

Proposal Paper

Proposed closure of Fountainhall Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Provision (currently temporarily closed) and rezone of the catchment area to Heriot Primary School, Heriot



IMAGE :- Fountainhall Primary School ,Old Stage Road, Fountainhall, TD1 2SY

Consultation Period: Monday 24th August 2026 until Monday 12th October Inclusive (7weeks)

Education Scotland Three-week period – 20th October until 10th November inclusive

Public Meeting:Wednesday 16th September Fountainhall Village Hall- 5.30pm.

1. The Proposal It is proposed, subject to the outcome of this statutory consultation process, that

- 1.1 Fountainhall Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare provision, Old Stage Road, Fountainhall, TD1 2SY, currently temporarily closed/mothballed, is permanently closed.
- 1.2 If it is decided to permanently close Fountainhall Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Provision, it is proposed that the Fountainhall Primary School catchment area is permanently rezoned to Heriot Primary School, Heriot EH38 5YE being the current temporary catchment school.

This proposal is due to:-

1.3 The demand for Fountainhall Primary School and its ELC setting being insufficient to allow the school and ELC setting, currently temporarily closed/mothballed, to be viable and sustainable for the long term.

1.4 The educational benefits of permanent closure and rezoning the catchment to Heriot Primary School, Heriot are considered to outweigh the significant educational, financial and operational drawbacks of reestablishing Fountainhall Primary School and ELC, having regard to the Options Appraisal Analysis within the Options Appraisal Mothball Status Review Report 2026 (**Appendix 5**) which discussed in detail the alternatives to closure assessments and reviews, and which have concluded that there is no reasonable alternative option but to undertake the Statutory Consultation on permanent closure and rezone of the catchment.

The expected implementation date, subject to statutory consultation, consideration of the Consultation Report, Council decision and any Scottish Ministers call-in process, to be **Monday 19th April 2027 or another date as may be agreed** in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (As Amended) and subject, to the Ministerial Call -In Procedures under the 2010 Act.

2. Purpose of the Paper

2.1 This Proposal Paper has been prepared by Scottish Borders Council's Education and Children's Services to consult with relevant consultees in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as Amended).

2.2 The paper aims to set out the proposal, aims to set out and explain the educational benefits of the proposal, and also identifies and discusses the principal educational drawbacks, risks and rural school factors that have been considered in line with the Proposal in terms of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as Amended).

2.3 This proposal paper should be read alongside the Fountainhall Primary School and ELC Options Appraisal Mothball/ Temporary Closure Status Review Report 2026, which reviewed the temporary closure (previously known as Mothball) status and considered the reasonable alternatives to closure and ultimately concluded that proceeding to Statutory Consultation on permanent closure and catchment rezoning to Heriot Primary School, is the favoured option to take into account local community preferences, the lack of demand for the school in terms of real numbers both now and into the future, making sustainability for the future not feasible for Fountainhall Primary, and to try to provide real support for Heriot Primary School, (and its new Early Learning and Childcare provision opening on 19th August 2026) the small rural local village primary school catchment adjacent to Fountainhall, to be supported further to be viable into the longer term.

2.4 This proposal paper follows informal consultation with community voices in so far as possible thus far, to assess and gauge demand and to support decision-making with community parent and carer voices at the heart of the decision-making processes to try to support decision-making to bring this Proposal. Thus far the proposal to close Fountainhall primary and ELC being the favoured option for the reasons advised above, hence the Proposal Paper and movement to Statutory Consultation for further dialogue.

3. Overview

The purpose of this paper is to advise and inform the Fountainhall community and surrounding local area and all relevant consultees of the background to the Statutory Proposal, the reasons why permanent closure is proposed, and the basis upon which rezoning the catchment to Heriot Primary School, is proposed.

The proposal follows a significant and sustained decline in the school roll of Fountainhall Primary and ELC. Fountainhall Primary School was temporarily closed in June 2025 when the roll was projected to be just one pupil in August 2025. The ELC setting had already been temporarily closed in 2023 following low demand given the other local options available and community preferences, and in collaboration with those families who attended the setting.

The 2026 Options Appraisal Temporary Closure/Mothball Status Review considered current and projected primary and ELC demand, pupil numbers, community survey responses, building condition and suitability, financial implications, rural factors, travel arrangements and community impact. It also assessed and discounted all reasonable alternatives to permanent closure of Fountainhall Primary, with particular emphasis on hearing the views of parents and carers in the community not simply within Fountainhall but also within the local area and the surrounding cluster schools. Most

respondents to that survey favoured directing resources towards helping Heriot Primary School (and new ELC facility opening on 19th August 2026) to thrive and be sustainable for the longer term, rather than seeking to sustain two rural primary schools with very small school rolls.

4. Detail of Proposal

4.1 The proposal has implications for Scottish Borders Council primary pupils who are living within the Fountainhall Catchment area, and for pupils also who are either currently attending Heriot primary School or indeed the adjacent catchment area of Stow Primary School for completeness. It also has implications for Parents/ carers of children expected to attend the designated “affected” schools (being for completeness Fountainhall, Heriot and Stow) and Galashiels Academy as the local cluster feeder high school within 2 years of the date of publication of this proposal document as relevant consultee, in terms of the closure of the school and the re zoning of the catchment area proposal. Officers believe it is important to obtain clear opinions and voices regarding the proposal to close and also regarding the catchment area re zoning proposal, to best reflect and consider all community voices and opinions in terms of supporting decision-making processes going forward.

5. Summary of the Statutory Consultation Process

5.1 Publication Information

5.2 The proposal paper will be available for inspection, free of charge at:-

- A. Council Headquarters, Newton St Boswells, TD6 OSA – upon request
- B. All SBC primary and secondary schools within the Scottish Borders- upon request.
- C. Published on the Scottish Borders Council Website and advertised on SBC Social Media.
- D. Copies of the Proposal Paper are also available on request from: -

5.3 The Fountainhall Primary School Closure Proposal (please request paper format or electronic version)

Education and Children’s Services
Scottish Borders Council
Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells Melrose
TD6 OSA
Telephone: 01893 582 4000

5.4 Or by E-mail to:-

schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk

Please state that you are looking for the Fountainhall Primary School and ELC Closure -Statutory Consultation- Proposal Report.

5.5 . This proposal Paper is available in an alternative format or can be translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply to:-

The Fountainhall Primary School Closure
Proposal
Education and Children's Services
Scottish Borders Council
Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells Melrose
TD6 0SA
Telephone: 01893 582 4000

<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/regulatory-services/fountainhallstatutory>



Or E-mail:

schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk

5.6 . Formal Notice of the proposal and relevant information will be given and made available, free of charge to:-

1. Parents/ Carers at the affected Schools (namely Heriot Primary, being temporary catchment school for Fountainhall Primary (currently temporarily closed/mothballed) and Heriot Primary School (as possible new permanent catchment school), Stow Primary school as close and adjacent primary catchment to Fountainhall primary school and ELC, and Galashiels Academy as catchment High School and which form part of the Galashiels learning Cluster - notification of the Citizen Space Link will be by Group Call notification to all Parents and Carers within all Galashiels Cluster Schools and ELC settings, and on SBC social media/ SBC website as well as local media press release to include all Galashiels cluster primary schools and ELC providers to ensure as much engagement as possible.
2. Parents/ carers of children expected to attend the affected schools (Heriot being temporary catchment school and adjacent northwest of Fountainhall and Stow being a primary school in adjacent southeast proximity to Fountainhall) and any Parents or Carers living within Fountainhall Catchment area who may have wanted their children to attend Fountainhall primary or Heriot or Stow primaries, within 2 years of the date of publication of this proposal document as relevant Consultee. All ELC private and local authority run Early Learning and childcare provisions, within the Galashiels Cluster school area will be contacted and will be given notice of the Consultation by way of Group call and will be sent the Consultation Citizen Space link for engagement. It will be the clear intention of Officers to try and consult with a large selection of Heriot and Stow Primary School Pupils, to try and obtain views from as many young people affected as possible to include as many Fountainhall catchment children as possible. Officers will

take a pragmatic approach to try to engage as many Pupil Councils/ focus groups from the Heriot and Stow schools as much as possible to obtain their views on the Proposal taking cognisance of UNCRC in particular. Information obtained and a note of views at each meeting will be noted and reported within the Consultation Report document.

3. The Staff of Heriot (currently temporary catchment zone School) and Stow Primary Schools as affected schools will also be asked to provide views and opinions as to the proposal.
4. Any trade Union which is representative of the staff of the affected schools as above.
5. The Community Council of Stow and Fountainhall (and any Community Council of any further Scottish Borders area upon request) All local Community Councils will be advised by media publishing and Statutory Notice of the Consultation process in any event, and encouraged to participate in the statutory consultation.
6. Community Planning Partnership named Partners
7. The constituency member of the Scottish Parliament
8. The constituency member of Parliament
9. The List members of the Scottish Parliament
10. Councillors of Scottish Borders Council

5.7 . Advertisement in local Media - An advert will be placed on Scottish Borders Council website and social media to advise and provide a link to the Proposal Document which will be published on Citizen Space when the Statutory Consultation opens on **Monday 24th August 2026** inviting views and comments on the Proposals. A press release has already been published in local media outlets to give advanced notice and to provide information about the availability of the Proposal online and in paper format as soon as Scottish Borders Council have approved the Proposal Paper on 20th August 2026 at full council meeting. Notice of proceeding to the Statutory Consultation has been provided by way of a Public Notice Published in the Southern Reporter/ Border Telegraph to give advance notice to advise that SBC had voted on 26th March 2026 to proceed with a Statutory Consultation on the permanent closure of Fountainhall Primary School and the rezoning of the catchment to Heriot giving dates of the Consultation and advising that that the Proposal paper would be taken to Full Council for Approval on 20th August 2026. This advance notice was to ensure clear intimation of the progression to the Statutory Consultation. This Proposal Paper is expected to be approved by Full Council on 20th August 2026. A Notice has also been published on the Council website , following the decision to move to the Statutory Consultation, to further advise communities and about the decision to proceed to a statutory consultation to again give as much advanced notice as possible. ¹

5.8 A further Public Notice will be published on opening of the Statutory Consultation to advise of the dates of the **Public Meeting being 16th September 2026 at 5.30pm within Fountainhall Village Hall** (or any such place within the Village should this be unavailable to use and this will be communicated and published in advance accordingly) and reaffirming dates of the Statutory Consultation and providing a link to the online citizen space consultation, to ensure robust and widespread knowledge of the Statutory Consultation, once the Proposal Paper has been approved at Full Council on in advance of, if possible, or simultaneously alongside to the Statutory Consultation opening date of **Monday 24th August 2026**, given the time constraints from Proposal paper approval on 20th August 2025. There will also be widespread publication of the Consultation within Local Government Elected member briefings and widespread publications on website and SBC social media accounts to inform people of the Statutory Consultation to ensure as wide engagement as possible.

