



**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

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

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

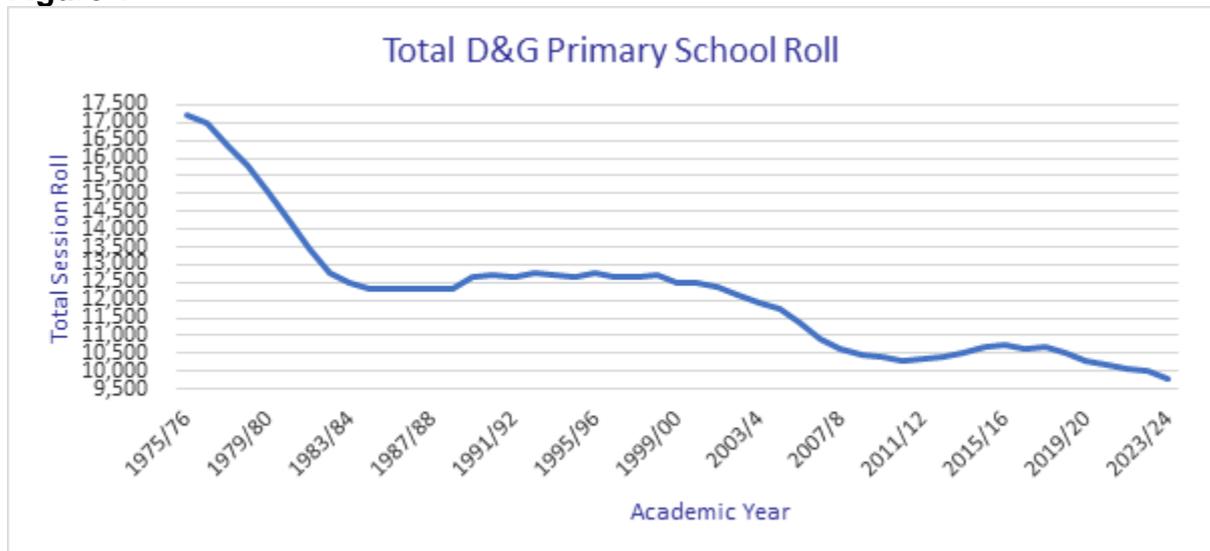
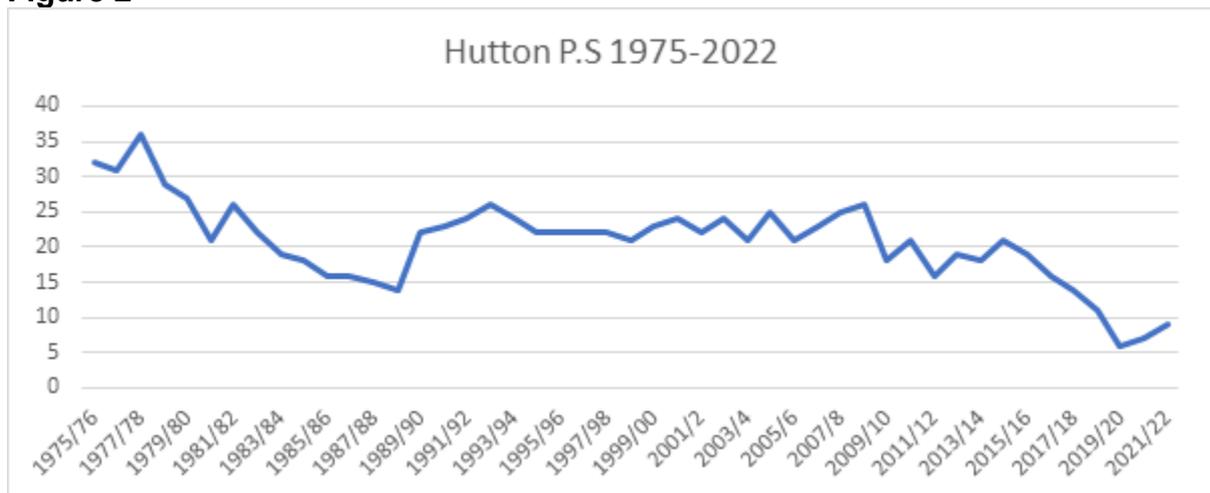


