North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

Proposal to close Castlepark Early Years Centre and establish the provision as Castlepark Primary School and Early Years Class

REPORT BY HEAD OF SERVICE (EDUCATION)

This document has been issued by North Ayrshire Council for consultation in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

This document can also be made available in other formats and community languages.

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

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درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

Na życzenie klienta, informacje te mogą być udostępnione w innych językach oraz formatach.

North Ayrshire Council
Education Directorate

Proposal to close Castlepark Early Years Centre and establish the provision as Castlepark Primary School and Early Years Class

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 This document sets out the proposal to incorporate Castlepark Early Years Centre (CEYC), a standalone early years centre, into Castlepark Primary School as its Early Years Class. This proposal requires the formal closure of CEYC, a 'school' in terms of the legislation.

1.2 Following the full implementation of the expansion of early learning and childcare to 1140 hours across North Ayrshire, the Council has continued to review the leadership and management arrangements for early years provision to ensure that services are sustainable, high quality and focused on improving outcomes for children and families. Castlepark Early Years Centre has operated as a standalone early years centre, led by a Head of Centre. The proposal to incorporate Castlepark Early Years Centre into Castlepark Primary School as an early years class provides an opportunity to establish a flexible, sustainable and collaborative leadership model, under the direction of the Head Teacher of Castlepark Primary School and supported by a dedicated Early Years Manager.

1.3 Our objectives continue to be:

- Improving learning outcomes for all
- Supporting needs, wellbeing, equality and inclusion
- Building a self-improving service

1.4 The integration of early years into Castlepark Primary School under the direction of the Head Teacher will provide further opportunities to evaluate and improve approaches to learning, teaching and wellbeing across the stages.

1.5 Following the conclusion of this consultation, it is proposed that a report will be prepared for consideration and a decision on the proposal by Cabinet in March 2027 (see timeline at Appendix 1).

2. Strategic Context

2.1 Council Vision

Our Council Plan 2023–2028 sets out the Council's vision, mission and priorities for the five-year period to 2028.

Vision
"A North Ayrshire that is fair for all."

Mission
"Working together to improve the lives of our people in North Ayrshire."

Priorities

1. Wellbeing

- Develop a wellbeing economy.
- Tackle inequalities.
- Support employment, skills and educational attainment.
- Improve prosperity and resilience.

2. Communities and Local Democracy

- Support active, inclusive and resilient communities.
- Increase participation in local decision-making.
- Strengthen community networks and locality working.

3. Climate Change

- Achieve net zero by 2030.
- Reduce carbon emissions.
- Protect the environment and support low-carbon living.

4. A Sustainable Council

- Build on Community Wealth Building principles.
- Ensure services are efficient, accessible and financially sustainable.
- Maximise investment and focus resources on priorities

2.2 Education Vision

The Education Service Improvement Plan supports North Ayrshire Council's wider Council Plan 2023-28, particularly the aim of:

"Transitioning to a wellbeing economy, delivering prosperity, wellbeing and resilience for local people."

The vision is to continue to develop a motivational learning environment that supports the delivery of positive educational outcomes for the children of Castlepark.

2.3 Equality

Promoting equality is one of North Ayrshire Council's core values. The principles of equality and fairness are central to all council activities. Equality means everyone is treated fairly and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Under equality legislation, the general equality duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The main method the council uses to ensure it is meeting its requirements under the legislation is through the Equality Impact Assessment process, which is used to assess policies, procedures and proposals. Following an Equality and Children's Rights Impact screening, no adverse effects have been identified as a result of the proposal.

3 Proposal

3.1 In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, and as a result of engagement with relevant interested parties, North Ayrshire Council proposes:

(i) to close the standalone Castlepark Early Years Centre, and
(ii) incorporate the provision as a new early years class at Castlepark Primary School.

3.2 North Ayrshire's Early Years Centres are led by a Head of Centre. Early Years Classes are led by the school's Head Teacher and form part of its leadership, management and wider community. Both Heads of Centre and Head Teachers report directly to a Senior Manager, with overall responsibility resting with the Head of Service.

3.3 If approved, Castlepark Primary School's leadership team would assume responsibility for the early years provision, including the additional statutory duties required by the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council.

3.4 CEYC is adjacent to Castlepark Primary School on the same campus, with capacity for 112 children aged 3–5 years and 50 aged 2–3 years. Its Model 1 delivery, operating from 8am to 6pm throughout the year, would remain unchanged.