¹[Fountainhall Primary School and ELC | Notice of decision | Scottish Borders Council](#)

5.9 . Period for community views to be heard.- The proposal report document will be published on citizen space along with a survey/ response form to ask for comments on the Proposal Report on Citizen Space which will open when the statutory consultation begins on **Monday 24th August 2026** , to adhere to the requirement of 6 weeks and at least 30 school days.

6. Public Meeting

6.1 Format of Public Meeting -Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so. It will take place on **Wednesday 16th September at 5.30pm within Fountainhall Village Hall** (or any such place within the Village should this be unavailable to use and this will be communicated and published in advance accordingly)

The meeting, which will be convened by Scottish Borders Council will be addressed by the Director of Education and Children's Services, and/ or other Senior Officers of the Council.

6.2 The meeting will provide an opportunity to hear more about the Proposal to close the primary and ELC permanently. It will provide an opportunity to ask questions about the Proposal to close the primary school and ELC on a permanent basis, and it will be an open forum for the community to provide their views. The public meeting will let you have your views recorded so that they can be considered as part of the Proposal and Statutory Consultation process.

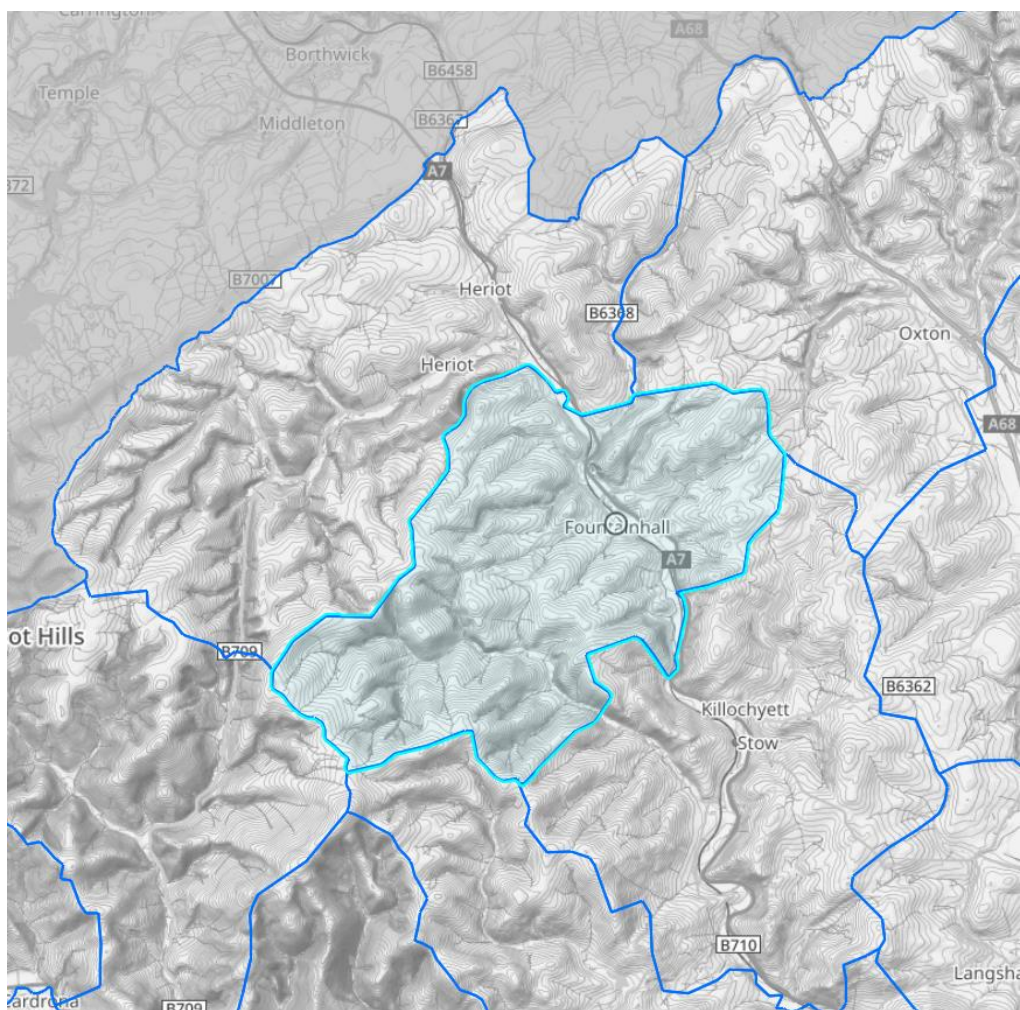
6.3 A note will be taken at the meeting of comments, questions, and officer responses. These notes will be made available on request. These meeting notes will be sent to HMIE who may be present at the meeting(to observe only) and will form part of Education Scotland's response (Report on the Educational Benefits of the Proposal) to the Consultation. HMIE are not required to attend the meeting but can do so, if they wish.

7. Background

7.1 Location and geographical position Fountainhall primary school and ELC is a small non-denominational primary school and ELC, with capacity for 50 pupils allowing for the maximum possible capacity including Primary and ELC, located in the village of Fountainhall in the northwest of the Scottish Borders Region. It is designated as an accessible rural school by the Scottish Government and can be seen on this map below and Rural Schools list link.² The school is located on Old Stage Road, Fountainhall which is a small rural village set on the Gala Water. Fountainhall is close to the major road A7 which connects Edinburgh to Carlisle. The school prior to mothballing had a shared headship with Heriot Primary School, within the village of Heriot, and the Headteacher Mrs Anderson divided her time equally between the schools (prior to temporary mothballing) as they were closely linked as partner schools.

7.2 See below for Fountainhall catchment Map highlighted in light Blue and the adjacent catchment areas of Heriot to the north northwest and Stow to the southeast.

² [Rural schools in Scotland - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/rural-schools)



8. Role Profile and Temporary Closure Review

8.1 The Primary School The roll profile of the primary school roll reduced significantly from 24 primary pupils in 2020 to 15 in 2021, 15 in 2022, 11 in 2023, 5 in 2024, and a projected one pupil from August 2025. The projected pupil in August 2025 was an out-of-catchment placement.

Year	Number of Primary Pupils
2020	24
2021	15
2022	15
2023	11
2024	5
2025	1 was projected from August 2025

8.2 The Early learning and Childcare Provision (ELC) The ELC roll profile in 2023 was :- three N5 levels and 1 N4 level. The year before in 2022 they had three N5's and 2 N4 providing a total of 5 children in the ELC, and the year before that in 2021 they had 7 in total- 5 N5.1 N4 and 1 N3.

In 2020, the total had been 11 with the breakdown being 8N5's 2 N4 and 1 N3 child.

8.3 Enrolment numbers had been declining since 2020. The ELC provision at Fountainhall Primary School was temporarily closed/ mothballed in 2023 when the numbers dropped to a low figure of 4. Early Years officers collaborated with the parent community at ELC to develop a plan for moving forward—gathering their thoughts and feedback, considering educational benefits and drawbacks (including transportation issues for any families), and analysing all options with a child-centred approach, when only 4 infants were enrolled. After careful assessment, and given the high demand for nearby provisions such as Stow ELC, Lauder Primary ELC, and private ELC providers, it was ultimately decided to temporarily close/ mothball the ELC provision to see if demand could increase.

8.4 The chart below illustrates the ELC roll profile and the decline since 2020 until temporary closure/ mothballing in 2023:-

Year	N3	N4	N5	TOTAL ELC
2020	1	2	8	11
2021	1	1	5	7
2022		2	3	5
2023		1	3	4

8.5 Officers then reviewed the data available to assess the numbers of infants and primary age children residing within the Fountainhall primary catchment and considered the Council's current projections regarding housebuilding etc in the Fountainhall catchment area along with the birth rates and projections for planning. There was to only be 1 enrolled pupil from August 2025 and this was an out of catchment enrolment. There were no new primary 1 starts who had enrolled in the school, and none for the academic year of 2025/2026. There were also no ELC requested spaces for 2025/26 following ELC enrolment week in November 2025 where a temporary closed setting can still be requested to allow officers to have any indication for demand and choice.

8.6 Within the figure of 5, at the primary school for the academic year in 2025, there were 3 P5 children and 1 P2, and 1 P3. There were three out of catchment placement requests from families living within the Fountainhall catchment area in 2024/25 to schools out with Fountainhall catchment. Officers understood at the time of mothballing in June 2025 that there were 2 children who resided within the Fountainhall Primary catchment area who attended Heriot Primary School and also a child who attended Stow Primary School. This trend suggests that primary aged children who were and are living within the Fountainhall catchment area had been choosing to attend other schools out with their catchment area, and were not choosing to attend Fountainhall primary school prior to temporary closure of the primary . From the most recent survey with the community, this seems to corroborate this trend. The reasons being given by their parents and carers is to seek a larger pupil cohort for a more social educational experience, whilst still choosing the smaller rural schools of Heriot Primary and larger still but still rural village primary of Stow Primary which are both adjacent in terms of neighbouring primary schools and in terms of Stow which at that time, had an ELC provision to further be a draw where Heriot did not.

8.7 There are 11 primary schools within the Galashiels Primary school cluster area which are listed below with enrolment numbers from June 2025(at the time of the temporary closure/ mothballing of Fountainhall) excluding ELC. Within the Galashiels Primary Catchment there were approximately 1227 children in total.

Balmoral Primary School	124
Burgh Primary School	225
Clovenfords Primary School	145
Fountainhall Primary School (before roll fell to (1)	5
Glendinning Terrace Primary School	56
Heriot Primary School	27
Langlee Primary School	260
St Margaret's RC Primary School (Galashiels)	160
St Peter's Primary School	241
Stow Primary School	80
Tweedbank Primary School	222

8.8 The updated figures at each of the schools as at the time of the Options Appraisal Mothball Review Report 2026 ³were:-

Balmoral Primary School	109
Burgh Primary School	209
Clovenfords Primary School	140
Fountainhall Primary School	0

³ It should be noted that school rolls do fluctuate and the figures within this section of the proposal report are correct as time scales state or when drafting the Options Appraisal Mothball Review Report 2026.