Figure 2



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 21st 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 19th 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

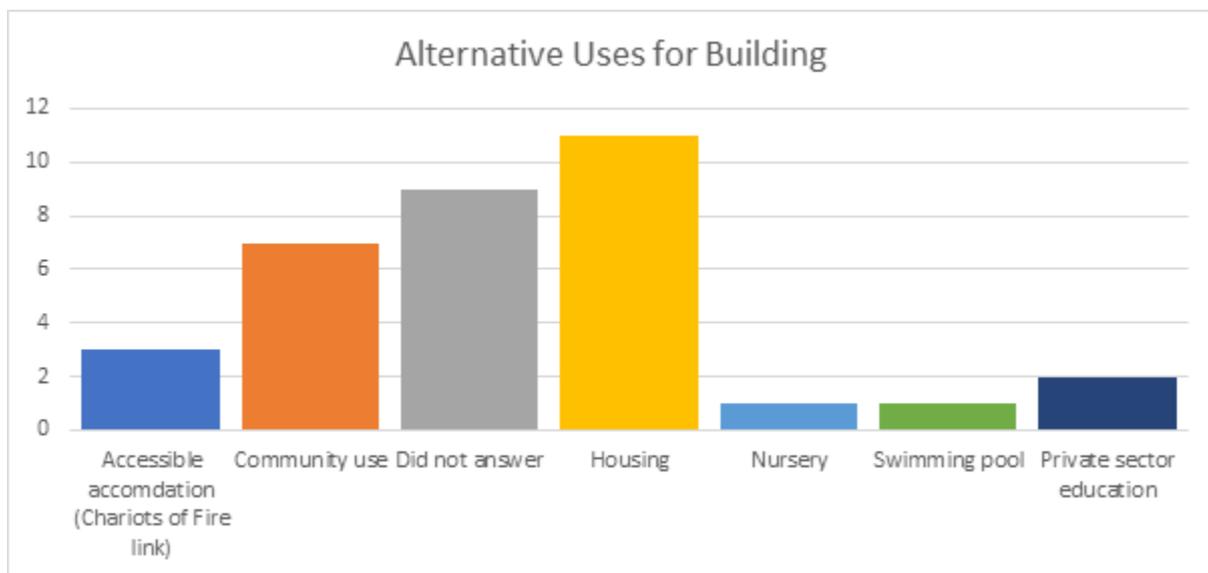
Formal closure of the school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community.

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

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

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:

