Midlothian

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Please refer to the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Guidance when completing this form.

Basic Details

1. Title of proposal (include budget reference if applicable)

Proposed closure of Lasswade High School Childcare Service.

2. Service(s)

Education – Children, Young People and Partnerships.

3. Lead officer (name, job title and date of IIA training)

Craig Murrin, Business Support Officer. Date of IIA Training: 17 April 2024

4. Other officers/partners involved (name, job title and date of IIA training

Katy Johnstone, Learning Estate Resource Officer.

Date of IIA Training: 17 April 2024

5. Date IIA completed

21/02/2025

6. Nature of proposal

Withdrawal of an existing service or function

Other (please specify)

7. Brief description of proposal

What are its main aims and objectives? What, if anything, will change as a result of this proposal?

The proposal is to close the Lasswade High School Childcare Service by September 2025. This decision follows a statutory consultation process that began in November 2024 and concluded in January 2025.

If the proposal is approved by Council/elected members in April 2025, children currently attending the Lasswade High School Childcare Service will be transitioned to other nearby childcare settings that have the capacity to accommodate them, with parents/carers being supported in with information on finding alternative childcare arrangements within Midlothian.

The proposal is designed to align with the council's commitment to providing high-quality, sustainable early learning and childcare services that meet the needs of all children and families in the area.

Equality and Rights

8. Could the proposal have an impact on any of the following groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010? (select all that apply)

Protected characteristics	
Age (older people, young people and children)	☒
Disability (people with disabilities)	☐
Gender reassignment (trans people, anyone whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth)	☐
Marriage and civil partnership (people who are married or in a civil partnership)	☐
Pregnancy and maternity (women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave)	☐
Race (people defined by their colour, ethnicity or nationality – e.g. Asian and black people)	☐
Religion and belief (people with different religions and beliefs, including no belief)	☐
Sex (men or women)	☐
Sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight)	☐

9. Could the proposal have an impact on children and young people under the age of 18?

   Yes

10. Could the proposal have an impact on human rights?
    See pages 14-15 of the IIA Guidance.

    No

11. Is the proposal a 'strategic decision' under the Fairer Scotland Duty to actively consider how to reduce socio-economic disadvantage (i.e. poverty)?

    Please select from the list below. The proposal is strategic if it falls under any of the headings.

    Significant budget proposals including cuts and level of aid given

Yes	☒
No	☐
Don't know	☐

If you answered yes to any of questions 8-11, you must also answer questions 12-15.

If you were unsure about any of questions 8-11, it is advised that you answer questions 12-15.

If you answered no to all of questions 8-11, please advance to **question 16 (Environment)**.

Equality and Rights

12. What kind of impact could the proposal have on groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act? (please explain your answers)

Protected characteristic	Potential impact	Explanation
Age	Neutral	As of November 2024, there were 10 children attending the Childcare setting. The proposed closure of the setting does not disproportionately advantage or disadvantage the protected characteristics within this group. If the decision if that the childcare setting will close, the parents/carers and children will be assisted/supported by council officers within education with information on alternative childcare settings within Midlothian and the local area. The availability and tracking of ELC settings will be undertaken to ensure accurate information is provided to parents/carers for the age groups of their children.
Disability	Neutral	Under *the Equality Act 2010*, education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage. With the proposed closure of Lasswade High School Childcare Service, council officers will comply with accessibility requirements and therefore would positively promote equal opportunities for any child who has a disability when assisting or advising of places at other childcare settings. As Council officers continue to track the availability of ELC settings, if a child has a disability or additional support needs and tailored support, we will ensure that accurate information is provided to parents/carers for the children who come under this protected characteristic group.
Gender reassignment	Neutral	The proposed closure is unlikely to specifically or disproportionately impact anyone undergoing or who has undergone gender reassignment. Each nursery or setting should have a policy and or guidance and can refer to Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