Glendinning Terrace Primary School	54
Heriot Primary School	19
Langlee Primary School	254
St Margaret's RC Primary School (Galashiels)	158
St Peter's Primary School	228
Stow Primary School	85
Tweedbank Primary School	222

8.9 The chart below shows what the August Term 2025 potential vacancies/ spaces were based on capacity for the primary schools closest to Fountainhall PS in the Galashiels Cluster Area:

School	Maximum school capacity (November 2024 layout)	Roll at June 2025	Expected roll at August 2025	Potential vacancies at August 2025
Heriot Primary School	50	27	21	29
Clovenfords Primary School	158	145	118 (137 including ELC)	40
Stow Primary School	100	80	57 (73 including ELC)	43
Glendinning Terrace Primary School	100	56	55 (64 including ELC)	45
Fountainhall Primary School	50	5	1 (0)	49 (0) as temporarily closed.

8.10 The chart below shows the position of vacancies and spaces based on capacity for the schools closest to Fountainhall Primary in the Galashiels cluster area as at time of Options Appraisal Review Report drafting within the Options Appraisal 2026 Review:-

School	Maximum capacity (November 2025 layout)	Current roll (February 2026)	Potential vacancies (February 2026)
Heriot Primary School	50	19 (projected at that time to rise to circa	26

		22/24 with the expected August 2026 P1 intake and ELC establishment)	
Clovenfords Primary School	158	140	18
Stow Primary School	100	85	15
Glendinning Terrace Primary School	100	54	46
Fountainhall Primary School	50	0 (temporarily closed)	50(0) as temporarily closed.

Officers understand that at the time of this Proposal Report being drafted the position with Heriot Primary School roll and projections and new ELC has meant that the number of primary children expected within Heriot Primary School is expected to increase. The new ELC provision providing 8 further children who are enrolled for August 2026, being 4 nursery enrolments along with 4 p1 enrolments, bringing the total number of Children expected to attend Heriot Primary School inclusive of ELC as at start of new term in August 2026 to be circa 22. Officers understand that the ELC numbers are expected to increase by Easter (April 2027) so that the numbers should be in total circa 26 by then.

8.10 Temporary Closure of Fountainhall Primary/ Mothballing Officers recognised that there were challenges in providing a positive school experience to such a small school roll (1) and the received wisdom was that mothballing/ temporary closure of the Fountain hall primary school would be the most considered option in such circumstances. These concerns included difficulties for children in such a small school roll to form any friendship groups, difficulties forming friendship groups with children with similar interests; anticipated difficulties with transition to high school; lack of any opportunities for sports and arts; lack of links into a network of clubs and activities other than through partnership with other primaries. Potential educational benefits were discussed regarding attending a slightly larger village primary school of Heriot with a greater opportunity for social interaction and collaborative learning opportunities along with more opportunities for participation in team activities and a chance to experience the skills and abilities of a wider staff group which would also help children and staff alike. There was also a recognition that a very small cohort it can be difficult to fully participate in the Curriculum for Excellence as opportunities for collaboration and peer working amongst learning is extremely limited with a tiny cohort. Following these discussions, the family of the remaining pupil at Fountainhall were assisted to discuss alternative schooling. In June 2025 ,Scottish Borders Council took the decision that Fountainhall Primary School and before that in 2023 for the ELC, should be mothballed or temporarily closed due to lack of demand and the educational disadvantages/ operational challenges of a school with such a small roll when it fell to nil/one pupil. The position of the school was to be monitored on an ongoing basis at least yearly as per council SBC School Mothball Policy and SBC ELC Sustainability Policy to see if demand increased and if not then a Statutory Consultation was to be commenced as soon as possible under the 2010 Act.

8.11 Following the decision to Mothball, the catchment area of Fountainhall Primary school was rezoned on a temporary basis to Heriot Primary school in the village of Heriot. Fountainhall primary school had a shared headship with Heriot Primary school. Heriot Primary School is located in the small village of Heriot which is 5 miles from Fountainhall and is an approximate 8-minute drive from the

primary school. Headteacher, Susan Anderson divided her time between these two schools in any event, and as partner schools they shared good inter- relationships also as relatively close geographical neighbours also. Good partnerships have also been forged with Stow Primary School and Clovenfords Primary School within the Galashiels cluster schools group. Heriot Primary has a capacity for circa 50 pupils (as of November 2025 figures- based on maximum possible capacity – and based on optimal layout/ arrangement with classes). There was sufficient room for all Fountainhall catchment children within Heriot Primary School, and indeed it was clear that data suggested many children within the catchment of Fountainhall were already attending Heriot primary in any event, along with Stow also, it was therefore considered the most sensible and reasonable option at the time to rezone the catchment temporarily to Heriot whilst Fountainhall was temporarily closed. This also helped Heriot whose school community were concerned about a declining roll and eager to try to sustain the school in terms of viability for the longer term.

8.12 The educational benefits of Heriot Primary being the catchment zone school on a temporary basis whilst the school was mothballed, was also documented within the Options Appraisal Proposal to Mothball Report 2025 which recommended mothballing. This is attached in Appendix 1. Heriot Primary School was chosen as the temporary catchment school for the reasons below in 8.13.

8.13 There were already close ties between Fountainhall and Heriot was at the time of temporary closure, seen as giving continuity for those links for pupils and celebrated. The shared headship of Fountainhall and Heriot, in addition to the schools being partnered with Stow Primary School, was cited as an educational benefit. In terms of the current temporary arrangements, Heriot has quality small rural school facilities and with strong educational outcomes and experiences. It has a strong and active parent group and strong links with parents and carers who play a substantial role within the school. Families of pupils who filled out the mothball/ temporary closure review survey, also expressed a strong preference for Heriot Primary school due to the continued experience of a rural village school with a smaller roll and to help the sustainability of Heriot into the longer term. Officers understand this and appreciate that many would appear to feel that Heriot Primary would also benefit from this proposal due to the smaller roll number, and close ties with shared headship etc, and the support that Heriot would get from being temporary catchment school given the concerns also in terms of falling roll numbers. It was felt this would help to support Heriot primary school to thrive with the catchment rezone potentially helping to boost numbers. Heriot is also gaining an Early Learning Facility which is due to open on Wednesday 19th August 2026 further strengthening the future sustainability of Heriot Primary School, as it would appear to be a popular village school setting for those within its own catchment and beyond.

9. Options Appraisal Mothball Status Review 2026 Officers carried out an Options Appraisal Mothball Status Review beginning in Autumn 2025/and into 2026 to consider the long-term viability and sustainability of Fountainhall Primary School and ELC given the very low demand for the school and ELC in the years preceding. The review considered the same factors used when mothballing/ temporary closure was first mooted and considered all reasonable options and took account of the rural school factors and requirements under the 2010 Act.

9.1 A community survey as part of the review opened on Citizen Space on 10th October 2025 and closed on 16th November 2025. It was distributed through school and community channels, including briefings to Local Councillors advising of the survey and review being undertaken, Social media and Group calls to all schools within the Galashiels cluster area cascading the survey, including Heriot Primary School and Stow Primary School and all local ELC providers including private nurseries and childminders. All were asked to cascade far and wide to ensure that everyone who wished to be

involved to provide an opinion could do so. Officers had also distributed it to the Stow and Fountainhall Community Council in good faith by way of an email, and had asked them to cascade this and had sent updates to them to provide them with the survey link and to advise the results of the survey. Local elected members were copied into all this correspondence. The purpose was to gain thoughts about Fountainhall Primary and ELC to obtain as much data as possible about demand for the primary school and the ELC and to generate ideas about increasing demand and also to give the Fountainhall community and surrounding localities, the chance to provide their thoughts about sustainability, and give feedback in terms of both the primary and the ELC and gauge what the community felt should happen next. This was also to encompass views of parents and carers and find out whether reinstatement would have been desirable for them, whilst also asking community members to consider all alternatives to closure, and to ensure that all options for the school and ELC were identified, considered appropriately, prior to any further recommendations to be made to elected members for final decision making at Full Council.

9.2 It must be acknowledged that unfortunately, due to the use of an out-of-date email address with no bounce/ undelivered message, back to advise it was an out-of-date email address, it was established after the review and the Options Appraisal process, that the Stow and Fountainhall Community Council regrettably had no knowledge of the review survey which went out to the whole of the Galashiels cluster community– until the matter was at Council being discussed in terms of the Review conclusions. It would appear they therefore could not add their valuable input on the survey within the Options Appraisal Mothball Review Process . This was highlighted by a local elected member following the Council meeting, as the elected member had received an email from the chair of the Stow and Fountainhall Community Council stating that the Community Council was not aware of the communications on this which had been sent to them by officers throughout the review process. The intention was to keep them updated and aware of the review and to advise them of the results of it. Communication was immediately commenced by Officers with the chair of the local Stow and Fountainhall Community Council (by way of the new up to date email address) to apologise for this regrettable administration error, and to make sure that the new email address was noted and to provide an undertaking that this would be used for all communications regarding the Statutory Consultation on closure. As such, it is imperative in this Statutory consultation process , that all relevant consultees voices are heard, listened to and carefully considered, in relation to this relevant proposal. Officers are keen to ensure that Stow and Fountainhall Community Council take a central role within this statutory Consultation process and are able to feedback views and opinions within the Statutory Consultation and also to attend the Public meeting. Officers provided an undertaking to them that the correct email address will be used to consistently inform the Stow and Fountainhall Community Council of the progress of the Statutory Consultation process and to allow their full representations to be made with regards the process. It is also assumed that Stow and Fountainhall Community Council will be made aware of the process by their local elected members in addition to keep them informed throughout the Statutory Consultation process and to ensure and encourage all everyone who has an interest in this proposal to close and rezone should be able to provide their views on it within the Statutory Consultation. Officers provided an undertaking that the Stow and Fountainhall Community Council will be fully included as they should be within the Statutory Consultation Process.

