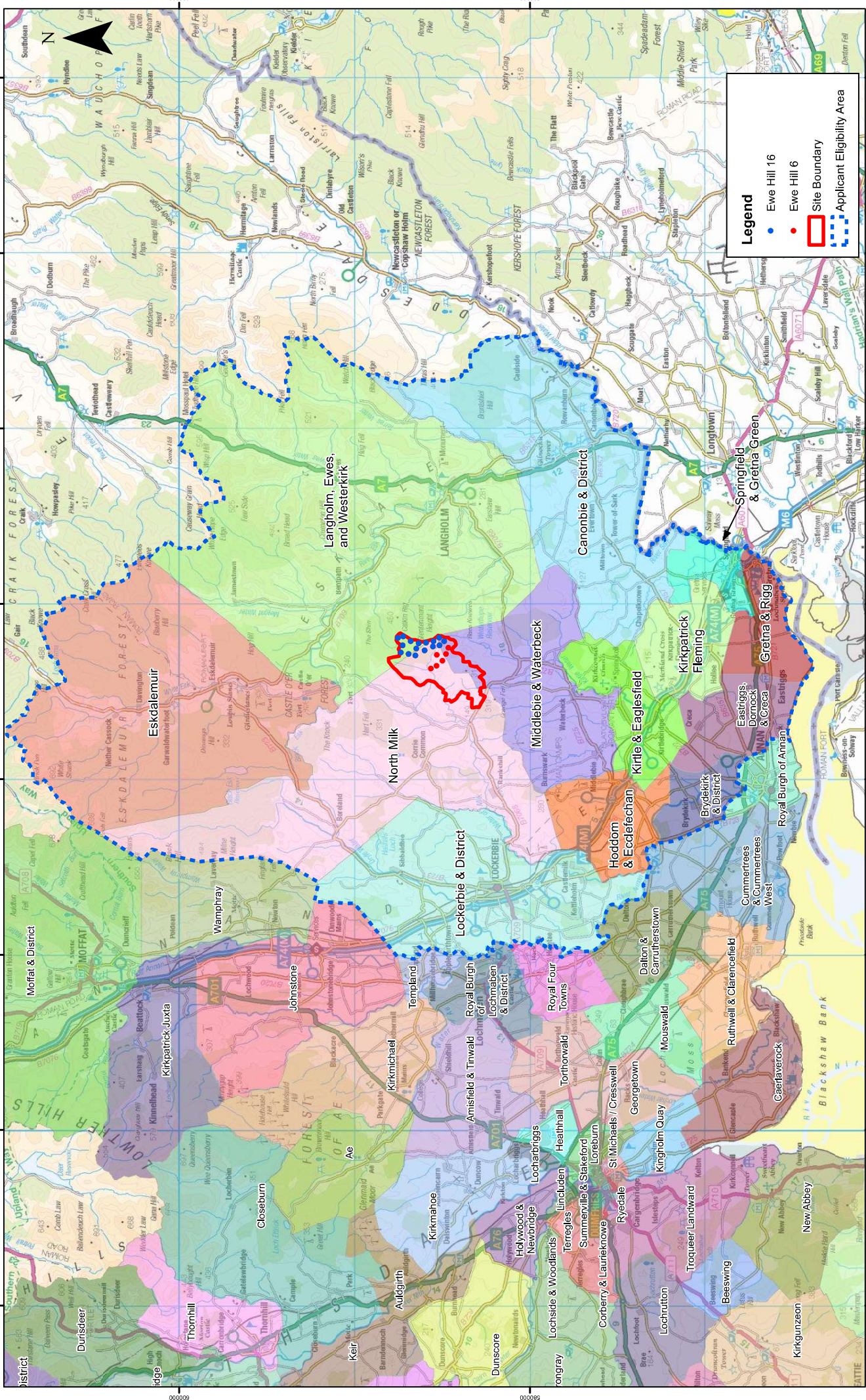
It will save time if you provide **all** relevant details and documents requested, otherwise there could be delays in processing your application.

It is easier to assess your application if all relevant information is provided within the Application Form document. If you do need to provide further information in support of your application separately, please make sure that this is clearly stated on your application form (e.g. 'see attached 'name of document') or this may not be taken into account.