3.5 No negative impact on children and families attending CEYC is anticipated. Transition plans would support all involved, with the early years' practitioner team, building and learning environment remaining unchanged.

3.6 If the proposal is approved, the existing Depute Head of Centre post would become an Early Years Manager post, remaining at the same salary grade. The Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) staff team would come under the leadership of Castlepark Primary School, supported by the Early Years Manager (see Appendix 2).

3.7 Under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, statutory public consultation is required where there is a proposal to permanently discontinue a "school". The Act applies to this proposal as it affects CEYC "nursery school" (under the management of the education authority).

3.8 Financial information

The proposal aims to make best use of resources to maximise the benefits of 1140 hours of ELC for North Ayrshire's children and families.

If approved following consultation, deleting the Head of Centre post would generate recurring savings of £85,656. A provisional job sizing review of the school leadership team indicates anticipated additional salary costs of around £5,314, resulting in an estimated net saving of approximately £80,342, to be reinvested across the service.

4. Educational Benefits Statement

4.1 This section addresses the educational benefits associated with the proposal, including the anticipated impact on pupils and other affected groups, any potential adverse effects and how these will be mitigated.

4.2 Castlepark Early Years Centre would become Castlepark Primary School Early Years Class, led by the existing Head Teacher and supported by a dedicated Early Years Manager. This flexible, sustainable and collaborative model would give the provision access to a wider leadership team and a broader range of skills and expertise.

4.3 Integrating early years provision into the school's leadership, management and improvement planning would support a shared approach to raising attainment, improving wellbeing and closing the poverty-related attainment gap from the earliest stages. The senior leadership team would oversee improvement priorities, promoting attainment, achievement and positive outcomes for children aged 2 to 11 years.

4.4 Closer collaboration between early years and primary staff would support a consistent understanding of play-based learning, nurture, early literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, and child development across early years and Primary 1. Joint planning and opportunities for staff to work across stages would strengthen continuity and progression in children's learning.

4.5 Existing transition arrangements would continue and be strengthened through closer joint planning of learning and teaching at key transition points. Shared values, routines, relationships and approaches to wellbeing, inclusion and achievement would support a more seamless journey into primary education.

4.6 Shared systems for observation, assessment and tracking could improve understanding of children's progress over time, supporting responsive planning and smoother handover of learning information.

4.7 Closer working between early years practitioners, school leadership, support staff and partner agencies could help identify learning, communication, developmental or wellbeing needs earlier and provide timely, coordinated support.

4.8 Enhanced professional learning and collegiate opportunities would support a shared understanding of national guidance, additional support needs and safeguarding responsibilities within the context of Getting it Right for Every Child and Child Protection legislation.

4.9 Bringing together the strengths, expertise, interests and skills of both establishments would support high-quality learning experiences for current and future children. Children could benefit from appropriate access to school facilities, outdoor learning areas, nurture spaces, libraries, digital resources and specialist staff knowledge where these support age-appropriate learning.

4.10 Greater participation of early years children in school life would strengthen links between children, families and staff. A school-based model may also help build long-term relationships with families from the earliest stages, supporting consistent communication, parental involvement, family learning and participation in wider school events.

4.11 The provision would remain within the Castlepark community, in the same building and learning environment, with early years and primary educational services continuing on one campus. No disruption to families' existing routines or access arrangements is anticipated. Closer links with the school, partner agencies and community organisations would support a more joined-up and inclusive local learning community.

4.12 No adverse educational or community effects are anticipated, and the proposal would not affect other children in the Council area.

4.13 The anticipated benefits are supported by national guidance on continuity in early learning. Education Scotland's *Realising the Ambition: Being Me* recommends joint working between early years and primary staff to strengthen curriculum progression and continuity in children's learning and development. The *Scottish Early Childhood and Families Transitions Statement* also emphasises positive relationships, collaboration with families and continuity of learning, play and wellbeing. The proposed shared leadership arrangements would provide a robust framework for embedding these approaches through coordinated improvement planning and closer working across early years and primary stages.

5. Statutory Public Consultation Process

5.1 This document has been issued by North Ayrshire Council for consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

5.2 **What is a Statutory Public Consultation?**

In Scotland, local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure the adequate and efficient provision of education in their area.

Under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, local authorities must undertake a formal consultation on "relevant proposals", such as school closures or significant changes to school provision, ensuring parents, pupils and communities have an opportunity to contribute.

5.3 When does the Statutory Public Consultation start?

The consultation will start on 9 November 2026 and close on 8 January 2027. This covers a period of 31 school days.