10. Results of Community Survey 2025

10.1 In terms of the community survey 2025/ 2026 for the Options Appraisal Mothball Review 2025/2026 there were 20 responses to the survey. The full results of the survey can be seen in Section 5 of the Options Appraisal Review Mothball Status Review Report 2026 in Appendix 5 of this Proposal Report. Officers acknowledged within the report that reporting the results of this survey to Council was slightly delayed due to competing workload demands of Officers; unfortunately, Education Officers had only been able to assess and analyse these results in early 2026. However, this remained well within the stipulated one-year mothball/ temporary closure period and aligns with the timescales discussed at Council on June 25, when the 12month decision to mothball/ temporary close due to the one pupil, was made. There was a commitment made them to begin a review in Autumn 25 to evaluate the primary school and ELC's viability and sustainability, and to ask for community views on the school and ELC about what should happen next, as soon as possible, in accordance with the intentions of the 2010 Act, which specifies that mothballing should not undermine the Act's objectives.

10.2 The data from the survey was in summary: -

10.3 -20 responses to the survey were received. 10 responses were from parents and carers within the Fountainhall catchment area, nine were from individuals residing out with the catchment area, and one was from a community group or organisation- being the Heriot Primary School Parent Council.

10.4 In response to whether families would consider using a reinstated Fountainhall Primary School and nursery, 5 respondents answered "yes", 3 answered "no", 2 answered "maybe" and 10 did not answer. The "yes" and "maybe" responses related to 5 children and were often contingent on nursery provision, wraparound care and a larger pupil cohort being offered at the primary.

10.5 The review identified approximately 12 children and infants residing in the Fountainhall catchment area: around 6 primary-aged children attending Stow and Heriot Primary Schools, and around 6 pre-school or infant-aged children attending settings including Stow ELC, Lauder ELC and Moorfoot Nursery.

10.6 Officers are aware that the survey suggested an albeit limited desire in the Fountainhall community to utilise a reopened Fountainhall Primary School and ELC, with 5 children's families suggesting they may use the primary and or ELC/ nursery provision from 2027 onwards. As the Options Appraisal Mothball Review report 2026 Report stated, this would equate to (5) children at Primary and an ELC in total with the possibility of utilising the Primary school should it be reinstated and mothball status rescinded at some stage:- 1 child who is 3.5years and would possibly attend P1 in 2027, 1 child who is 1.5 years old and would possibly attend P1 in 2029 or 2030, 1 child who is 1.5 years old and attends Lauder ELC currently but would possibly indicate that they might consider Fountainhall, if it were to be reinstated. 1 child who is 3years at Moorfoot Nursery and would wish the ELC to be opened, 1 child who is 3 years of age and at Stow nursery at the moment.

10.7 Suggestions in relation to the school and ELC included adding nursery and wraparound care, offering specialised focuses such as outdoor learning or additional needs and trying to attract more families by doing this investment. Some suggest this is the reason they sent their children to Stow or Heriot Instead given the provisions offered there and the larger cohort. Many responders highlighted the need for housing developments needed to draw young families in to help with demand while

expressing concerns over the demand for the school being too low from families in catchment already, and how families are choosing to utilise Heriot or Stow for the reasons above such as offering wraparound care or larger cohort as the school roll was too small for them and they expressed the view that they felt that a larger cohort was going to offer a better social educational experience.

10.8 The majority of responders proposed that Fountainhall should be recommended to close on a permanent basis and the catchment should be changed to Heriot Primary School catchment suggesting that this would help Heriot Primary school to thrive as the smallest rural school in the cluster with a declining roll and which is currently struggling to attract and keep numbers up at a healthy level for sustainable rural small school into the longer term.

10.9 The Parent Council from Heriot Primary was a responder who clearly stated this was a preference to assist Heriot to thrive and remain a sustainable rural offering.

10.11 One respondent suggested that from a teaching and parent perspective that it was “ from a moral and practical point of view, an easy decision to make; a school that has one pupil enrolled is not going to provide the holistic education set out for Curriculum for excellence and that Fountainhall should be encompassed into the Heriot Catchment” There was also an opposing view from a responder in terms of suggesting that “ Whilst it's extremely welcome that an outdoor forest nursery will be introduced to Heriot Primary, the same business model & investment into Fountainhall’ s nursery would be expected as the material infrastructure was already in place. It's expected that the same effort going into supporting Stow & Heriot is going into increasing the viability of Fountainhall” and officers are aware that there is some evidence of possible demand in terms of ELC with the survey suggesting that two responders indicated they could utilise an ELC offering within the School although this would in practical terms equate to a very small number of children perhaps at very best 2 or 3 children at best.

10.12 Although Officers understood and take cognisance of all the comments and respondents views. The majority of the respondents to the survey did suggest that their view would be to seek to close Fountainhall primary and ELC permanently, and look to realign it within the catchment area of Heriot school with (9 out of 20) of those responding and commenting that that should be the option that SBC should favour. The comments within the survey were very clear that this was the overall narrative that those responding wanted to see happening. Officers are also clear when drafting this proposal Paper that the Stow and Fountainhall Community Council has not has the opportunity to respond and may have differing views to communicate. However, within the Options Appraisal Review, Officers have thus far determined that, for the primary school to be reestablished and for the mothball (temporary closure) status to be lifted, there must be reasonable demonstrable community demand and educational benefits also. The survey indicates that such demand is not sufficient to justify this option being considered, especially when considering the overall landscape of adjacent catchment primary and ELC provisions. Further analysis of this issue will be provided in the subsequent sections of this report. The issue concerning rural schools is not strictly dichotomous; prevailing perspectives within most communities indicate that a single digit composite class may be insufficient to ensure both viability and sustainability at the primary level. Many believe such an arrangement would not deliver the educational advantages desired by parents and carers, particularly in terms of accommodating appropriate age groups and developmental stages. Others

have a different view and feel a very small roll would be better for their child or children. However, Officers are aware that there is usually a preference for at least two classes, or a preference for more children in order to facilitate learning with peer cohorts of similar ages and stages and this does appear to be the case with the Fountainhall Primary School survey respondents within the 25/26 review.

10.13 Officers recognise, based on community feedback from the Fountainhall survey that there is overall support for not maintaining Fountainhall primary and ELC but to seek to amalgamate this primary catchment to Heriot Primary school. The reasons would appear to be based on many different views. There is undoubtedly support for this option to try to support Heriot as the adjacent small rural school and to try to increase Heriot's numbers when there is a chance to do so. Also, officers understand that demand at Fountainhall is unlikely to increase substantially, due to its proximity to Heriot Primary and new ELC, but also because Stow Primary which also has an ELC facility attached and wrap around care facilities is popular too, thereby limiting Fountainhall's capacity to succeed independently due to this fact and which is a clear draw for parents and carers. Nonetheless, officers acknowledge that preferences vary among communities and individuals, and that educational approaches suitable for one child may not necessarily be ideal for another or preferred by parents and carers. Officers have noted that individuals in the Fountainhall catchment who have children at Heriot Primary or Stow Primary have expressed reluctance to move their children to a reinstated Fountainhall primary. This is because they have stated that their children are content and well-adjusted in those still smaller rural village schools and have cohorts of similar ages and stages there with larger friendship peer groups along with additional attractions, than they would have at Fountainhall due to the availability of ELC and wrap around care at those primary schools. As a result, the suggestion was that some parents and carers would be hesitant to commit to enrolling children to a reestablished Fountainhall catchment primary school unless numbers grew first, even if the intention or will to try to grow the school was there.

10.14 To determine what the most reasonable option was regarding the future of the school; Council officers within the 2025/ 2026 mothball Options Appraisal Review, identified several potential options to consider.

10.15 The report contained the analysis of the options to assist officers to identify the most reasonable option for the School to then make proposals and recommendations to Councillors. Four possible options were identified for the future of the School. In considering the four options in the Review, account was taken of the fact that there is a presumption against closure of a rural school. As part of the Options Appraisal 2026, the "rural school factors" specified in the School Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 have been given special regard as well as population and demographics of the area, catchment areas and profiles, what could be done to encourage more pupils to come to the school if it were to be reopened, likely developments in the area and the educational benefits or otherwise, and the likely impact on the Community and the likely effect on travel arrangements.

10.16 - The 4 options that were identified and discussed within the Options Appraisal Mothball Review Report 2026 (Appendix 5) were:-

Option	Description	Conclusion
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Option 1	Reinstate Fountainhall Primary School and ELC with the original catchment area.	Officers felt this was not a reasonable alternative to closure. Demand was not sufficient, projected numbers remain very low, with little future demand for the school at a viable and sustainable level. Of the survey respondents who stated they would consider utilising the school and ELC the total figure was “5” children in total over several years to come. 1 child who is 3.5years and would possibly attend P1 in 2027, 1 child who is 1.5 years old and would possibly attend P1 in 2029 or 2030, 1 child who is 1.5 years old and attends Lauder ELC currently but would possibly indicate that they might consider Fountainhall, if it were to be reinstated. 1 child who is 3years at Moorfoot Nursery and would wish the ELC to be opened, 1 child who is 3 years of age and at Stow nursery at the moment. Very low numbers spanning a number of academic years/ ELC. if the school was to be reinstated based on a generous assumption that it could have “”up to 5 children max within a five-year period” it would have an occupancy rate of up to 10 percent at the best estimate. Officers reviewed catchment pupil numbers, housebuilding projections and birth-rate data for the June 2025 Options Appraisal and again for the 2026 Options Appraisal Mothball Review Report- See Appendix 5. The Local Development Plan allocates one Fountainhall site for six houses. At January 2026 and Proposal report drafting, there were no new residential approvals or live consents in the school catchment. A two-house Watherston site may remain developable, but the owner’s intentions are unknown. Development therefore depends on developer interest and completion rates. Estimates remain speculative. Housebuilding may generate one or two pupils annually, depending on build rates, family migration and parental preference. Most survey respondents favoured the slightly larger cohorts at Heriot or Stow, although some families with younger children suggested they might consider using reinstated school. Updated planning information from Officers as at drafting Proposal Report suggests there has been no changes at planning level, and the position with housebuilding / allocation for development remains the same. In addition, substantial investment would be required to reinstate the school because the school is rated “C” for both condition and suitability, indicating a poor standard. Most survey respondents favoured permanent closure and rezoning the catchment to
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		Heriot Primary School to support the long-term sustainability of its small rural primary provision and new ELC.
Option 2	Reinstate Fountainhall Primary School and ELC and seek to expand or re-delineate the catchment area.	Officers felt reinstatement and changes to catchment was not a reasonable alternative to closure. No realistic catchment change was identified that would materially increase demand or provide clear educational benefit given the clear intentions of parents in the area to utilise Heriot/Stow primaries over Fountainhall primary prior to temporary closure when demand fell to one. The trend has been clear. They utilised larger cohorts for educational benefits and facilities such as wrap around care and ELC provision. It is not considered likely that there would be a significant change in demand for spaces at a re-opened Fountainhall Primary School. Almost all the pupils that reside near the catchment boundaries currently have shorter or at least on par journeys to their current schools. Given the geography of the area careful consideration has been paid to the distance of journeys and to safe routes to school; it is the Council's policy to support placement requests wherever possible to allow for parental choice, and officers have been unable to conclude that expanding the Fountainhall catchment area sufficiently would necessarily bring more demand and provide greater numbers for the reinstatement of the primary school given the trend to utilise Heriot or Stow Primaries in the main and the clear trend to support Heriot as the smaller rural offering within the area, and given the new ELC facility within the school.
Option 3	Continue to mothball Fountainhall Primary School and ELC for a further period with temporary catchment arrangements continuing.	Officers felt continuing to keep closed temporarily in the hope demand increased, was not a reasonable alternative to closure either. Continued mothballing or temporary closure would prolong uncertainty and would not be an effective use of public resources where demand is not projected to rise significantly, communities should not be "in limbo" for longer than necessary and such temporary closure should not be used to circumvent the 2010 Act. Elected members, when agreeing to mothball, expressed clear desire that temporary closure would only be "temporary" and that it would be prudent to move to Statutory Closure, if demand was seen not to increase substantially, sooner rather than later. Keeping a school temporarily closed and unused for years in the hope that numbers do rise, is an inefficient use of limited public resources and contradicts Scottish Government guidance on making a permanent decision about the primary school's future within a clear reasonable timeframe, and is not helpful for the