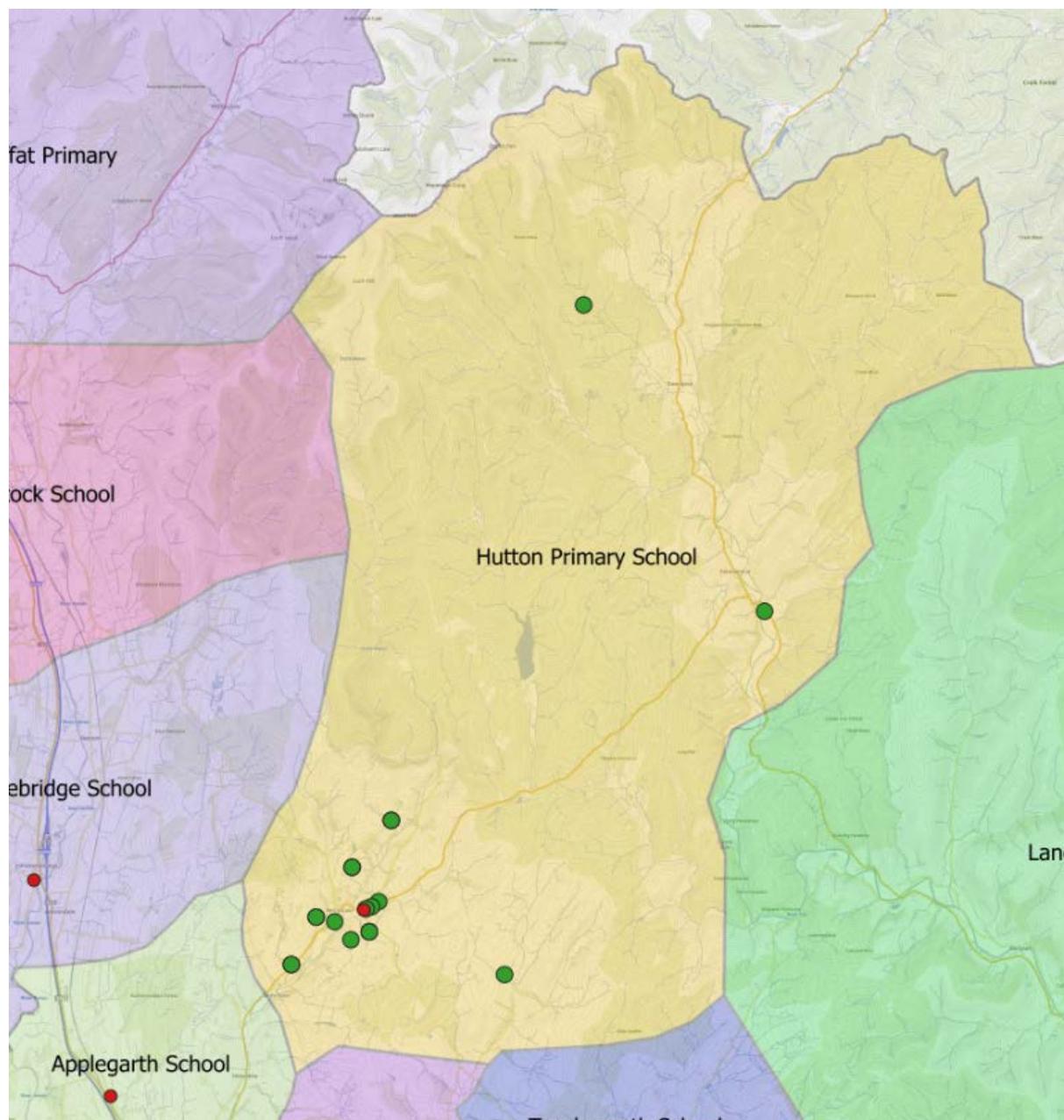
- Hutton Primary School has been formally mothballed for seventeen months, with no pupils in attendance since August 2020, almost 3.5 years. The school roll is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in 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