To assist in processing, **typed** applications are preferred. If this is not possible, please write clearly in black ink. Completed application forms, and all supporting evidence, should be emailed to [decbgscio@gmail.com](mailto:decbgscio@gmail.com) **AND ALSO** posted, with **original** signatures, to:

**The Southern Uplands Partnership, Studio 2, Lindean Mill, Galashiels, TD1 3PE**

Applications will be acknowledged within one week of receipt and decisions will be notified within one month of a Board meeting. Please check you pay the correct postage for the size and weight of your application. We cannot take responsibility for the return or non-delivery of applications sent with insufficient postage.



**Legend**

- Ewe Hill 16
- Ewe Hill 6
- Site Boundary
- Applicant Eligibility Area

**Ewe Hill 16**  
Community Benefit Fund  
Community Area

1:200,000  
Scale @ A3

0 2.5 5 10 Km

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Rev	Date	By	Comment
A	22/02/17	DD	First Issue.

Drg No	EWE-I-083
Rev	A
Date	22/02/17
Figure	1147

**SCOTTISHPOWER RENEWABLES**

Datum: OSGB36  
Projection: TM

Pupil Consultation – School Closure	
Date of visit	10 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
School for proposed closure	Hutton Primary School
Member of staff leading discussion	Andrea Macfarlane, Quality Improvement Officer
Pupils involved (school, number and stage)	Applegarth Primary School 6 x pupils P2 – P6 (including 2 x Hutton Primary School catchment pupils) 3 x P6 1 x P4 1 x P3 1 x P2
Background information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am meeting with you today because Dumfries and Galloway Council would like your views on the potential closure of Hutton Primary School.</li> <li>• This consultation is anonymous, which means your views and thoughts might be used in reports and discussions which are public, but your names won't be written alongside your views and ideas.</li> <li>• We want to consult with you to find out what you think of the Council's proposal to close Hutton Primary School. The Council are proposing this because:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the number of pupils at Hutton Primary School dropped below 10.</li> <li>○ the Council believe pupils will get a better Educational experience in a larger school with more children.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• It is important that we get your views because some of you may have gone to Hutton Primary School but we also want to hear what it is like at Applegarth Primary School with more pupils.</li> <li>• Your views will help the Council make its decision.</li> </ul>
If you went to Hutton Primary School, can you tell us some of the good things about going there?	Ball pool with sounds in it  1 x – can't remember anything good.
What do you think might be an advantage of a larger school?	You can play with lots of other children and learn with more people.  There will be more adults to help you.  You will get more social skills because you will meet different types of people.  New surroundings

<p>What do you think might be some disadvantages of a larger school?</p>	<p>New people</p> <p>Too many people</p> <p>You might be with people you don't want to know. People that you don't get on with.</p> <p>There might be people at the big school that you don't like, if he's not your friend anymore.</p> <p>You might not know anyone when you go to the school.</p>
<p>What do you think might be an advantage of a smaller school?</p>	<p>Quiet</p> <p>More room to play.</p> <p>Teachers can help you better because there's not loads of people that need help.</p> <p>If you get stressed out in bigger environments.</p>
<p>What do you think might be some disadvantages of a smaller school?</p>	<p>You won't get to meet many people and it'll just be a bit boring when you're doing things because there won't be many people to do them with.</p> <p>Not enough people to do group work. The teacher might have to go into a group.</p> <p>Some people might learn at different paces so it might be hard to teach them all because of a lack of staff.</p> <p>Less people to tidy up so there would be more mess each day.</p>
<p>What do you think about Hutton Primary School possibly closing?</p>	<p>Kind of sad because my mum went and I don't get to go.</p> <p>Mostly sad but also happiness because my friends go to Applegarth. I don't really mind.</p> <p>It was fun there but it's sad because I had to go to a different school. The different school is good.</p> <p>I don't really mind because my friends get to come here.</p>
<p>How do you feel about children from other catchment areas/schools attending Applegarth Primary School?</p>	<p>I think it's a good thing because I've got friends here that I wouldn't have met if I went to Hutton.</p> <p>It's fine but it might get too crowded at one point, but right now it's fine.</p>
<p>Is there anything you think the Council should consider before making its final decision?</p>	<p>One more chance to see if anyone wants to go before they close it.</p> <p>I think they should do a visit (open the school) so people can see if they like it.</p>
<p>Anything else?</p>	