		community of Fountainhall. For many parents and carers who responded to the community survey finality will mean helping to sustain Heriot over Fountainhall by recommending to close Fountainhall and rezone the catchment to Heriot and support one very small rural school (adjacent to Fountainhall) with a falling roll and recently opened new ELC facility, rather than try to sustain two or keep Fountainhall temporarily closed as that this would not be a sustainable option for the reasons given above.
Option 4	Proceed to statutory consultation on permanent closure of Fountainhall Primary School and ELC and permanent rezoning of the catchment to Heriot Primary School.	Officers felt that this was the most reasonable option, having regard to the educational benefits of rezoning to Heriot Primary, sustainability, and community views which were clear within the most recent survey, rural factors and best value. This option is explored further below in-The Proposal

1. The Proposal – Option 4.

11.1 Educational Benefits of the Proposal to close and Rezone to Heriot Primary School.

11.2 Scottish Borders Council has statutory duties relating to the provision of education in the Scottish Borders. The educational benefits of the proposal have been assessed having regard to the Curriculum for Excellence, the Council's priorities for children and young people, and the statutory guidance under the 2010 Act.

11.3 Education and Children's Services key priorities are to improve well-being, inclusion, experiences and opportunities for all our children and young people, both within and out with the formal curriculum. As part of a multi-agency partnership, the following priorities have been identified within the Education and Children's Services Plan and these are important priorities within all Scottish Borders Council Schools:-

- Keeping children and young people safe
- Promoting the health and well-being of all children and young people and reducing health inequalities;
- Improving the well-being and life chances for our most vulnerable children and young people;
- Increasing participation and engagement
- Raising attainment and achievement for all and closing the gap between the lowest and highest achievers.
- The Curriculum for Excellence is the national curriculum for Scottish schools. It aims to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need if they are to flourish in life, learning and work now and in the future. The Council has a further duty to deliver a service which meets the criteria for best value, in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, economy and equal opportunities, and which meets the agreed priorities in the Single Outcome Agreement and Scottish Borders Council's Corporate Plan.
- The purpose of the Curriculum for Excellence is encapsulated in the four capacities to enable each child or young person to be:- • a successful learner; • a confident individual; • a responsible citizen; and • an effective contributor.
- The Curriculum for Excellence encourages children and young people to develop through different learning experiences.

11.4 These can include:-

- Collaborative learning - where children can work collectively within a group setting. This allows children to learn from each other and to share experiences and skills;
- Individual learning- where children are given opportunities to make choices about their own learning. This encourages children to learn in the most effective way for them;
- Peer to peer learning and assessment;
- Relevance in learning, where children learn through experiences;
- Outdoor learning – where learning takes place out of the classroom or school setting.

11.5 The Educational Benefits of the Proposals to close Fountainhall primary and ELC and rezone to Heriot Primary have been assessed taking account of the requirements under legislation and the priorities and aims of the Children and Young People's Services Plan and having regard to the terms and statutory guidance of the Act, along with the above priorities at the centre of the Educational benefits.

11.6 Heriot Primary School is a small rural school located approximately 4-5 miles from Fountainhall and around an 8-minute journey by car. It is situated within the village of Heriot. It has a capacity of 50 pupils and had a roll of 19 in January 2026, expected to rise to circa 22 with the August 2026 P1 intake. It is also about to open a new Early Learning Provision on 19th August 2026, with one teacher and ELC Staff for 8 new ELC children. It is expected that there will be circa 26 children in total attending the Primary and ELC facility by Easter 2027 with the current projections. Heriot Primary and ELC has now the smallest roll number, of the Galashiels Cluster Primary Schools. Fountainhall was smaller when it was open. Stow Primary and ELC is the next adjacent primary catchment with a roll of approximately 92 children (including ELC) at time of drafting the Proposal report.

11.7 The proposal is for the permanent closure of Fountainhall Primary and ELC and the rezoning of the Fountainhall primary catchment to Heriot Primary School to allow Fountainhall catchment pupils to attend a similar rural primary school setting with a slightly larger peer group than could be provided by a reinstated Fountainhall Primary School. It would be hoped that amalgamation the catchment with Heriot would support the roll to grow by supporting the longer-term sustainability of Heriot Primary School, which itself has been suffering from a small and declining school roll. Heriot Primary School is gaining an Early Learning and Childcare setting which will be opening in August 2026 and which will have one class teacher and ELC as advised above.

11.8 It was considered in the analysis of options 1,2 and 3, that it would not be reasonable to re-open Fountainhall Primary school with its current or extended catchment area and that continuing to mothball / close on temporary basis, would not be a reasonable option to progress. Proceeding to a statutory closure consultation on a proposal to close Fountainhall permanently was seen as the most reasonable option in the circumstances and that there was no alternative but to proceed to move to this proposal. This option would formalise the status quo; and result in the permanent closure of the school and permanent delineation of the primary catchment zone to Heriot. This would allow Education and Children's Services to declare the school building of Fountainhall as surplus, and alternative uses for the building could then be progressed thereafter or allow the community to consider options under CAT provisions etc. Council Officers were unable to detect sufficient enough demand in terms of a sustainable school roll for the future to suggest reopening of Fountainhall Primary and ELC, and it is considered that the educational benefits of the catchment amalgamation with Heriot for Educational benefits reasons, and sustainability arguments for supporting Heriot are particularly persuasive.

11.9 Heriot Primary and ELC can offer a full curriculum within the traditional village school building and the extensive village school infrastructure required to support future Fountainhall catchment and ELC pupils' learning journeys.

11.10 Heriot and Fountainhall were already linked through shared headship and partnership working prior to mothballing/temporary closure. A village school setting can play an important and strategic role in a rural community setting spanning across villages and provide opportunities for members of both communities to become involved in learning and having closer ties with each other in terms of the school. Closer forged ties between the Heriot and Fountainhall village communities can provide specific learning opportunities and experiences which can enhance the sense of community across generations and can assist smaller rural communities. Heriot primary School prides itself on being able to provide a wide and varied curriculum within a "family setting". With the support of an active Parent Council, the school under the stewardship of the headteacher Susan Anderson, has excellent relationships with parents and carers to enhance learning. Officers understand that The Heriot Primary School management actively encourages parents and carers to participate in learning and activities and they actively encourage parents and carers to assist within the school to help classes, trips and many other activities. All parents and Carers of pupils are automatically members of the parent Council and School staff and Community members can also have places on the Council. Officers understand that The Parent Council of Heriot are well known for working extremely hard to raise funds to support the school by organising events and they have an active role in school decision-making processes, making changes and improvements. Such highlights include raising funds for football goals, play equipment, an astroturf pitch for football and an outdoor learning classroom. The parent Council of Heriot was also a participant within the Fountainhall Mothball Review Status, Options Appraisal Survey 26 and responded to state that they wished that Fountainhall to be rezoned to Heriot on a permanent basis, to support their smaller village school's sustainability into the longer term.

11.11 An educational benefit from the proposal to close and rezone to Heriot primary school and ELC, could be that Pupils may have greater exposure to friends across a wider age range at a slightly larger but still village ethos school, which can assist with social skills and development. The nature of composite classes can encourage pupils to work together across the age ranges and abilities which can have a positive impact on all learners. Heriot as advised provides a rural school environment with excellent and extensive grounds, and which is closer in character and ethos to Fountainhall and thus will offer that level of similarity on a permanent basis if the catchment was rezoned. With a slightly larger peer group than Fountainhall, it is often felt that this offers more opportunities to experience a variety of learning and teaching experiences offered through flexibility of grouping and the possibilities that allows and the extensive grounds within Heriot allows that to happen within an outdoor learning environment at Heriot.