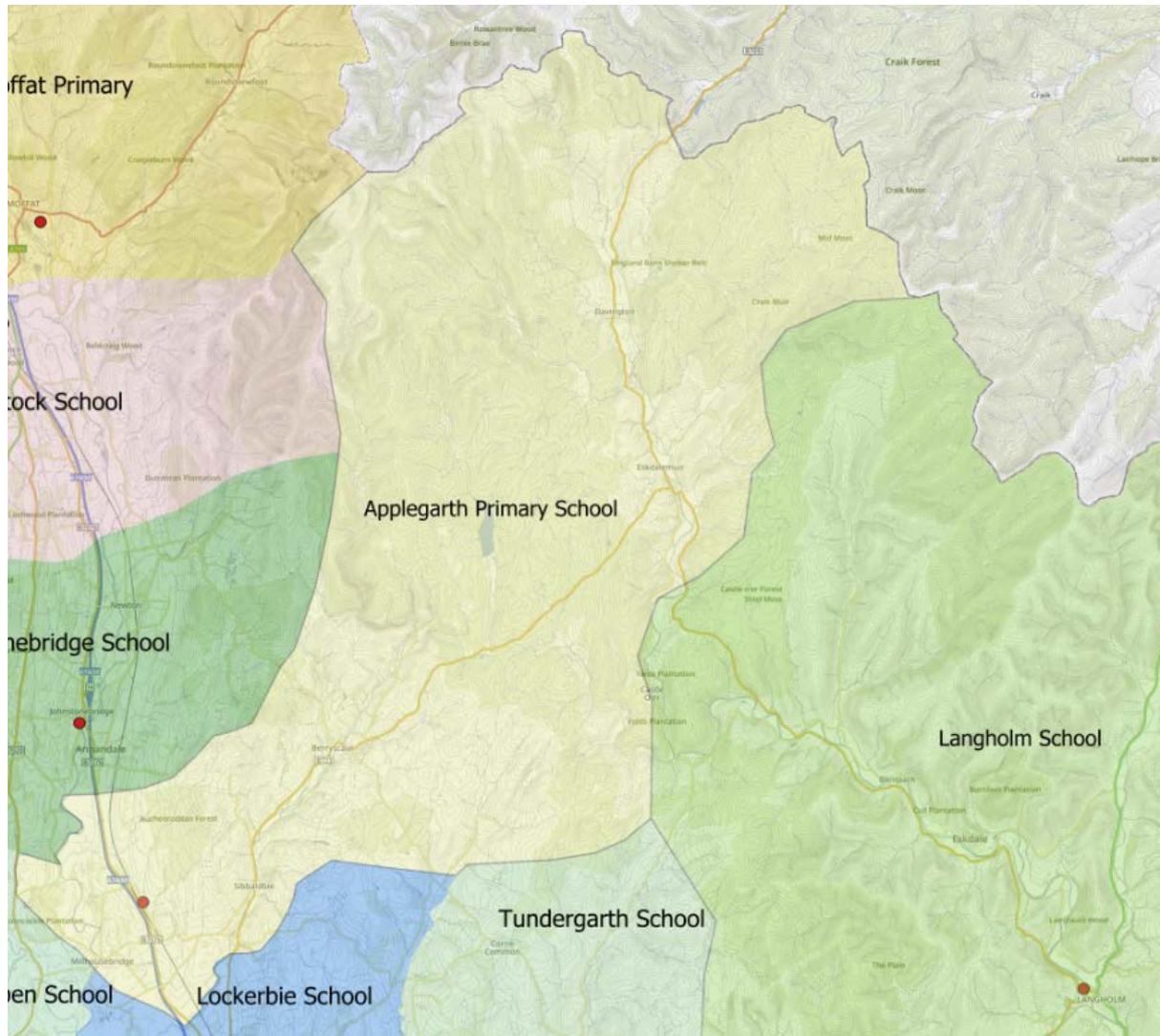
The map below shows the current Hutton Primary School catchment area, the green dots mark the location of the primary aged pupils living within this area. Red dots mark the location of the Primary Schools.



Realigned Catchment Area Option Maps

Option A - Catchment area realigned to Applegarth Primary School

Red dots mark the location of the Primary Schools.



Financial Template

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

Table 2	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7
Capital costs		School proposed for closure	Receiving school
Capital Life Cycle cost - note 7		-	-
Third party contributions to capital costs		-	-

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		-
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL		5,380

Table 4	Non-recurring revenue costs	
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS		-

Table 5	Impact on GAE - note 5	
GAE IMPACT		-

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

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
- 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

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.

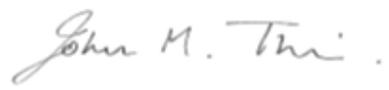
Please note that this summary document is for convenience only. Copies of the Proposal Paper can be obtained from:

- 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

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

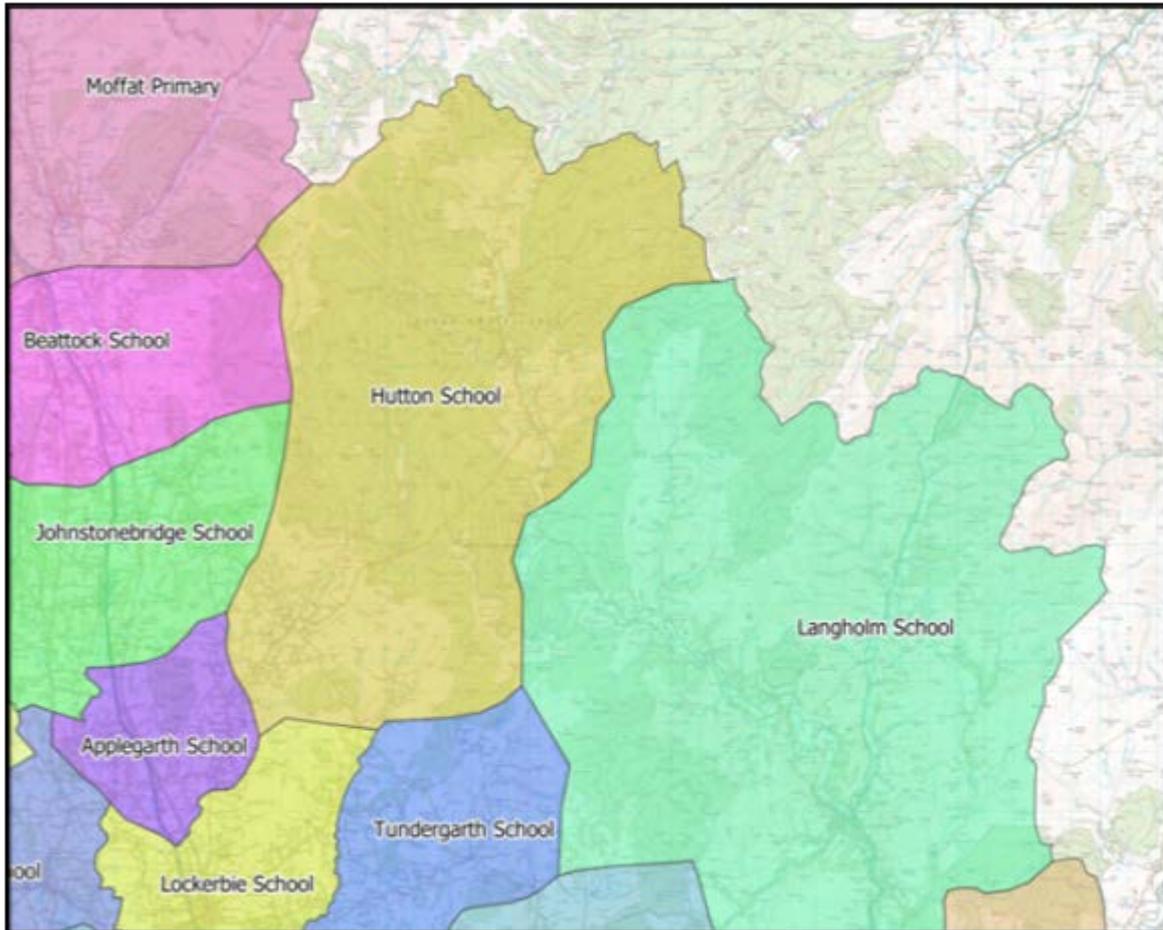
3.2 Hutton Primary School

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