Protected characteristic	Potential impact	Explanation
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	The proposed closure is unlikely to specifically or disproportionately impact anyone based on their marital status. Admission to Early Years, Primary and Secondary schools do not differentiate between married, civil-partnerships or single parents/carers.
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	The proposed closure has the potential to create childcare gaps if the decision taken by elected members is to close the service. However, this is caveated that the number of children attending the childcare service is a low number and there are a number of other ELC Settings within the local area and a number throughout Midlothian. The availability and tracking of ELC settings will be undertaken to ensure accurate information is provided to people who are either going to become parents or returning back to work and or education seeking childcare options.
Race	Neutral	The proposed closure is unlikely to specifically or disproportionately impact anyone based on their Race.
Religion or belief	Neutral	The proposed closure is unlikely to specifically or disproportionately impact anyone based on their religion or belief. All Early Learning and Childcare in Midlothian are non-denominational, even if the setting is in a denominational school and there are no catchment areas for ELC provisions.
Sex	Neutral	The proposed closure is unlikely to specifically or disproportionately impact anyone based on their Sex. Each nursery or setting should have a policy and or guidance and can refer to Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).
Sexual orientation	Neutral	The proposed closure is unlikely to specifically or disproportionately impact anyone based on their sexual orientation. Each nursery or setting should have a policy and or guidance and can refer to Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

Equality and Rights

13. What kind of impact could the proposal have on children and young people in terms of the requirements of the **UNCRC (Scotland) (Incorporation) Act 2023**?

A full list of the UNCRC Articles can be found on pages 12-13 of the IIA Guidance.

UNCRC Article	Particular groups of children affected	Potential impact	Explanation
Article 3 **(best interests of the child)**	Children from low-income families. Children with additional support needs. Children from single-parent households. Families with Multiple Children. Children and families from an ethnic minority.	Neutral	If the decision is that the childcare setting will close, the parents/carers and children will be assisted/supported by council officers within education with information on alternative childcare settings within Midlothian and the local area. The availability and tracking of ELC settings will be undertaken to supply accurate information is provided to parents/carers for their children, ensuring alternative settings meet their needs/requirements.
Article 6 **(life, survival and development)**	Children from low-income families. Children with additional support needs. Children from single-parent households. Families with Multiple Children. Children and families from an ethnic minority..	Neutral	Council officers will ensure that there is adequate support and continuity in early learning and childcare if a child was to move onto another setting if the proposal is approved for the closure. Information relating to the child and their social development may also shared and or transferred.
Article 12 **(respect for the views of the child)**	Children from low-income families. Children with additional support needs. Children from single-parent households.	Neutral	As part of the statutory consultation and the proposal to close the Lasswade High School Childcare Service, a survey was shared with all affected consultees and responses were recorded. Public meetings and drop-in session were held to allow staff, parents /carers to voice their opinion.

	Families with Multiple Children. Children and families from an ethnic minority.		Due to the age of the children, parents/carers were welcomed to share their views and would act as an advocate for their children's needs. The staff in the setting and high school were also consulted with to allow them to share their views and for the nursery staff who have an insight into how the children may be affected. With the consultation and engagement, this allowed consultees to share their views and opinions which would incorporate any concerns which could potentially be overlooked.
Article 19 **(protection from violence, abuse and neglect)**	Children from low-income families. Children with additional support needs. Children from single-parent households. Families with Multiple Children. Children and families from an ethnic minority.	Neutral	ELC settings provide a secure, structured setting with trained staff. To assist with the transition and if requested, support and guidance will be provided to the parents/carers which will help to ensure that if information is requested relating to staffing and or Care Inspectorate reports for other settings, they are advised on where to obtain this. Each childcare setting has a duty under National Standards, and we work with the settings to ensure they are meeting the National Standards. All settings must have a rating of good or above to meet those National Standards.
Article 23 **(children with a disability)**	Children from low-income families. Children with additional support needs. Children from single-parent households. Families with Multiple Children.	Neutral	If a child has a disability or additional support needs, council officers will work with the current setting to ensure there is little disruption possible to the care and support given. If the proposal is approved to close the setting, council officers will work to ensure that childcare settings are identified who are able to provide the same level of care based on the need of the