11.12 A slightly larger village primary school roll with an Early learning provision can also provide more opportunities for social interaction across primary and younger age groups. The forging of close friendships and the development of self-esteem can be enhanced by being able to also be part of a more age-appropriate peer group of a sufficient size to allow a range of interactions and relationships to form and reform but also to assist as a group in collaboration with younger age groups. There will be a slightly larger staff and parent body at Heriot Primary due, in apart also, to the formation of the ELC and which increases the likelihood of more adults leading a range of activities which would

support the provision of a richer and higher quality curriculum. As discussed above, there is an active parent council at Heriot who do a lot to support the teaching staff already at the school. There would be greater opportunities for team sports and other active recreational activities. This applies even to individual sports, where successful learning of skills is helped by talking and sharing experiences. It further applies to the health and wellbeing element of the curriculum which involves discussion between pupils about healthy lifestyle choices. Whilst these problems can be overcome by taking the smaller school roll pupils to participate in activities in a neighbouring school, if partnership working with schools is needed, that involves time out of school travelling there and back when in a smaller rural school offering and is a drawback of a very small rural offering such as Fountainhall if it were to be reinstated. If Fountainhall were to close on a permanent basis and the catchment rezoned to Heriot such travel, even if limited due to proximity, would be not required as much although, Officers note that it would likely still require travel to collaborate with Stow and Clovenford's primaries for the benefit of partnership school working. As with sports, the possibility of the slightly larger roll at Heriot, could also provide a greater likelihood of pupils benefitting from a wider range of solo and group musical and artistic opportunities if the school roll were to grow. The transition to High School may be easier, as pupils would move as part of a hopefully larger village school cohort albeit still within a smaller rural school setting given the current roll of Heriot and the demographics of the school being based within the small rural locale of Heriot.

11.13 Finally, The clear consensus from most of the responders to the Options Appraisal Review Survey 2026 was that Heriot Primary should be supported to thrive for sustainability purposes given it has noted a declining school roll and that closure of Fountainhall (in the face of very low demand) and realigning the catchment to Heriot primary permanently would do a great deal to support that smaller school to grow, as it is currently battling for numbers and ongoing demand. This could help support Heriot to continue to be viable and to encourage enrolment with a stronger school identity into the future, if the catchment was to change. Council officers are therefore satisfied that there would be strong educational benefits as discussed above, attached to a proposal to realign a catchment to Heriot on a permanent basis, but it is important to establish what the views and preferences are at the stage of carrying out this statutory consultation on proposals from the Fountainhall and the Heriot community before a final proposal is made to Councillors about the Proposal and they are asked to decide following the Statutory Consultation.

12. Rural Factors - Impact on any current and future pupils on the closure of Fountainhall and rezone to Heriot :- As discussed, a slightly larger school roll can often provide greater opportunities for peer interaction, group learning, friendship formation, team activities, health and wellbeing learning, and transition support.

12.1. There will be a slightly larger staff body at Heriot and also a larger parent body (and one which is extremely active) which increases the likelihood of adults leading a range of activities would support the provision of a richer and higher quality curriculum. Fountainhall catchment pupils would be attending a catchment school at Heriot with a slightly larger peer group which could allow more opportunities to experience a variety of learning and teaching experiences offered through flexibility of grouping. There are and will therefore be greater opportunities for team sports and other active recreational activities. This applies even to individual sports, where successful learning of skills is helped by talking and sharing experiences. It further applies to the health and wellbeing element of the curriculum. As part of the Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, the aim is to develop

increased awareness of the world of work, social skills and employability skills. Such knowledge and understanding and skills acquisition very much benefit from discussions and dialogue with peers of the same age and stage. The level to which pupils are able to become skilled in social interaction will depend to an extent on the opportunities afforded to them. The forging of close friendships and the development of self-esteem is enhanced by each pupil being enabled to be part of an age-appropriate peer group of a sufficient size to allow a range of interactions and relationships to form and reform. Heriot Primary school currently has a very small roll which dropped to 19 -but it anticipated to go to circa 22 with new p1 starts in August 26 and with an extra 8 ELC places given the opening of the new nursery provision. This can also make the catchment area attractive for families and households to locate.

12.2 Integrating the Fountainhall catchment into the Heriot Primary catchment is likely to increase enrolment at Heriot Primary School and its new ELC provision, benefiting current and future pupils. This supports the **Scottish Government's 2024 Addressing Depopulation Action Plan**, which requires decision-making to consider wider rural development and demographic outcomes, including the role of schools and nurseries in making communities attractive places to live. Although the proposed closure of Fountainhall village school is regrettable and represents a drawback, rezoning its catchment to Heriot is likely to strengthen the long-term sustainability of Heriot Primary School and ELC, reflect community preferences and support one viable small rural school where maintaining two is unlikely to be sustainable. Overall, the proposal is considered to offer greater educational benefits and sustainability benefits than disadvantages.

13 Rural Factors -Likely impact on Staff on closure and rezone to Heriot

13.1 Fountainhall was temporarily closed due to having only one pupil, and the shared headteacher was already head teacher of Heriot Primary school overseeing both schools already. The only impact on staffing is in respect of Heriot Primary School. Officers understand that therefore there was to be an increase in staff costs in terms of Heriot Primary School as that cost was no longer be shared between the two schools, and that cost was borne by Heriot primary school alone. Officers are aware that other teaching staff hours or employee posts were redeployed from Fountainhall and absorbed into vacancies within other SBC primary schools and thus as integrated as part of a larger team, staff are able to share planning and curricular resources. They can also learn from each other to provide improved approaches to learning and teaching.

13.2 Fountainhall as a one teacher school would often present challenges in attracting and supporting staff. In a larger but albeit still smaller rural village Heriot primary and new ELC, staff would be able to receive support in providing an inclusive curriculum and enable collaborative working together too, albeit still a within a very small rural village school setting. Staff can work within a more sustainable team structure, sharing planning, curricular resources and professional support. The proposal supports the wider rural sustainability objective of strengthening one viable rural school provision in the area rather than maintaining two very small schools in close proximity with insufficient demand to enable neither school to likely thrive into the longer term. There appears to be approximately 2 children at least from Fountainhall catchment attending Heriot Primary currently and there is sufficient room (capacity) for all and any children within Fountainhall Primary catchment to attend Heriot Primary, and a new ELC provision which is opening on 19th August 2026.

14 Rural Factors- Community Impact Considerations on closure and rezone to Heriot.

14.1 Fountainhall Primary School and ELC is a rural school for the purposes of the 2010 Act. Accordingly, there is a “presumption against closure” and the Council must have special regard to the likely educational benefits and any drawbacks, including all or *any community impact* and travel implications of the proposal, as well as any and all reasonable alternatives to closure which must be considered and discounted before moving to any statutory Consultation on Closure is progressed.

14.2 The permanent closure of Fountainhall Primary School would have an undoubted impact on the Fountainhall community because the school has historically formed part of the village fabric and would mean that the community would no longer have access to their own village school within Fountainhall. However, although there will be a clear sadness about this within the community and which Officers understand, the roll had already declined to one projected pupil and that pupil was living out with the catchment. There appears to have been a trend whereby the school was not considered by those in the catchment area for the reasons outlines previously.

14.3 Prior to temporary closure/mothballing, officers understand from the headteacher that the Gala Water Singers were the only community group to use the school outside school hours, for choir rehearsals and recitals. The group has not used the premises since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Otherwise, the school was used only for school functions and Parent Council meetings, and no other community group or organisation is known to have used it before or after temporary closure. Officers are keen to welcome the Community Council’s views on the matter, through the statutory consultation. Survey responses to date indicate limited interest in reinstatement, mainly where nursery or wraparound care would be provided. With the prevailing view being that closing Fountainhall Primary School and rezoning its catchment to Heriot could give Heriot a more secure future by concentrating limited demand in one sustainable small rural school in the area rather than dividing it between two. This appears reasonable given that most parents and carers have chosen Heriot or Stow Primary Schools for the reasons outlined above. That established pattern of preference requires to be taken into account.

14.4 Apart from one representative who opposed the temporary closure of the school when one pupil was projected for August 2025, no other concerns about the closure or temporary rezoning to Heriot were raised with officers or elected members. Most respondents to the autumn review survey supported continuing this arrangement and viewed it positively as a means of strengthening and supporting Heriot Primary School. The proposal is also expected to benefit Heriot’s pupils and staff from the educational benefits listed above. Officers consider that supporting Heriot Primary School and its new ELC provision is the most prudent way to promote sustainable rural education in the area and help secure their long-term future.

14.5 There is now a new Early learning and Childcare Provision at Heriot Primary School which has been passed by the Care inspectorate at the time of drafting, and which is set to open on Wednesday 19th August. This was mentioned by several responders to the survey stating that they would be intending on utilising a nursery/ ELC at Heriot should it be established (they stated at the time of the survey) and would be intending to support that school being supported by the realignment of Fountainhall to Heriot Primary school. This clear wider community support to utilise this primary school is felt will go some way to help sustain the future of the Heriot Primary and ELC and must be considered.

14.6 Prolonged uncertainty over a school's temporary closure or mothballing status can create uncertainty about a rural village's future. A permanent decision following statutory consultation would provide clarity, allow Fountainhall village community to plan for the future and enable support to be focused on Heriot Primary School through permanent rezoning of the catchment.

14.7 Opportunities for Fountainhall village community also could arise in terms of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 for any possible future use of the building by way of Community asset transfer. Any proposals for future use of the building will only come into play once decisions are made in accordance with statutory obligations on closure proposals, but in line with other school closure situations, there are options that suggest the building and grounds could in theory be developed into a meaningful asset for the area and beyond in due course. Those matters would be considered separately and would not determine or prejudice the statutory closure proposal or procedures but it important to know for the community of Fountainhall that such is possible.

15. Rural Factors - Travel Arrangements- likely implications on closure and rezone to Heriot

15.1 Fountainhall and Heriot villages are approximately 5 miles apart, with an estimated journey time of around 8 to 9 minutes by car. Fountainhall to the village of Stow is also around 9 minutes by car. Given the semi-rural nature of the area, individual journey times may vary depending on where families live within the Fountainhall catchment zone.

15.2 Transport is currently provided in accordance with Council policy for any children in the Fountainhall catchment who wishes to attend Heriot Primary School as the temporary catchment school, following temporary closure in June 2025. If the catchment is permanently rezoned to Heriot, future transport provision would be provided in accordance with Scottish Borders Council's school transport policy and would continue. There is not thought to be any increased travel time concerns with both Heriot and Fountainhall being in close rural proximity to each other (being a matter of single digit- minutes away by school transport / car/bus/) and any permanent change to this is not thought to be too onerous or provide unreasonable travel times.

16. Rural Factors- Likely Financial Implications on closure and rezone to Heriot as per Options Appraisal Mothball Review 2026

16.2 The table below shows the estimated revenue and one-off capital costs associated with each of the options considered in the Options Appraisal Review Report 2026. Options 1 and 2 would also require upfront capital investment in order to bring the property back into use due to the nature of the investment required.