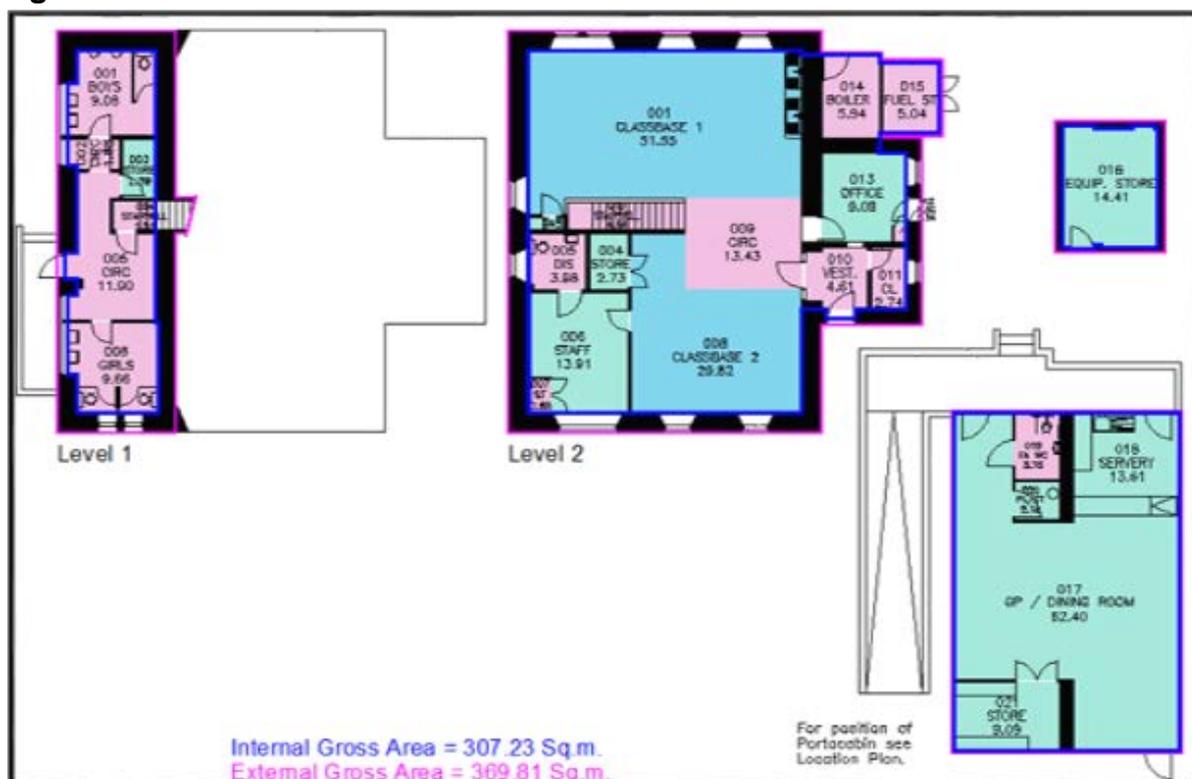
for example will have a longer journey time than those listed above but may choose to attend Langholm Primary School which is 12.9 miles (22 minutes) (Source: Google Maps).

