

## **Appendix 8: Responses From Online Survey**

### **Responses from those in Agreement with the Proposal**

#### **How will the proposal affect you?**

*"If rezoned to Grange, my children's class sizes are likely to increase along with other indirect impacts"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Not directly but I am a parent of children who attend school in this area"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"My child attends Grange Primary school, and so some pupils will move here if Blackness is closed."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Extra handful of children in Grange."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"The huge amount of money this school takes to run could be used to benefit many more people."* (OTHER)

*"Increase value for money on the budget."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

#### **If you support the proposal, what are your reasons?**

*"Realignment of council funds utilised to keep a very small school open to the benefit of the other schools in the catchment area"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Budget cuts are effecting all areas of the council. It seems sensible to make savings and close a school having such few pupils. This could be a good Saving for the council."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"The cost per pupil is too high and unfair compared to other children in the council area - this money would be better spent serving the needs of the wider pupil population in the area. The closure appears to be proportionate when Grange offers good educational provision and pupils are still entitled to school transport."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"The funding directed towards the running, staffing, maintenance etc of Blackness is completely disproportionate and diverts funds which could be better used in the other schools in the area."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Given the financial situation with education in the council area, I don't think it is fair that a small school with a high cost remains open when the children could be*

*accommodated within another setting. I also believe there are a number of children outwith catchment who attend Blackness, therefore boosting the numbers. If the parents are happy to send children to Grange for nursery provision, I don't understand why it is an issue for school."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"The school is a very very small pupil and staff body which get the same funding as other schools in the community which is not fair"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Money saved can benefit all children."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It costs the council too much money to keep this school open when the majority of the children attending do not actually come from Blackness."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Falkirk has closed down many Bo ness facilities which have affected hundreds of local people. The money this tiny school costs could be used to benefit many more local residents if Falkirk Council choose to use it in Bo ness and other communities which have lost so much. All of these communities are growing very quickly and although they are increasing revenue for Falkirk, the facilities are diminishing rapidly."* (OTHER)

*"Blackness should NOT be opening for a small amount of children when the REC venture was shut down due to funding. Absolutely ridiculous"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"First of all it's the budget, the council needs money for so many important things, I'm not saying Blackness school is not important, it is very important as any other school but the number of children is not helping. Those kids can be allocated to other schools and they will miss nothing. Secondly, It's for the sake of those children, they need to come in the real world. It's not helpful for them being stuck in a very small group from p1 to p7. They need to go to schools with real numbers of children, face real challenges it how they will built their resilience. Just thinking about them going to high school with a big numbers of children with different challenges, I'm afraid they might not be able to cope. In conclusion, If we are really thinking about the well fare of the children, Blackness school should close and those children allocated to Grange school or other schools of theirs or their parents choices."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*" Although the blackness school building could be used as a separate SEN school"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Disproportionate use of council funds when more populated schools suffer with a lack of funding to support Bo'ness primary pupils educational needs"* (BO'NESS COMMUNITY COUNCIL)

**The Proposal Document considers a range of alternative options to permanent closure. Do you have any comments on these or any suggestions for other alternatives to closure that should be considered?**

*"Blackness Primary is an extravagant cost."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Add capacity to Grange School for wraparound childcare to support wider pupil population"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"4 and sell the building to raise funds which should be invested in other childcare / education establishments in Bo'ness"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"All except 5. Nursery provisions, or out of school care, especially if Friday half day goes ahead may be very welcome. Youth area? A place for children and families who need extra support? Use as a community hall type venue?"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"None of here. Use the school to provide SEN education"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

### **Educational Benefits?**

*"Being part of a larger school will provide greater social inclusivity for the Blackness pupils"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Excellent education establishment at Grange Primary"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"So long as the funding was repurposed, this could be used to boost opportunities for the school population of the Grange."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Financial benefit to other schools"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"More opportunity for social interaction and inclusion within larger school."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Pupils will have a wider peer group throughout primary which will help their transition into secondary"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Money saved per pupil may benefit all, offering wider opportunity and specialists."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Better for kids - wider exposure to larger social grouping and educational activities"* (OTHER)

*"The closing will be beneficial for the children, they will be able to learn like any other kids."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Greater mix of kids which mirrors real life"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