Cost Details	Option 1 Re-Instate	Option 2 Re-Instate with extended Catchment	Option 3 Continued Mothballing	Option 4 Consult on Closure
Staffing				
Teaching Staffing Costs	173,332	173,332	94,112	94,112
Early Learning	78,144	78,144	-	-
Additional Support Need	3,723	3,723	-	-
Cleaning & Catering	13,099	13,099	-	-
Utilities				
Gas/Electricity/Oil	15,059	15,059	2,192	2,192
Property				
General Maintenance	3,853	3,853	750	750
Education Costs				
Devolved School Management Budget	407	407	-	-
Smart Boards	3,000	3,000	-	-
Refuse Collection	399	399	-	-
Transport				
School Transport	-	-	-	-
Total	291,016	291,016	97,054	97,054

16.3 Options 1 and 2 -The estimated annual running cost of reinstating Fountainhall Primary School and ELC is £291,016 PA based on 2026/27 prices and the minimum staffing required for a primary school and ELC, together with routine maintenance, utilities, cleaning, catering and priority upgrades identified through the suitability survey. There will also be essential maintenance required per the suitability survey, this includes priority areas including new smart boards and a new heating system needed, electrical capacity/ WIFI installation. Reinstatement would also require capital investment not fully costed within the annual figure, including substantial improvements to heating, electrical capacity, Wi-Fi, telephony, IT and classroom technology.

16.4 Option 3- The estimated cost of continuing to keep the school and ELC temporarily closed is £97,054 reflecting ongoing running costs required and also reflecting the reallocation of head teacher costs to temporary catchment Heriot and in terms of utilities, and general maintenance.

16.5 Option 4- A permanent closure proposal, subject to statutory consultation and decision-making requirements, would avoid estimated costs of approximately £193,692 per annum when compared with reinstatement. Annual running costs would remain the same as those associated with continued mothballing (which was discounted option 3) until a formal closure decision was made and the catchment permanently rezoned. Decisions regarding the building's use or disposal would be made only after successful closure consultation. A capital receipt may be realised by the council if the building was sold.

16.6 If Option 1 or 2 were approved and realised, additional revenue budget of £193,962 would need to be identified and used, as well as capital budget to provide upgraded electrical capacity, a new heating system, and Wi-Fi installation which would need to be fully costed. The cost of Options 3 and 4 would fall within existing budgets. .

16.7 Reinstating the school is not considered financially viable because projected pupil numbers and the potential demand identified through the survey, planning data and housing projections remain very low. More importantly, the educational benefits would be insufficient, as any future school roll is expected to remain extremely small. The required expenditure would therefore be difficult to justify, particularly given families' preference for the larger pupil cohorts available at nearby Heriot and Stow Primary Schools and the clear preference for trying to support sustainability at Heriot Primary into the future.

17 Building Condition and Suitability

17.1 Throughout Scotland, core facts are gathered and published on school buildings. The definition and assessment categorisations are set by the Scottish Government as follows:-

17.2 Condition- An assessment of the physical condition of the school and its grounds. Categorisation is as follows:- A: Good – Performing well and operating efficiently B: Satisfactory – Performing adequately but showing minor deterioration C: Poor – Showing major defect and/or not operating adequately D: Bad – Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure

17.3 Suitability- An assessment of the school as a whole, its buildings and its grounds and of the impact these have on learning and teaching, leisure and social activities and the health and well-being of all users. Categorisation is as follows:- A: Good – Performing well and operating efficiently B: Satisfactory – Performing well but with minor problems C: Poor – Showing major problems and/or not operating optimally D: Bad – Does not support the delivery of services to children and communities

17.4 The most recent condition and suitability information identified and elaborated more within the Options Appraisal Mothball/ Temporary Closure Review Report 2026 stated that Fountainhall Primary School required significant investment before it could continue to operate effectively as a modern primary and ELC setting. The building was assessed as Condition “C” overall, indicating poor condition and major issues or sub-optimal operation. Priority issues include electrical capacity, Wi-Fi, heating reliability, smart boards, ventilation, lighting, flooding at the old entrance, skylight leaks, blinds, and the boiler.

School: Fountainhall Primary School

Weighting 50% 15% 15% 10% 10% 9.5
Score out of 20 8 11 9 12 13

	General Learning & Teaching	Internal Social Areas	Internal Facilities	External Social Areas	External Facilities	Total:
Functionality	C	B	C	B	B	C
Accessibility	D	C	D	C	C	D
Environmental Conditions	D	C	C	B	B	C
Safety & Security	C	C	C	C	C	C
Fixed Furniture & Fittings	C	C	C	C	B	C
Total:	C	C	C	C	B	C

Overall Suitability Rating =

C

17.5 Priority Levels of Investment required:-

- Improved electrical capacity.
- Wi-Fi in Head Teachers office.
- Improved heating system as the current one is unreliable.

Short-term interventions - suitability improvements:

- Improved heating system as it is unpredictable- when it fails, it creates very significant disruption.
- Improved Wi-Fi and new smartboards.
- A door from the nursery classroom in order to create free flow play between the playground and the classroom.

Recommendations for occupant comfort upgrades :

- Improved heating system as it is unpredictable, when it fails, it creates very significant disruption.
- Improved lighting, as harsh lighting in classrooms can be an issue.
- Replacement of the noisy extractor fan and harsh lighting in changing room as they cause significant problems especially for children with ASN.
- Improved ventilation as this is generally poor.

Key Maintenance Actions:

- Flooding at old entrance.
- Skylight leaks during heavy rain.
- Blinds are not operational.
- Boiler is old and unreliable.
- Loud extractor fan in changing room.
- Low electrical capacity.

17.6 All these matters would require significant investment if the school and ELC were to be reinstated and are not deemed reasonable or justifiable in the circumstances.

18 Environmental Impact on closure and rezone to Heriot

18.1 Given the rural nature of the area, most pupils already require transport or have historically attended schools other than Fountainhall for the last few years. Operating any school and providing school transport will have some environmental impact, but the proposal is not expected to create a material environmental effect. The fact that most pupils in catchment did not attend their own catchment school prior to mothballing or temporary closure of the school meant that there was no option taking up for walking to school in any event. The environmental impact of a proposal to close the school and ELC on a permanent basis is not considered material.

19. Further Evaluation of additional Further Alternatives to Closure Mooted by Community

19.1 The Options Appraisal Mothball Review Report 2026 considered all reasonable alternatives to closure, including reinstatement with the original catchment, catchment expansion, continuing

mothballing, reestablishing ELC or establishing wraparound care provision, attracting housing development, infant-only provision, and an alternative specialist use of the building.

19.2 Those alternatives were not considered viable because projected demand remains very low, the current and forecast catchment population is limited, reinstatement would require significant expenditure, and there is no clear evidence that any alternative would generate sufficient and importantly sustainable demand for Fountainhall Primary School and ELC. The general consensus with the community of parents and carers thus far, is that such a small rural school cannot continue alongside another adjacent smaller rural school such as Heriot and the prevailing sentiment is that it would be better for the community to support one village school to thrive and survive rather than two to not. The opening of the Heriot Early Learning and Childcare class means that this is likely to be supported by the community to help to sustain the future of Heriot Primary and ELC and the survey respondents seem to suggest that this is their general preference. Officers are keen to support this preference and this proposal takes cognisance of this and officers clear commitment to sustaining the rural school offering at Heriot Primary School.

19.3 Officers are also required to consider suggestions from the community and all alternatives to proceeding to a consultation on closure given Fountainhall is a rural primary school. A range of alternative options to closing Fountainhall Primary School were considered by officers having been mooted by the community. Officers were very grateful for all input by the community. Suggestions included introducing specialist provision for children with additional needs, establishing wraparound care or nursery/ELC settings, increasing awareness of the school, attracting new housing developments, and allowing a grace period for rural schools to grow numbers. Each option was carefully reviewed. The suggestion of using the building for specialist Additional Support Needs provision or other educational purposes would be considered separately if the closure proposal proceeds and only after the statutory process has been completed. No such alternative use removes the requirement to consult on permanent closure of the primary school however officers have considered matters in relation to the further alternatives to closure as is detailed within the Options Appraisal Mothball Review Report 2026 and these options and conclusions can be summarised below:-

- Specialist Provision for Additional Needs: Specialist Education Officers are working on an ongoing project with the Vardy Foundation to develop proposals for local provision, including ASN, but there are no confirmed locations and no immediate plans for Fountainhall. The option may be considered in future, contingent on outcomes elsewhere.
- Wraparound Care/Nursery (ELC): While positive for the village, current and projected numbers are too low to justify a new setting. Existing ELC provision in the Galashiels cluster is sufficient, and there appears to be more local community interest in utilising the new Heriot Primary Nursery class due to open in August 2026, and was actively mentioned within the survey as an option for the majority of parents and carers who wished to be taken forward instead. Officers understand there has been positive take up of places and approximately 8 children will be starting in August 2026.
- Raising Awareness: The school is already listed on the Council's website, and further promotion alone is unlikely to address the underlying issue of low demand in the circumstances given that families wish to utilise other schools such as Heriot and Stow for the social and educational benefits of a larger school cohort and also due to wrap around

care and ELC facilities there, as seen by the results of the survey, however Officers do appreciate this suggestion.

- **Housing Development:** The Local Development Plan allows for a small number of new houses, as is mentioned previously in this report, but planning approvals have not increased and future development is uncertain within the catchment. Relying on speculative growth is not considered a good use of public resources and conflicts with government guidance for timely decision-making when the community preference would appear to be for supporting Heriot Primary School and ELC.
- **Implement a Grace Period for Increasing Numbers:** One Suggestion was made within the survey to allow rural schools in the Borders a three-year period to grow numbers were considered. Officers understand that current projections indicate persistently low enrolments and demand, and a lack of will within the community of Fountainhall when utilising other local schools and ELC, making this option unviable for Fountainhall when the clear case for proceeding to a Statutory Consultation on closure sooner rather than later is preferred and specified in such circumstances in terms of legislation in this area and in terms of Scottish Government Guidance. Scottish Borders Council has utilised a period of grace previously in relation to other rural schools, but this is done on a case-by-case basis and determined on their own facts and circumstances, by reviews each year of temporary closure, and Scottish Government Guidance is very clear that this should not be used to undermine the requirements of the 2010 Act. Where it is clear that demand is not likely to increase substantially in order to reinstate/ reopen the school, then proceeding to a Statutory Consultation on a permanent decision should be progressed to avoid communities being “in limbo”.
- **Establishment of Infant only Classes:** The idea of starting with infant only or composite classes was assessed, but with only around five children’s families potentially interested in utilising a reestablished primary within the survey, spanning a number of years to get to the number of “5”, numbers are insufficient to justify reopening the school for this reason in order to grow the school for the ground up. Existing schools in the cluster can accommodate all pupils, and long-term sustainability remains unlikely given the preferences of those who answered the survey who in the main wanted to support one small rural school to increase demand and thrive (Heriot Primary and ELC) rather than two smaller village schools which would likely struggle to attract sufficient numbers if both were allowed to continue and which is it felt would not serve either community well.