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

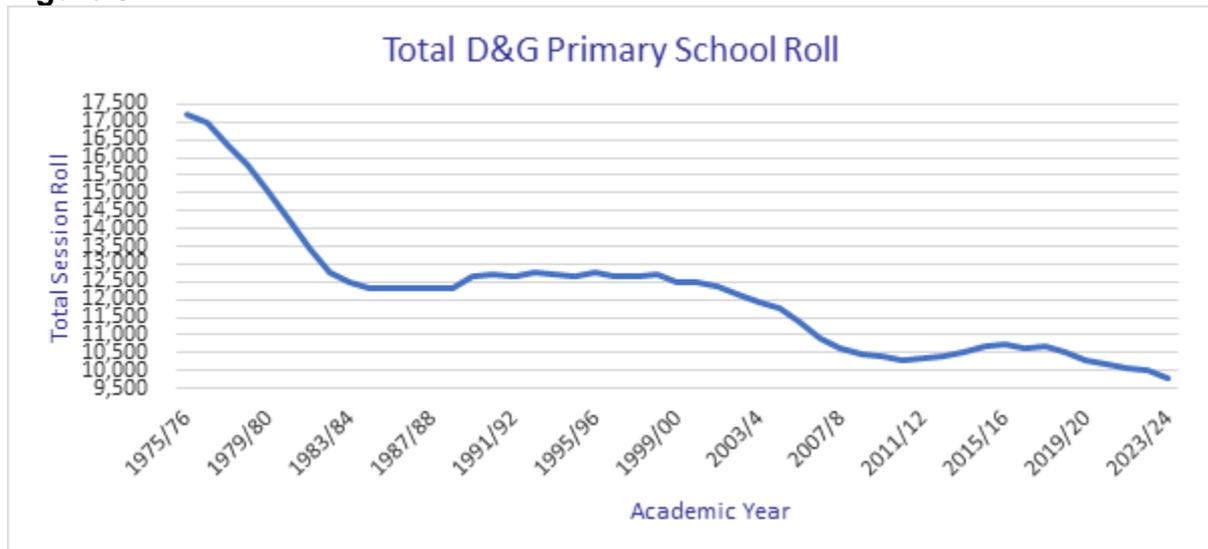
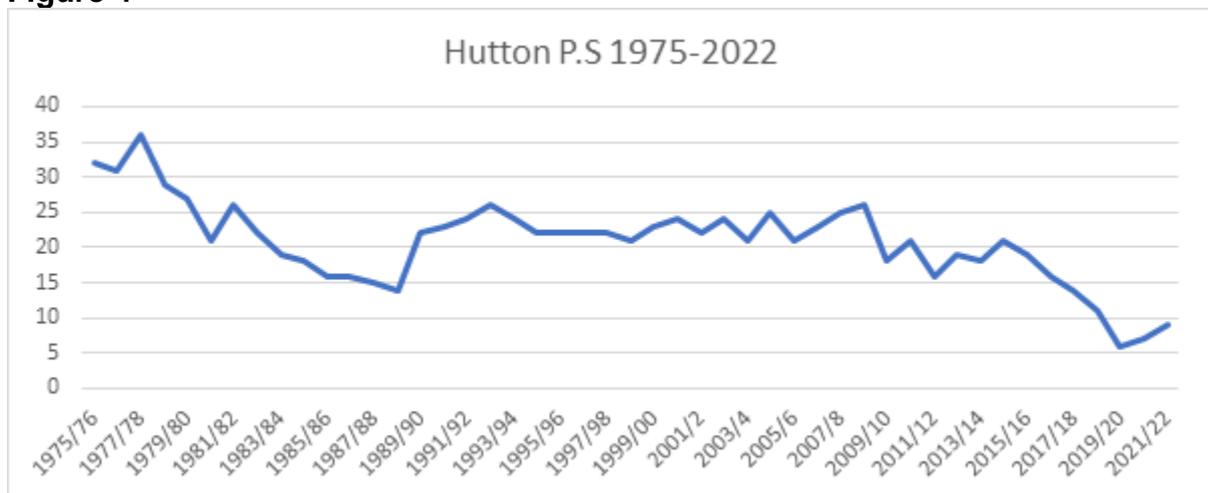


Figure 4



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.

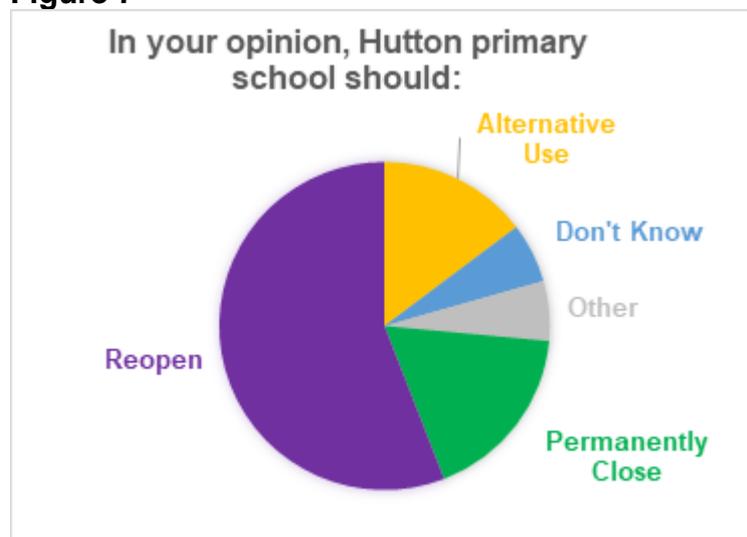
Dumfries and Galloway Council along with several other rural authorities is facing increasing challenges recruiting staff. Alongside this the pupil roll across the region continues to fall, with less primary age year on year as detailed in Figure 3.