	Children and families from an ethnic minority..		child. Staff could potentially assist with this to ensure a seamless transition.
Article 27 **(adequate standard of living)**	Children from low-income families. Children with additional support needs. Children from single-parent households. Families with Multiple Children. Children and families from an ethnic minority..	Neutral	Parents/Carers may be able to access funded childcare places. Midlothian has 'A good Time to be 2' etc. Council officers will provide a list of childcare settings in the local area which should help with travelling concerns etc. Parents and carers can also access a list of other settings throughout Midlothian which are on our website and from this can work out comparative costs.
Article 29 **(goals of education)**	Children from low-income families. Children with additional support needs. Children from single-parent households. Families with Multiple Children. Children and families from an ethnic minority.	Neutral	With the proposal to close the setting, Midlothian will continue to track and assess the availability of other settings within the local area. As this childcare setting is the only setting attached to a secondary school, this is not in line with the Council's visions and values for Education and Early Learning and Childcare. Being attached to a high school creates barriers to learning and could potentially reduce the ability for children and staff to benefit from the learning and resources available to settings that are attached to primary schools. As there are a number of other settings in the local and wider Midlothian area, the closure of this setting should not cause future disruptions to the delivery of early learning and childcare.
Article 31 **(leisure, play and culture)**	Children from low-income families. Children with additional support needs.	Neutral	Access to the outdoor space is limited and would require further development in line with My World Outdoors. Local authority ELC settings are almost all based on a primary school

	Children from single-parent households. Families with Multiple Children. Children and families from an ethnic minority.		campus which provides a range of outdoor space and curriculum facilities that are appropriate to the age group. The opening of the new Easthouses PS in August 2024 is an example of Midlothian Council's continual improvement and expansion of ELC settings and their outdoor facilities in line with the Learning Estate Strategy.
Other (please specify)		Choose an item.	N/A

Equality and Rights

14. What kind of impact could the proposal have in terms of the Articles of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)?

See pages 14-15 of the IIA Guidance.

Article of ECHR	**Particular groups of people affected**	**Potential impact**	**Explanation**
Article 6 – Right to a Fair Hearing	Children from low-income families. Children with additional support needs. Children from single-parent households. Families with Multiple Children. Children and families from an ethnic minority.	Neutral	A statutory consultation has been carried out, the relevant consultees were notified and the consultation period lasted for a period of at least six weeks which included 30 school days. This allowed parents/carers, staff and consultees time to read the proposals and express their views and concerns via online survey. Public meetings and drop-in sessions were and a dedicated mailbox.
Article 8 – Right to Respect for Private and Family Life	Children from low-income families. Children with additional support needs.	Neutral	When considering the proposal to close the childcare setting, council officers considered alternative options and other implications.

	Children from single-parent households. Families with Multiple Children. Children and families from an ethnic minority.		During this, other childcare settings in the local area were tracked to ensure space/availability to bring as little disruption as possible to family work life balance and for those who rely on the service.

15. What kind of impact could the proposal have on people experiencing or vulnerable to socio-economic disadvantage (i.e. poverty)?

An explanation of the different features of socio-economic disadvantage and information on vulnerable population groups can be found on page 18 of the IIA Guidance.

Socio-economic disadvantage	**Potential impact**	**Explanation**
Low income	Neutral	Families with low income could struggle to meet basic needs such as food, housing, and healthcare. This financial strain can limit their ability to afford alternative childcare or educational resources. The current childcare setting is going through a fee increase/review to ensure equitability against other settings in the local and wider Midlothian area. If the proposal is approved to close the childcare service, the increase in the current fees should be on par with other ELC settings.
Low and/or no wealth	Neutral	Wealth provides a safety net for families during financial hardships. Those with little or no wealth are more vulnerable to sudden changes, such as the need for additional childcare. There are options for families on low incomes and who meet certain eligibility criteria for 'A Good Time To B 2' as well as other financial assistance.
Material deprivation	Neutral	Unable to access basic goods and services (e.g. food, clothing, heating, electrical appliances, etc.) The proposed closure of the childcare service should not impact the material deprivation of children, as families will be assisted with the information of other ELC settings in the local and wider Midlothian