5.4 Who will have access to this proposal document?

This proposal document has been made available to all interested parties, including the Care Inspectorate, the Parent Council, HMIE (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland), parents and carers of children attending Castlepark Early Years Centre and Castlepark Primary School, Staff, Trade Unions and any other users of the establishment as detailed in the distribution list.

This proposal document is published on the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership website https://northayrshire.community/

Copies are also available from the Education Directorate, Cunninghame House, Irvine KA12 8EE (Tel: 01294 324442), where this document will be available from the main reception on the ground floor.

Copies can also be made available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English.

5.5 What if I notice an error in the document?

If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this proposal document, either by the Council or any person, the Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or if there has been an inaccuracy.

The Council may then take appropriate action, which may include the issue of a correction notice, the reissuing of the proposal document or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period, if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) will be advised.

5.6 How will I get a chance to give my opinion?

You will be able to give your opinion on the proposal:

- By completing an online response form at https://tinyurl.com/emtuh3e
- By submitting a paper copy of the response form, attached at Appendix 4, to the address given on the form
- By emailing **educ_consultation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk**
- In writing to the Head of Service, Education Directorate, North Ayrshire Council, Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE

All responses must be submitted by no later than 4pm on 8 January 2027.

5.7 **Will there be any meetings for the public?**

A meeting for the public will be held at Castlepark Primary School at 5pm on Wednesday 25 November 2026. This will be followed by an MS Teams meeting, held online at 7pm the same evening. To request the joining link for the online meeting, please contact Claire Reid at **clairereid@north-ayrshire.gov.uk**.

These meetings will provide an opportunity for interested parties to hear about the proposal from council officers, ask questions and have their views recorded so that these can be taken into account as part of the consultation process.

Advance notice of specific questions or issues to be raised at the meeting will be accepted up to Tuesday 24 November 2026. These should be submitted to educ_consultation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk This will allow all issues to be covered and give those who may not be comfortable speaking publicly their opportunity to be heard.

Everyone wishing to attend will be made very welcome.

A note will be taken of comments, questions and officer responses at the session. The notes will be published on the Council website and a copy will be made available on request.

The notes will also be forwarded to HMIE along with all other submissions and comments that are received by the Council during the consultation process.

5.8 **Will any other agencies be involved in the process?**

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires that a report on the proposal is prepared by HMIE, who may be in attendance at the information session.

Once the statutory public consultation period comes to an end, HMIE have three weeks to consider the educational aspects of the proposal and submit a report to the council.

HMIE receives copies of relevant papers from the council, including:

- a copy of the proposal paper;
- copies of the written representations or a summary of them (if HMIE agree);
- a note of oral representations made at the public meeting sessions; and
- any other related documentation.

HMIE may visit schools and centres as part of their consideration of the proposal and meet with children, staff and parents/carers who may be affected by the proposal.

Upon receipt of the proposal document and other relevant documentation, HMIE will consider the educational aspects of the proposal. They will ensure that their report takes account of:

- the educational benefits statement;
- the representations received by the council; and
- any further written representations made directly to HMIE on any educational aspect of the proposal which is considered relevant.

The consultation report that the Council publishes following the statutory public consultation must include the report from HMIE in full.

5.9 **Will the outcome of the consultation be made public?**

The Head of Service will prepare a report on the outcome of the consultation process. The report will take account of all HMIE recommendations. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in the Irvine Times and Irvine Herald. It will be available on the Council website and at Cunninghame House.

The report will include:

- a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period,
- a summary of the written and oral representations,
- the Council's response to recommendations made by HMIE

A copy of HMIE's report will be an appendix to the consultation report which will be published and available for further consideration for a period of at least 3 weeks ahead of presentation to Elected Members in early 2027.

5.10 **When will the Council make a decision on the outcome of the consultation?**

A report on the consultation, together with any other relevant documentation, will be considered by Cabinet, who will make a decision on the proposal in March 2027.

5.11 **What happens next?**

If the proposal is approved, the Council is required, in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, to notify Scottish Ministers within 6 days of making that decision. The Council is also required to place a notice on the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership website of the decision and of the opportunity to make representations to Scottish Ministers.

Scottish Ministers then have a period of 8 weeks following an authority's decision in which to decide to call-in the decision or not. The first 3 weeks of this period is to allow stakeholders to make representations either against or in support of the decision. Scottish Ministers then have a further 5 weeks to consider all documents and representations.