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
2023/24	2	4	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					4	4	4	4	3	5	10	34
2027/28					2	4	4	4	4	3	5	26

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
2023/24	11	12	21	21	22	18	18	30	24	22	25	184
2024/25					21	22	18	18	30	24	22	180
2025/26					21	21	22	18	18	30	24	179
2026/27					12	21	21	22	18	18	30	167
2027/28					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

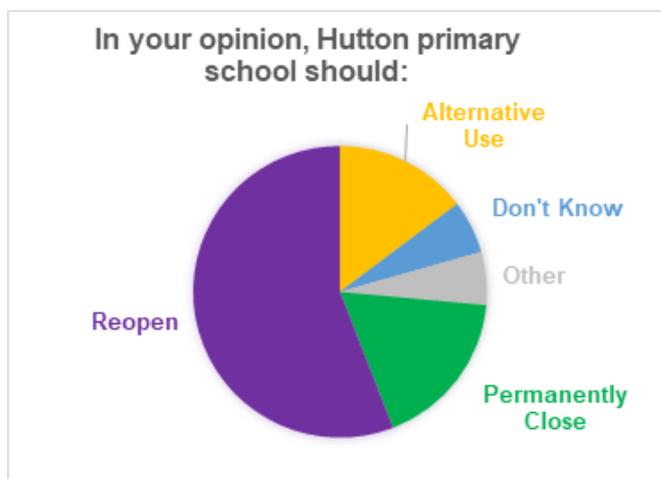
- School attended by parents
- Closest school so reduced travel times

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

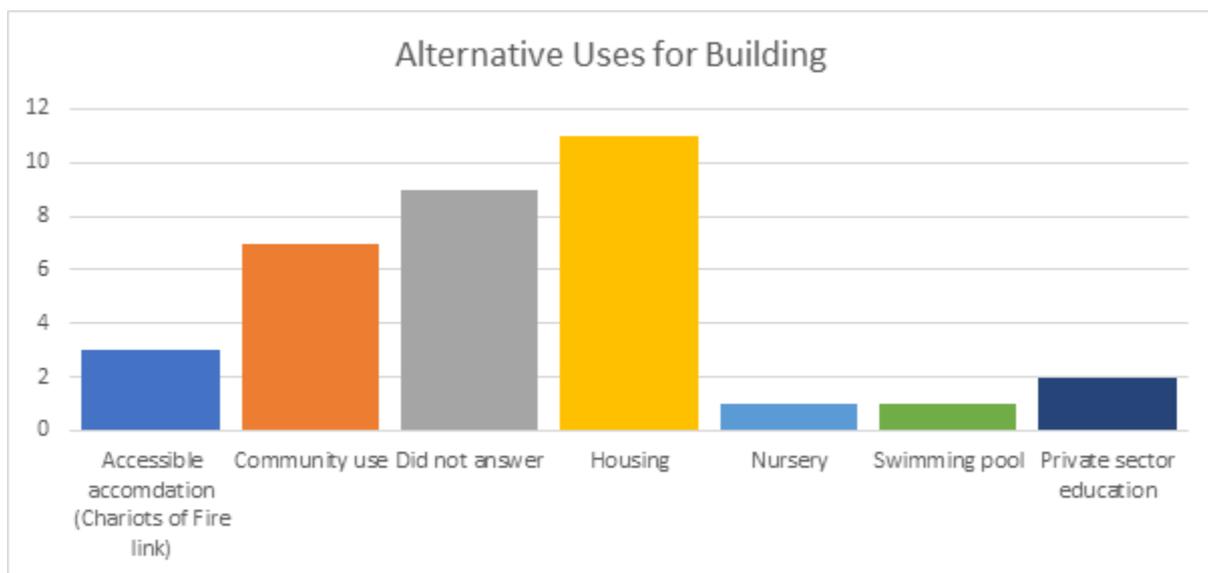
- Redo of all interior decor to freshen it up. Arrange open days. Get extra curricular activities in place for the children.
- Have an active engaging open event for school age families at the school.
- As there are only 3 children registered to attend Hutton and only 3 or 4 possible pupils, that is 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.