Pupil Consultation – School Closure	
Date of visit	22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2024
School for proposed closure	Hutton Primary School
Member of staff leading discussion	Andrea Macfarlane, Quality Improvement Officer
Pupils involved (school, number and stage)	Langholm Primary School – Group 1 6 x Primary 7 pupils
Background information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am meeting with you today because Dumfries and Galloway Council would like your views on the potential closure of Hutton Primary School.</li> <li>• This consultation is anonymous, which means your views and thoughts might be used in reports and discussions which are public, but your names won't be written alongside your views and ideas.</li> <li>• We want to consult with you to find out what you think of the Council's proposal to close Hutton Primary School. The Council are proposing this because:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the number of pupils at Hutton Primary School dropped below 10.</li> <li>○ the Council believe pupils will get a better Educational experience in a larger school with more children.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• It is important that we get your views because some of you may have gone to Hutton Primary School but we also want to hear what it is like at Langholm Primary School with more pupils.</li> <li>• Your views will help the Council make its decision.</li> </ul>
If you went to Hutton Primary School, can you tell us some of the good things about going there?	N/A
What do you think might be an advantage of a larger school?	<p>If the pupils came to Langholm they would get more opportunities.</p> <p>They would get more sporting opportunities.</p> <p>When there's smaller groups some companies might say they've got a bigger group so they might go to them instead.</p>
What do you think might be some disadvantages of a larger school?	<p>There's a lot more places so it's harder to find your way around.</p> <p>More fallouts could happen because you've got bigger friend groups.</p>

<p>What do you think might be an advantage of a smaller school?</p>	<p>Nice and quiet.</p> <p>You will know everyone.</p> <p>You will all be in a friend group.</p> <p>You might get more help if you are stuck on a question.</p>
<p>What do you think might be some disadvantages of a smaller school?</p>	<p>It would be really hard on the teachers because they are just by themselves.</p> <p>If you want to play games (like ladders) there wouldn't be enough people. If you wanted to do any team sports like football or netball there wouldn't be enough people for a team.</p> <p>Less funding.</p> <p>Fundraisers wouldn't have as many people at them.</p> <p>You wouldn't raise as much. In our school we are raising hundreds.</p>
<p>What do you think about Hutton Primary School possibly closing?</p>	<p>I think it would be quiet sad for the pupils.</p> <p>It would be harder on the parents because they would have to travel to the school. It could affect the parent's work.</p> <p>It might be hard for the children starting in a school with more other children.</p> <p>It would be a good idea because you wouldn't be wasting electricity and water.</p>
<p>How do you feel about children from other catchment areas/schools attending Langholm Primary School?</p>	<p>We do get people who come quiet a lot here so it wouldn't be too different. It's always nice to have someone else because you can make new friends. It wouldn't feel too different.</p> <p>It can make it interesting to get new people from different countries. You learn about them as the time goes by.</p> <p><i>All the pupils would be quite happy for new pupils to come.</i></p>
<p>Is there anything you think the Council should consider before making its final decision?</p>	<p>Ask the children from Hutton Primary. It's not going to be too different but it's nice for them to have a say.</p>
<p>Anything else?</p>	<p><i>All six pupils thought it would be a good idea to close the school.</i></p>