Socio-economic disadvantage	Potential impact	Explanation
		area. Children will have access to similar services they have within the current setting.
Area deprivation	Neutral	Living in deprived areas often means limited access to quality services, including education, healthcare, and recreational facilities. The proposed closure of the childcare service should not have an impact on the area deprivation as there are a number of other ELC settings in the local area which council officers will continue to track and monitor the spaces available. Each childcare setting has a duty under National Standards, and as a Local Authority we work with the settings to ensure they are meeting the National Standards.
Socio-economic background	Neutral	A person's socio-economic background encompasses their family's income, education, and occupation. Regardless of socio-economic background, day-to-day activities which parents/carers undertake with their children are highly correlated with children's learning and development, and this can be through play experiences and interactions with those around them. Children learn about themselves and make sense of the world around them. They develop language and cognitive skills whilst the social environment of the early years setting provides opportunities for children to develop positive relationships with others, and allows them to explore an understanding of boundaries, problem-solving, self-regulation, negotiation and choice.
Other	Neutral	The proposed closure of the childcare setting can have significant impacts on individuals and households experiencing or vulnerable to socio-economic disadvantage. **Children**: They are directly affected by the loss of an ELC setting they are familiar with.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Potential impact	Explanation
		Single Parents: They may face increased childcare issues if they having to find an alternative setting with different hours etc.

Environment

16. What impact could the proposal have on the environment?

Considerations relating to the environment, climate change and sustainability are described on pages 19-20 of the IIA Guidance.

Potential impact	Affected populations	Explanation
Not applicable	N/A	N/A

If the proposal is likely to have a significant impact on the environment (positive or negative), it is advised that you undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Further information on when an SEA is required can be found on page 19 of the IIA Guidance and on the **Scottish Government website**.

If you have identified any impact (positive, negative or neutral) on protected characteristic groups, children and young people, human rights, socio-economic disadvantage or the environment, you must complete all of the remaining sections.

If you have not identified any potential impact on protected characteristic groups, children and young people, human rights, socio-economic disadvantage or the environment, please advance directly to **question 29 (Recommendation)**.

Evidence

17. What data, research and other evidence informed the proposal?

Evidence can include, for instance, surveys, databases, census and population figures, focus groups, in-depth interviews, pilot projects, reviews of complaints, user feedback, academic publication and consulting reports.

Evidence source	**Explanation** (what does the evidence tell us about nature and scale of the potential impact?)
Research	Midlothian Council has no other nurseries or childcare settings attached to a secondary school. The impact of this closure proposal should not affect future eligible children, as there are a number of other Early Learning and Childcare settings in the local and wider Midlothian area.
Research	The current learning environment at Lasswade High School Childcare Service creates barriers to learning, as being attached to a secondary school reduces the ability for children and staff to benefit from the learning and resources available to settings that are attached to primary schools. This environment would be more suited to a unique standalone setting in line with Midlothian Council's vision and values for Education and Early Learning & Childcare. If

Evidence source	Explanation (what does the evidence tell us about nature and scale of the potential impact?)
	the space was to continue as a local authority setting it would require enhancement to fully meet best practice guidelines contained within Realising the Ambition: Being Me, Curriculum for Excellence and Space to Grow and Thrive.

Consultation and Engagement

18. How has the proposal been informed by consultation and engagement?

Please explain who was consulted/engaged during the development of the proposal, the extent of their involvement, what their views were and how these have been taken into account.

A statutory consultation process was undertaken on the proposal to close the Lasswade High School Childcare Service, and was informed by various types of data, research, and evidence. This allowed stakeholders to provide their input and views on the proposal. Public meetings and virtual drop-in sessions were held to facilitate community engagement and gather diverse perspectives. A pupil focus group was undertake with senior phase within Lasswade High School which provided qualitative insights into the potential impacts of the closure of the childcare setting.

Midlothian Council conducted a survey to gather views from a number of affected consultees which included parents/carers, staff, pupils, community councils, trade unions and professional associations representatives of staff, and the community about the proposed closure. Feedback was collected to understand the impact on families currently using the childcare service, to which there were 62 responses received with a range of comments/views and will form part of the final consultation report.