Until the Council has been notified of the outcome, the proposal cannot be implemented. Should the proposal be approved, it would be implemented from August 2027.

In accordance with legislation, should the proposal not be approved, the Council are restricted in their ability to reconsider it within a 5-year period.

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the North Ayrshire Council Community Planning Partnership website.

https://northayrshire.community/

A copy of this document will be made available to all stakeholders associated with the establishments affected by the proposal, including:

- Care Inspectorate
- Parents/Carers and Parent Councils
- Head Teacher and Acting Head of Centre
- Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff, including Facilities Management
- Local Elected Members for the Castlepark area
- Member(s) of Parliament
- Member(s) of Scottish Parliament
- HMIE
- Chief Executive, North Ayrshire Council
- All NAC Directors and Heads of Service
- Local Community Groups
- Relevant Trade Unions

A copy of this Proposal Document is available to view at

- Castlepark Early Years Centre
- Castlepark Primary School
- Castlepark Community Centre
- Irvine Library

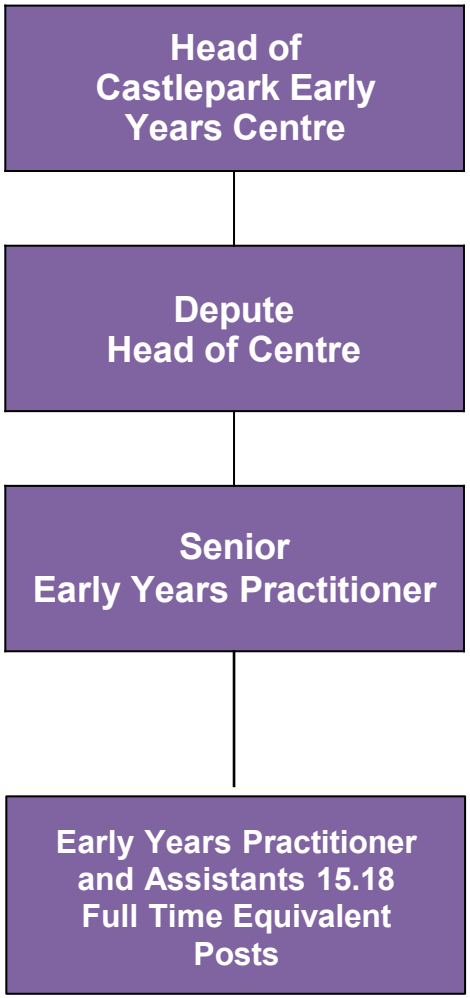
Public notices have been placed in the Irvine Times and Irvine Herald.