### **The impact on your local community?**

*"Negligible"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Connections with Blackness improving"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"With the closure money can be put elsewhere"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Possibility of fuller classes but feel this is impacted more so by new housing than 10 catchment children."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"More money for local communities"* (OTHER)

*"I hope the money saved from the closing will help the community in many ways. eg: hiring more people in schools who need more staff."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Brings blackness in line with other villages in area with no school"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

### **The effect on travel arrangements for Blackness children to Grange Primary School**

*"Grange primary is around two miles from Blackness primary, so travel arrangements should not be complicated"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Cost of transport is vastly cheaper than keeping a school opened"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"I understand that free school transport is still applicable - although I would hope that those children who live within Grange catchment already would be able to walk, so offers some benefits to travel."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Not sure if this is a huge issue as I suspect parents are happy to drive their kids to clubs etc and would be able to transport to school. Car sharing or minibus transport for such a small number of children could also be considered"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Very short journey. Most will already own car as no real public transport anyway. Minibus available for those who need it."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Most parents from Blackness have cars, it's easy for them to travel from Blackness to Bo'ness. Or put in place a school bus for the kids."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It's a mile. That's nothing. Especially when everyone drives. Get over it"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

### **Do you have any further comments on the proposal?**

*"I am aware that some families chose to elect to send kids to Blackness due to the wraparound care that was available here. I think it would help if after school provision was made available at Grange to soften the blow of this being lost at Blackness, and to support the wider population as local childcare is hard to find and expensive, which makes it difficult to work regular hours."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Given current financial difficulties, and cost per head, feel it simply has to be closed. Sending music/pe etc, and having admin, cleaners etc for 10 catchment children, all who can travel as far as new housing development children do, is simply unfair to the 250 who attend grange."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Why should Blackness have this expensive facility when other areas of Falkirk are losing most of theirs."* (OTHER)

*"No, I think I have said it all."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Use the school as separate SEN school"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

## Responses from those not in Agreement with the Proposal

### How will the proposal affect you?

*"My child loves the school, and it would be horrendous if it was to close"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Directly it won't but having had my own children educated there I know what a valuable educational establishment this is, and how integral this for the local community."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"It will mean I will not be able to help support my friend with her drop off and collection of children"* (OTHER)

*"I attend and support a lot of the events run by the parent Council and children of Blackness Primary"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"My children will need to move school."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"My son adore the school and will be devastated if it closes"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Significant impact on what I feel is a great school for my son within a rural area. What the kids and School do in this community is as key a part as the school itself. To remove this, you would be removing the heart of a rural community."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It will have a negative impact on our Blackness and Bo'ness community."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"In knowing that children like my daughter who benefitted from the unique learning environment and close-knit community culture will be failed by the education system as she was before reaching Blackness."* (OTHER)

*"The grange is already full and the extra amount of cars traveling from blackness will add to an already unsafe school area in morning"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Grange may see extreme overcrowding- the drastic increase in new build homes in grange catchment could equally utilise blackness primary"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Family member will lose her job"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Significant negative impact on the health and well-being of my child."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Community events organised by the parent council would be lost. We will end up with a degrading building on our doorstep as the proposal says the maintenance budget*

*would be directed elsewhere. Not having a school in the village will make the area less attractive for families, it's why we moved here."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"If will affect our rest niece and nephew greatly."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Family will be affected"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"My nephew and niece attend this school. They love this wee school, it's part of the community"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It will not affect me however given the amount of houses being built in Bo'ness the school places are surely needed."* (OTHER)

*"This proposal will not affect me directly but will affect my granddaughter's education. She spent a year at a primary school in Grangemouth and was constantly bullied, both verbally and physically. Since attending Blackness, the bullying has stopped and her knowledge is improving rapidly."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"We are very close to the catchment for Blackness Primary and would like to apply to send our daughter there when she's of school age."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Affect work and childcare requirements. Also heavily impact the Blackness community. The closure of this School is detrimental to the area."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Blackness Primary has provided our child and ourselves with a strong network of friends and great community spirit. Our daughter has just left a nursery that she has attended for the last 4 years and has settled in well at Blackness. As a parent the last thing you want is any trauma inflicted on your child. By forcing them to change this would impact them massively and affect us a family. We chose Blackness as we feel it's important that our child attended a small school with children with a range of ages who she can play and learn from, by closing Blackness the choice to send our child to a small school is removed, therefore Falkirk Council is making the choice of how our child is being educated not her parents that know her best."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"The school is such an integral part of the community and supports the community hall. Losing the school would be devastating for the area. What happens to the car parking for the hall, who owns the land, so many questions to be answered. My own children previously attended the school and had such an amazing time with so many different opportunities, they definitely wouldn't have got them at a larger school. A small school sees the children as individuals not as a class, so much more personalised. The school are so involved in the Blackness community, doing beach cleans, parcels to residents, coffee sessions, this will just disappear. It's against the human rights of the child. It's not working to GIRFEC principles,"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)"