Education Scotland's had an engagement period of three weeks on the proposal to close the Lasswade High School Childcare Service. Education Scotland participates in the statutory consultation process required under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. This includes reviewing the proposal and providing an independent report on the educational aspects of the proposed closure. They gather and consider feedback from various stakeholders, including parents, staff, and the community, to ensure that all perspectives are taken into account.

Education Scotland assesses the potential impact of the closure on the quality of education and the well-being of the children affected. This includes evaluating alternative provisions and the overall educational environment. After the consultation period, Education Scotland provides a report to Midlothian Council summarising their findings and recommendations. This report is made available to the public as part of the decision-making process and included in the final consultation report.

Mitigating Actions

19. Could the proposal, in its current form, discriminate against people in a protected characteristic group? No

20. Could the proposal, in its current form, violate the rights of children and young people under the UNCRC Act? No

21. Could the proposal, in its current form, violate human rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)? No

22. Could the proposal, in its current form, entrench or increase inequality of outcome due to poverty? No

23. If applicable, please describe any actions which could be taken to remove or mitigate the potential negative impact of the proposal.

Please provide estimates of the resource implications of adopting these actions.

N/A

24. If you have identified any potential negative impact which cannot be removed or mitigated, please clearly state your justification for continuing with the proposal.

N/A

NOTE: If the proposal could be deemed discriminatory under the Equality Act, UNCRC or ECHR, you must revise the proposal to ensure that the Council acts lawfully.

Monitoring and Review

25. How will the implementation and impact of the proposal be monitored? How frequently and by whom?

If the proposal to close the childcare service is approved, council officers within education will work with families to provide information on other childcare settings in the local area and where applicable, the wider Midlothian area.

26. How will the results of this monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

Monitoring results provide detailed data on various aspects such as enrolment numbers, financial viability, and the quality of education and care provided. This data is analysed to identify trends and issues. Based on the analysis, a consultation report is prepared, and this includes the findings from the proposal in relation to closure of the childcare service. These reports are published and made available for stakeholders, including parents/carers, staff, and the community to view.

Education Scotland reviews the proposals and assesses the potential educational benefits/impacts. This includes considering how the changes might affect current and future children, as well as any other users of the facilities.

27. When will the proposal be reviewed?

The feedback from consultations and the assessments by Education Scotland are used to refine and finalise the final report for consideration. This ensures that the proposals are well-informed and consider the needs and concerns of all stakeholders.

The final proposals/considerations are then presented to Council/elected members for approval. If approved, the council will implement the changes, ensuring that any adverse effects are minimal and that there are clear plans for transitioning to new childcare settings.

28. If the proposal is to be delivered wholly or partly by contractors, what arrangements are in place to ensure equality, human rights and environmental issues are properly considered?

N/A

Recommendation

29. What is your recommendation for the proposal?

Adopt proposal with no amendments	☒
Adopt proposal with mitigating actions (outlined above)	☐
Reject proposal due to disproportionately negative impact on equality, human rights or the environment	☐

30. Please give the reasoning behind your recommendation

- Include reference to any potential impact you have identified during the IIA process.
- **If you have not conducted a full impact assessment by completing all sections of this form, please explain why.**

The childcare setting being attached to a high school, with a low enrolment number impacts the financial viability and resource allocation for the childcare service.

Feedback from stakeholders, including parents/carers and staff, has been considered as well as a report from Education Scotland on the educational benefits. HM Inspectors agreed that the proposal has educational benefits which relate to, better transition arrangements and improved access to leadership from ELC professionals.

There may be an initial disruption for families currently using the setting however, council officers will provide support to ensure a smooth transition to alternative settings.

The proposed closure aligns with the council's vision of providing high-quality, inclusive, sustainable early learning and childcare services that meet the needs of all children and families. The values include a commitment to equity, excellence, and the well-being of all children. The proposal to close the nursery setting is in line with these values, as it aims to enhance the overall quality and sustainability of early learning services in the area.

Authorisation by Director/Chief Officer/Head of Service

Name and job title

Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships

Date

24/02/2025

Signature