Appendix 1

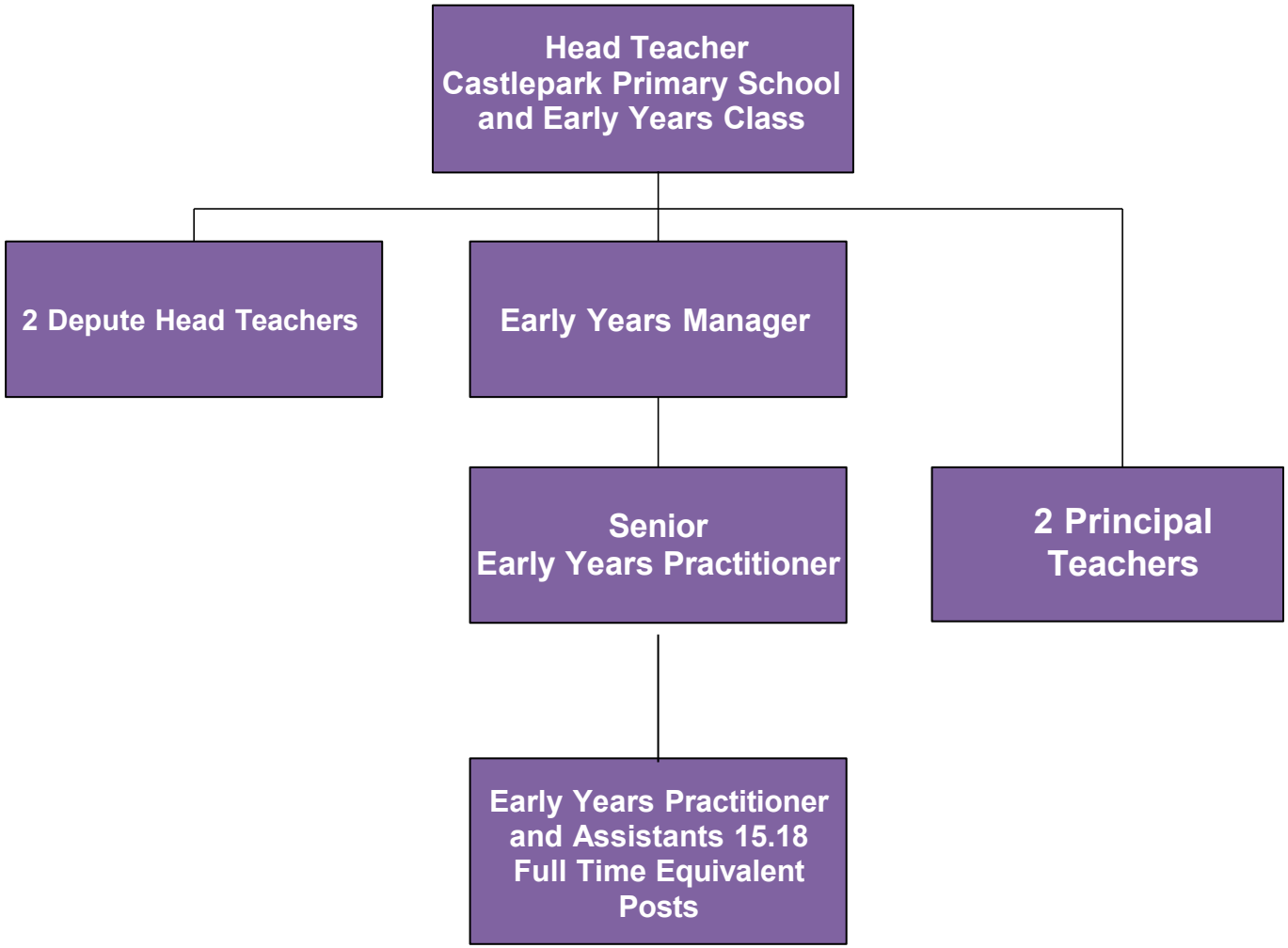
Time Required	Dates	Method / Action
	27 October 2026	Cabinet Meeting
	3 November 2026	NAC Cabinet decision call-in period expires
	4 November 2026	Public notice appears in local newspaper (Irvine Time and Irvine Herald)
31 school days	9 November 2026 to 8 January 2027	Start of Consultation Period – ▪ Issue Proposal Document ▪ Public meetings (one in-person at 5pm, one online at 7pm) to be held on 25 November 2026 End of Consultation Period
3 weeks	11 to 29 January 2027	Provide Education Scotland with all responses received and a summary of these Prepare Consultation Outcome Report Prepare Cabinet paper Receive report from Education Scotland Provide update to Portfolio Holder and Local Elected Members
3 weeks	1 to 19 February 2027	Publish Consultation Outcome Report
	March 2027	NAC decision and notice of decision
3 weeks	April 2027	Period for representations to be made to Scottish Ministers
5 weeks	May to June 2027	Period for Scottish Ministers to consider all documents and any representations
	August 2027	Castlepark Early Years Centre becomes Castlepark Early Years' Class

Appendix 2

Current Staffing Structure



Proposed Staffing Structure



Appendix 3 - Financial Template

Table 1

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Row 1	**Current revenue costs for school proposed for closure**			
Row 2	**Castlepark Early Years Centre**	**Costs for full financial year (projected annual costs)**	**Additional financial impact on Castlepark Primary School**	**Annual recurring savings** (column 2 minus column 3)
Row 3	***School costs***			
Row 4	***Employee costs - note 1***			
Row 5	teaching staff	£85,656	£5,314	£80,342
Row 6	support staff			
Row 7	teaching staff training (CPD etc)			
Row 8	support staff training			
Row 9	Supply costs - note 2			
Row 10				
Row 11	*Building costs:*	n/a	n/a	n/a
Row 12	property insurance			
Row 13	non domestic rates			
Row 14	water & sewerage charges			
Row 15	energy costs			
Row 16	cleaning (contract or inhouse)			
Row 17	building repair & maintenance			
Row 18	grounds maintenance			
Row 19	facilities management costs - note 6			
Row 20	revenue costs arising from capital			
Row 21	other			
Row 22				
Row 23	*School operational costs:*	n/a	n/a	n/a
Row 24	learning materials			
Row 25	catering (contract or inhouse)			
Row 26	SQA costs			
Row 27	other school operational costs (e.g. licences)			
Row 28				
Row 29	*Transport costs: note 3*	n/a	n/a	n/a
Row 30	home to school		note 4	
Row 31	other pupil transport costs			
Row 32	staff travel			
Row 33	**SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL**	n/a	n/a	n/a
Row 34				
Row 35	Income:	n/a	n/a	n/a
Row 36	Sale of meals			
Row 37	Lets			
Row 38	External care provider			
Row 39	Other			
Row 40	**SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL**	n/a	n/a	n/a
Row 41				
Row 42	**TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL**	£85,656	£5,314	£80,342
Row 43				
Row 44	**UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR**	n/a	n/a	n/a