*"I have a young child due to start Primary 1 in August 2027. If Blackness Primary was still open, I would be able to walk my child to school every day. My child would attend a small rural school, close to home, with the opportunity to get a more holistic, community focused education. If they are to be moved to Grange Primary, my child will be part of a very large class in an overcrowded school with less opportunity for functional skills to be learned."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"Unsure at this stage"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Closure of the local school will be devastating for our community"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Should the school close I believe it would be very difficult to find a suitable buyer for the property and expect it would fall into disrepair and end up being an eyesore which will cost more to maintain. Without the School and it's interaction with the community we would lose the community spirit between young and old."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Loss to the community"* (OTHER)

*"The community of Blackness will be severely impacted by the loss of the school. Families will not move into the rural area if there is no local school."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Affected by the overall amenities in the town including provision of schooling"* (OTHER)

*"A friend's child goes to that school"* (YOUNG PERSON)

*"My son would need to move to another primary school which would affect our current school run arrangements"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Perhaps I will have grandchildren who would have gone to the school. My mum has been a member of Blackness rural for 65 years in the school hall. There is no community hall apart from this. Rural living is isolating and losing the school loses more than the local children's education in their area."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"It will not affect me personally as I no longer have children at school, but I am a concerned local resident. Concerned about the educational future of children in this rural area and concerned about the future of the community hall and current buildings."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Was planning to send my children there in future"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"It will not affect me or my children, but I believe the school serves a great purpose to the community."* (OTHER)



*"Having to do school runs further afield, so costs, damage to environment through more mileage on car." (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Loss of community connection with BPS (Blackness Primary School) and the roll-on effect on our Community Hall:*

*-currently all community school events are led by parents (craft fair, MacMillan coffee afternoon, harvest donations to older community members). This will stop.*

*- lack of contribution and enjoyment of the Bo'ness Fair because of lack of participation of our local school*

*- lack of involvement in the Blackness and Area Community Council. Will it fold? This is the voice of our area. It is already on the periphery of Bo'ness Community Council and is barely on the register of Falkirk Council*

*-the last few years have seen decline in participation of community events (eg carol service) since BPS being annexed to a larger, more distant school. BPS appears to be marginalised*

*- less children and their parents will move into the area. No-one wants to start bussing 4-year-olds. Demographics will change with an older population and little input from young people*

*- attracted community orientated staff to the area" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"I plan to send my daughter to blackness primary school next year (2025). I have recently viewed the school, as well as other schools in the area and it stood out to me as by far the best option." (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)*

*"Having been a previous student of Blackness, I have always been engaged in events going on with other local young people attending the school and being part of the community and pride myself in knowing and speaking to most of the residents in the area." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"As a committee member of the Blackness Community Hall we are very concerned about the future viability of the hall without school support as both work in unison assisting the community. I assist when i can in events within the hall and is always a hub to meet local people in the community" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"My child currently attends Blackness Primary as did his older brother (now at High school and doing well!). We as a family couldn't wish for a better school to educate our children. We chose to live in this wonderful community and to send our children to a school in which they would be treated as individuals and receive an education and opportunities we believe sets them up for life and not be sardined into noisy, classrooms with huge numbers. My child went to nursery at the Grange and did not enjoy his time there.*

*My child walks / cycles to and from school every day no matter the weather with myself and we are greeted by school staff and happy children and parents ready to start their school day. If we were to move, our child would be collected by bus and we would*

*have very little communication with others, making it harder to meet new parents and chat to teachers and the end of the day isolating us further from a school we already have no relationship with contrary to what is written in the report. The bus situation concerns me too with the chaos around the grange school gates and road a minibus in that area is an accident waiting to happen!*