19.4 In conclusion, officers carefully reviewed all reasonable alternatives to closure, including the community’s suggestions, and assessed their educational, community and travel implications in terms of the rural factors. Low projected pupil numbers and the availability of provision elsewhere meant that none was considered viable. Key considerations were the long-term sustainability of Heriot Primary School and its new ELC provision, educational benefit and the effective use of public resources. Officers therefore concluded that neither continued mothballing nor catchment expansion was justified. Permanent closure of Fountainhall Primary School and ELC, with the catchment permanently rezoned to Heriot Primary School, was considered the preferred option because it would provide clarity and certainty for the community. There is no clear evidence that sufficient children living in the Fountainhall catchment would attend a reinstated village school to secure its long-term viability. Survey

responses indicated a community preference for permanent closure and rezoning to Heriot Primary School and its new ELC provision. Heriot Primary school parent council is also clear that this is their preference to help their school. Officers therefore recommend progressing this proposal, recognising its educational benefits. All reasonable alternatives to closure were considered and discounted before the closure proposal was advanced. The proposal aligns with the community views expressed to date and wider rural development objectives, particularly the aim of supporting Heriot Primary School and new ELC as a sustainable small rural school into the longer term.

20. Integrated Impact Assessment

20.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the Options Appraisal Mothball Status Review Report 2026. It will be reviewed and updated as required during the statutory consultation period / process and before the Consultation Report is finalised – this is an iterative process and will be updated as the Statutory Consultation Process evolves.

21. Summary and Conclusions

21.1 Fountainhall Primary School and ELC were temporarily closed because demand had fallen to very low levels. The primary school roll had reduced from 24 pupils in 2020 to a projected one pupil (an out of catchment placement) in August 2025, and the ELC setting had been mothballed or temporarily closed since 2023 following low enrolment numbers.

21.2 The Options Appraisal Review of 2026 identified limited evidence of demand for reinstatement for both primary and ELC. Although some respondents expressed interest in using a reinstated school or nursery, the numbers were very small and often depended on additional provision such as wraparound care, nursery provision and a larger cohort in the school, before it would be attractive for families to consider.

21.3 Permanently closing Fountainhall Primary School and ELC and rezoning the catchment to Heriot Primary School is expected to provide educational benefits by enabling future catchment pupils to attend a nearby rural village school with a similar ethos, and a potentially larger peer group offering broader opportunities than Fountainhall Primary School could reasonably offer. The proposal would also support the long-term sustainability of Heriot Primary School. Most survey respondents favoured supporting Heriot and establishing ELC provision there. The new ELC is due to open on Wednesday 19th August 2026, with eight children expected to attend and provision supported by a class teacher and ELC staff.

21.4 Having given special regard to the rural school factors, the Council considers that the educational and sustainability benefits of permanently closing Fountainhall Primary School and ELC and rezoning the catchment to Heriot Primary School outweigh the disadvantages. It is therefore consulting on this proposal as the most reasonable option in the circumstances. The proposal reflects the views of most respondents to the 2025/26 review survey and appears consistent with the preferences expressed by parents and carers in the Fountainhall and Heriot communities. Officers recognise that closing a village school will understandably cause sadness and acknowledge the wider challenges facing rural communities in Scotland. However, concentrating support on Heriot Primary School and its new ELC provision is considered the best way to sustain rural education in the area, as maintaining two struggling small schools would be unlikely to serve either community effectively. As

Fountainhall Primary School is designated as rural, there is a statutory presumption against closure. All reasonable alternatives were therefore assessed through the appraisal process and discounted for clear and evidenced reasons before this proposal was advanced under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. This assessment is set out in the 2026 Options Appraisal Mothball Status Review Report and summarised in this Proposal Paper.

22. Responding to the Proposal

22.1 Interested parties are invited to respond to the proposal by making written or electronic submissions during the consultation period to this link:-

<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/regulatory-services/fountainhallstatutory>



Or use this address for written responses:-

The Fountainhall Primary School and ELC Closure Proposal
Education and Children's Services
Scottish Borders Council
Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells Melrose
TD6 0SA

Telephone: 01893 582 4000

schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk

22.2 Please state that you are looking to make comment on the Statutory Consultation –The Fountainhall Primary and Early Learning and Childcare Closure Proposal and rezone to Heriot Primary School.

Responses should state the respondent's relationship to the school or affected community, for example parent, carer, young person, staff member, community resident or community organisation.

Those submitting a response should be aware that responses may be open to public scrutiny and may require to be disclosed in response to reasonable requests. If a respondent wishes their response to be treated as confidential, this should be clearly stated. Those wishing to respond are invited to state their relationship with The school for example "Parent/ "Carer of child"/"young

person “ or “Teacher” Those sending a response, whether by letter or electronically should be aware that their response could be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. As such, if they do not wish their response to be publicly available, they should clearly make their response “confidential and for access to be restricted to elected members and council officers of Scottish Borders Council only”

All responses should be received by the last day (midnight) of the consultation being Monday 12th October 2026.

23. Relevant Consultees

23.1 The Council will consult the relevant consultees identified in the 2010 Act, including the Parent Council, parents and carers of pupils attending affected schools, pupils, parents and carers of children expected to attend affected schools within two years, staff, relevant trade unions, the Community Council, elected representatives and any other users or stakeholders considered relevant. It is the intention of Officers to ensure the greatest engagement possible. Schedule 2 to the 2010 Act identifies a core set of relevant consultees who should be consulted in connection with every type of proposal set out in Schedule 1. These are the Parent Council, parents of pupils attending an affected school/s as well as the pupils themselves, parents of pupils likely to attend an affected school, staff at an affected school, any trade union which appears to the education authority to be representative of those staff, and any other users whom the authority considers relevant. The Schedule also specifies other relevant consultees in relation to specific categories of proposal - for instance the Community Council is included where the impact is likely to affect the wider community. Officers are clear that this Consultation will be wide ranging and extensive, and officers intend to try and consult with Pupil focus groups of all the affected schools including Heriot and Stow being adjacent catchment schools to Fountainhall, within the Consultation Period to obtain the views and opinions of as many young people as possible.

24. Involvement of Education Scotland

24.1 When the proposal paper is published on Monday 24th August and the Consultation opens; a copy will be sent to Education Scotland. Education Scotland will also receive relevant written representations, a summary of oral representations made at any public meeting, and other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal in accordance with the statutory timescales. The three-week period has been scheduled to begin on 20th October until 10th November inclusive and in preparation for their report, Education Scotland may enter the affected school(s) and make such reasonable enquiries of such people there as they consider appropriate and may make such reasonable enquiries of such other people as they consider appropriate.

25 Preparation of Consultation Report

25.1 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland report, written representations received, oral representations made at the public meeting and any other relevant information. A Consultation Report will then be prepared and published. The Consultation Report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council website and from Council Headquarters, public libraries in the vicinity of the affected schools, as well as the affected schools, free of charge upon request. Anyone who made

written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the Education Scotland Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the Education Scotland Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. It will also include the responses to the pre consultation survey. The Consultation Report will also contain a statement explaining how it complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the report by Education Scotland and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published and available for further consideration for a period of three weeks, before it is presented to Full Council to make a final decision.

26. Scottish Borders Council Decision and Ministerial Call-In

26.1 The Consultation Report and relevant documentation will be considered by Full Council, who will decide whether to proceed with the proposal. If Scottish Borders Council, as the Education Authority, makes a final decision to implement the proposal, it will notify the Scottish Ministers of that decision, and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Paper and Consultation Report.

26.2 This must be done within 6 working days of that decision. The Education Authority must also publish on its website the fact that it has notified Scottish Ministers of its decision and of the period during which consultees have the opportunity to make representations to Ministers.

26.3 The Scottish Ministers have an 8-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. During the first three weeks of this period, anyone is able to make representations to Ministers on whether the decision should be called in. Within the first 3 weeks of that 8-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the 8-week call-in process is known, the Authority cannot proceed to implement the proposal. Ministers may come to a decision sooner than eight weeks (but not before the three weeks for representations to be made to them has elapsed).

26.4 If Scottish Ministers decide to call in a closure proposal, they must refer it to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels for determination by a School Closure Review Panel. Scottish Borders Council as the Education Authority may not implement the proposal (wholly or partly) unless the Panel has granted consent to it (with or without conditions) and either the period for making an appeal to the Sheriff has expired or, if an appeal has been made, it has either been abandoned, or the Sheriff has confirmed the Panel's decision. The School Closure Review Panel may refuse to consent to the proposal, refuse consent and remit the proposal back to Scottish Borders Council as the Education Authority or grant their consent to the proposal subject to conditions or unconditionally. The Act, as amended, gives Ministers and School Closure Review Panels the right to call on advice from Education Scotland in relation to a proposal at the call-in or determination stage.

27. Note on Corrections

27.1 If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this proposal paper, Scottish Borders Council will determine whether relevant information has been omitted or whether an inaccuracy has occurred.

Appropriate action may include issuing a correction, reissuing the proposal paper or revising the consultation timescale if required.

28. Appendices

- Appendix 1: SBC School Mothball Policy and SBC ELC Sustainability Policy
- Appendix 2: Options Appraisal Report June 2025 – Proposal to Mothball Fountainhall Primary School
- Appendix 3: Fountainhall Primary School Suitability Report 2024
- Appendix 4: Integrated Impact Assessment
- Appendix 5: Fountainhall Primary School and ELC Options Appraisal Mothball Status Review Report 2026