Please note that the costs detailed above are the only ones subject to change as a result of the proposal

Table 2

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

Table 3

Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal	
property insurance	
non domestic rates	
water & sewerage charges	
energy costs	
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	
security costs	
building repair & maintenance	
grounds maintenance	
facilities management costs	
other	
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL	

Table 4

Non-recurring revenue costs	
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	n/a

Table 5

Impact on GAE - note 5	
GAE IMPACT	n/a

Notes

1. The total costs incurred for teaching staff (row 5) and support staff (row 6) are required to be included. Column 2 should include the current costs for a full financial year for the school proposed for closure, and column 3 should include the *additional* cost to the receiving school as a result of staff transferring.

For teaching staff, this should include regular teachers, itinerant teachers, learning support teaching staff and special education (ASN) staff.

Itinerant teaching staff includes central support services such as English as additional language support, hearing, visually impaired services, educational psychology services.

For support staff, this should include classroom assistants, administration staff and janitorial staff.

For all staff the costs entered should include salary, NI and pension costs.

If the school proposed for closure has less than 3 staff members, then the cumulative staff costs only should be given in row 5 (for both teaching and support staff), so as to avoid possible disclosure of indiviudal salaries.

Training costs should be identified separately in rows 7 and 8.

2. Supply costs to cover teaching and support staff. This may be held in a central budget, be devolved or shared across the budgets.

3. 'Home to school' pupil transport costs should include those school transport costs incurred in accordance with Council policy. 'Other pupil transport costs' will cover costs incurred for the transport of pupils for activities such as swimming etc

4. Row 30 of column 3 should include the additional transport costs related to the increased home to school transport arrangements that are put in place in accordance with Council policy. This figure is therefore likely to be considerably higher than current costs.

5. This table is to capture the impact on the revenue support grant as a result of changes to GAE. Impact on GAE should consider the issues covered in the GAE section of the guidance document that accompany this template.

6. Facilities management costs will include costs related to caretakering, janitorial and security.

7. The capital costs for the receiving school should be taken across the life cycle of the school in line with the life expectancy of that school. The capital costs for the school proposed for closure should be taken across the same life cycle period.

North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Response Form

Proposal to close Castlepark Early Years Centre to allow its incorporation into Castlepark Primary School as an early years' class

Education Directorate

Castlepark Early Years Centre	Parent/Carer ☐	Staff ☐	Pupil ☐	Other ☐
Castlepark Primary School	Parent/Carer ☐	Staff ☐	Pupil ☐	Other ☐

Other (please state) _____

Question

Do you agree with the proposal to close Castlepark Early Years Centre to allow its incorporation into Castlepark Primary School as an early years' class?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please provide up to 3 reasons below for your response:

1.

2.

3.

Please provide your contact details so that we can respond directly to you, if necessary.

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Email: .....

Telephone: .....

Date Completed: .....

Responses should be received no later than 8 January 2027

Any responses received after this date cannot be considered.

Please contact 01294 324442 or email educ_consultation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk if you require further information or assistance in the completion of this form.

North Ayrshire Council, in line with our Data Protection responsibilities will only use the personal data provided for the sole purpose of evaluating your responses. The response submitted by you may form part of the response paper that will be submitted to the Council for consideration in the near future and will therefore be made available for public inspection.

Further information on how North Ayrshire Council manages your data can be found within our privacy policy at the following website: www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/privacy-policy.aspx

Should you wish any of your personal details (e.g. name, address, phone number, etc.), which you have included in your response, to be included in our published responses it is necessary for us to obtain your consent. Please indicate this by ticking the box below.

Yes, I consent ☐

This document can also be made available in other formats and community languages.

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

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درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

Na życzenie klienta, informacje te mogą być udostępnione w innych językach oraz formatach.