Pupil Consultation – School Closure	
Date of visit	22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2024
School for proposed closure	Hutton Primary School
Member of staff leading discussion	Andrea Macfarlane, Quality Improvement Officer
Pupils involved (school, number and stage)	Langholm Primary School – Group 2 6 x Primary 6 pupils
Background information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am meeting with you today because Dumfries and Galloway Council would like your views on the potential closure of Hutton Primary School.</li> <li>• This consultation is anonymous, which means your views and thoughts might be used in reports and discussions which are public, but your names won't be written alongside your views and ideas.</li> <li>• We want to consult with you to find out what you think of the Council's proposal to close Hutton Primary School. The Council are proposing this because:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the number of pupils at Hutton Primary School dropped below 10.</li> <li>○ the Council believe pupils will get a better Educational experience in a larger school with more children.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• It is important that we get your views because some of you may have gone to Hutton Primary School but we also want to hear what it is like at Langholm Primary School with more pupils.</li> <li>• Your views will help the Council make its decision.</li> </ul>
If you went to Hutton Primary School, can you tell us some of the good things about going there?	N/A
What do you think might be an advantage of a larger school?	<p>More friends</p> <p>Better learning</p> <p>Easier to learn because you can work with older pupils</p> <p>You might get more support in a bigger school because low pupil numbers will mean there aren't many staff.</p> <p>It will be much easier for the children to learn because there will be more support.</p>



	<p>I got support for two years and it definitely helped me a lot.</p>
<p>What do you think might be some disadvantages of a larger school?</p>	<p>It's trickier with loads of other people. There might be loads of people in your class but you might not get as much assistant.</p> <p>It will be harder because there are more people to get along with and not get along with.</p> <p>I have never moved but simply moving schools can be hard. You need to make sure it's a good bigger school. Transition needs to be good.</p> <p>Too too many friends could bug you.</p> <p>If you've got a big class there might be more disruption.</p> <p>It can be a bit nerve wracking.</p>
<p>What do you think might be an advantage of a smaller school?</p>	<p>You might get one-to-one work with the teacher.</p> <p>If someone was getting picked on you could see it easier because you can't hide in a smaller school.</p> <p>Quiet.</p> <p>Dinners might be better.</p> <p>Events might be better because they can plan it easier.</p>
<p>What do you think might be some disadvantages of a smaller school?</p>	<p>Not many participants in events.</p> <p>Sad that there's not enough people for a team.</p> <p>If everyone is off the teacher has no one to teach.</p> <p>I would get fed-up of there not being many people there. I'm a social person so I think it would be sad x 2.</p> <p>It might be annoying at break time because of the smaller area to play.</p> <p>If you don't have many people you can't go to races with your school.</p> <p>The food would be worse because it's not cooked there.</p> <p>Because it's rural it wouldn't have clubs.</p> <p>How are you going to have friends? Who are you going to choose to play with? It would be sad.</p> <p>It would be awkward with just a few pupils and your teacher.</p> <p>Not being able to go to sports events – I hate the thought of that.</p>

<p>What do you think about Hutton Primary School possibly closing?</p>	<p>In the middle.</p> <p>I reckon it's good to close it because you can't really do much.</p> <p>I think it's good to close it because if you want to have a game of rounders you can't because there's not enough people.</p> <p>A good idea because at break time there's nothing really to do. You can't even play football because there's not enough people.</p> <p>I feel like it's a good thing because they would have the chance to make different friends and take part in school events. They wouldn't have enough for a team. You don't always want to hang with the same people so it would more fun going to a bigger school.</p> <p>I guess it should close because I think the children would get more opportunities in a bigger school.</p>
<p>How do you feel about children from other catchment areas/schools attending Langholm Primary School?</p>	<p>I'd like that.</p> <p>I'd like a new friend.</p> <p>There are new people that come and you try and help them as much as possible.</p>
<p>Is there anything you think the Council should consider before making its final decision?</p>	<p>Don't knock the school down it could be turned into a 'Knitting Natter' for older people.</p> <p>They should think about using the building for something else.</p> <p>They should consider asking the pupils that went there what should happen to the building – gym, youth club.</p> <p>Bump track in the playground.</p> <p>If it's knocked down don't waste the land use it for something very important for the village.</p>
<p>Anything else?</p>	<p>No further comments were made.</p>

## **Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Dumfries and Galloway Council to discontinue education provision at Hutton Primary School and realign its catchment area either to Applegarth Primary School or to split between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School.**

June 2024

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His 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 a proposal by Dumfries and Galloway Council to discontinue education provision at Hutton Primary School which is currently mothballed and; realign its catchment area to Applegarth Primary School or split and realign the catchment between Applegarth Primary School and Langholm Primary School. 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' view. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it alongside any relevant considerations the council received and then prepare its consultation report. The council's 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 consultation report at least three weeks before it takes its final decision. With all proposals the council needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act. Where a council is proposing to close a school, there are specific additional obligations. These include notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers. There are special provisions that apply to close a rural school.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the schools; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people 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 public meeting held on 21 May 2024 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
- visits to the sites of Applegarth and Langholm Primary Schools, including discussion with relevant consultees. HM Inspectors also visited the mothballed site of Hutton Primary School.

1.4 As the proposal, if implemented, will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of any reasonable alternatives to closure of Hutton Primary School, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements of the proposed closure.

## 2. Consultation process

2.1 Dumfries and Galloway Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The consultation period ran from 24 April until 7 June 2024. A public meeting was held on 21 May 2024 and attended by 14 members of the public. The council invited responses to the consultation in the form of letter, email and an online survey. Consultation meetings were also held with children attending Applegarth and Langholm Primary Schools. The council received 12 responses to the public consultation. Four supported the proposal to permanently close Hutton Primary School and eight did not. There was a mixed response to the second part of the proposal regarding the re-alignment of the catchment areas, with a few respondents in favour of each option.

## 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council believes that there will be clear educational benefits for children should the proposal go ahead. These centre around the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence which is flexible, adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of individual learners. As the numbers of children attending Hutton Primary School have fallen consistently over recent years, the council believes that the children benefit from learning alongside their peers in larger schools. Since the temporary closure of Hutton Primary School, the council has made efforts to assess the demand for education in its catchment area. Responses indicate a maximum school roll of four pupils. HM Inspectors agree there are sufficient educational benefits to merit the permanent closure of the school. HM Inspectors agree that children are benefitting from the range of learning opportunities at both Applegarth and Langholm Primary Schools. This includes opportunities to develop their capacity to work with others and build their social skills.

3.2 HM Inspectors met with a range of stakeholders in both primary schools impacted by the proposals. Almost all were in favour of closing the mothballed Hutton Primary School. However, a few people are concerned about what would happen to the building once it is formally closed. Whilst a few people think it is unfortunate that the village would lose its school, most feel that the projected school is unlikely to be viable. Children who met with HM Inspectors were in favour of closing the school and felt that either catchment option meant they would have more friends. Most parents and staff in Applegarth and Langholm Primary Schools are also supportive of the plan to close Hutton Primary School. As both schools have capacity, most stakeholder thought that either option would provide a good educational experience for children.

3.3 As the proposal, if implemented, will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of the factors to which it should have special regard:

3.4 The council consulted widely on the proposal to close the school, carrying out a pre-consultation exercise prior to the formal consultation. Taking account of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, the council in its pre-consultation phase discussed the options for the use of the building beyond closure. They engaged with a range of stakeholders including local community members. Whilst recognising that continued mothballing was not a viable option, community members felt that a decision regarding its future was desirable. Whilst there is concern amongst local people about the impact of the school closing, there is no agreed way forward for the use of the building in the longer term. As the village where the school is situated has a community hall with a vibrant programme of activities, it is unlikely that the community would request an asset transfer for Hutton Primary School. In its proposal, the council also considered the transport implications for children moving to Applegarth and Langholm Primary Schools. As

the current transport arrangements for Applegarth will continue, there is only a cost implication for Langholm Primary School should the second option be adopted. This could lead to some environmental impact in terms of additional vehicles on the roads. However, as the numbers of children requiring transport is small, this is not likely to be significant.

#### 4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there are educational benefits to the council's proposal to close the building permanently. Children from the area are already benefitting from the educational opportunities available at Applegarth and Langholm Primary Schools. There was no clear agreement amongst stakeholders regarding re-aligning the catchment areas. Therefore, HM Inspectors would support the council's proposal to re-align the catchment to Applegarth Primary School as it would be more cost effective. Should the proposal go ahead, the council should continue to engage with the local community in the area surrounding the school. This may help to allay any concerns regarding the long-term use of the building.

**HM Inspectors**  
**June 2024**