*My child enjoys learning at his level in a class with a diverse age range helping, supporting and pairing up with each other to learn from numeracy, literacy, social skills and general school activities. In the workplace you do not work with people all of the same age groups, so this gives them the skills to take forward in later years.*

*Learning doesn't just take place in the classroom at Blackness, the community aspect is something I don't believe they would experience at another school; the children love learning about and growing their fruit, veg and plants which they sell at their honesty shop at the school gates, raising money / funds for developing it further. Through this they learn all sorts from making soup, where their food comes from, sustainability. They make soup packs and deliver on foot to elderly local residents, they do regular beach cleans in the village learning about marine life, conservation and taking pride in their community. They are regular visitors to Blackness castle, local businesses and also go on trips to the Highland show, pantomimes, and have people into the school for projects etc, this is undertaken as a whole school, learning together and through repetition reinforcing and solidifying new information and skills in memory. This cannot be achieved in a larger school.*

*My son is a quiet, conscientious child who is very much seen as an individual at Blackness who absolutely loves his school, friendships and would absolutely not cope or do well in a noisy, overcrowded classroom, which is only going to get worse with the new houses currently being built in Boness.*

*In short if this proposal goes ahead, you are affecting my child's education, future and our right of choice in where we choose to send our child to be educated along with the negative impact this will have on the community, we choose to live in."*  
(PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"

*"We're planning on sending our future children to blackness primary" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"My child attends Blackness Primary School and my older boy attended the school and is now in 3rd year at Bo'ness Academy. The school has been great for us as a family with my eldest thriving from learning and working with older and younger kids. My youngest is really happy at the school and we chose to live in this lovely community and send our children to a rural school which gives great educational benefits and sets them up for life. He walks or cycles to school as do his peers, and we are greeted by school staff, parents and children. The school gate acts as informal meeting point where people get to know each other and maintain friendships - this would be lost, along with the opportunity to discuss the school day with teachers, isolating us further from a school contrary to the report that we have no interaction/joint working with. Bus situation gives me safety concerns to an already busy bottleneck area of Bo'ness which is an accident waiting to happen.*

*The different ages of children have helped him improve his communication skills, he's mature for his age and overall improved his social skills. He enjoys learning in this environment and this extends to the pupils growing their own fruit and vegetables which they sell, putting the money back in to developing further. This promotes sustainability first hand. They do regular beech cleans and school trips to the local businesses to see how they work - this cannot be achieved at a larger school.*

*He is a quiet conscientious kid who is seen as an individual who loves his school, teachers and friendships. With small classes our teacher can easily monitor every pupil's progress and tailor learning to each pupil. Teachers get to spend more time with each child, therefore they'll have a better idea of what my child might need extra support with." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"*

*"Mental health would suffer due to worry and concerns over children's education future" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"I am a parent who's child attends Blackness Primary, I'm a member of the PTA and also Blackness Community Council member. This proposal has a huge negative affect on me and my family.*

*My child moved to Blackness Primary in Jansen when we moved house and is a catchment child. Being new to the area and part of a rural community, the school has enabled me to make friends and meet parents from within the Blackness community.*

*The community spirit is fantastic and this will be lost should the school be closed. This would have a negative effect on my well-being and mental health which can't be replaced." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"*

*"My grandson is thriving at Blackness Primary School, and I've made many new friends within the community." (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"My grandchildren's education will be compromised by increasing the numbers of their primary and secondary schools" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"It will dramatically affect me and my family if the school closes and my children need to go to another school." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"It hugely effects my child by trying to close the place he loves, and he doesn't understand why it's being closed" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"I was considering my youngest attending this school" (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"My two children currently attend and love Blackness Primary. They are already affected by the proposal, getting upset and anxious because they don't want their school to be closed. They were so happy when the mothballing didn't go ahead last year and with numbers increasing significantly since then, they don't understand why*

*anyone would try to close such a wonderful school. I'm glad the children are being consulted and I really hope they will be listened too, because this process is very hard for them to go through, and it sounds like the meeting with (education officers) was quite upsetting for them.*" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"By losing a valuable community resource."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Losing a valuable community resource"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"My child who is a pupil has additional needs will have to relocate to a school which cannot meet her needs."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It will add more strain onto Grange Primary where my son attends and will stretch resources even further, impacting on his education as I feel he doesn't already get the support he should so adding more children to the role will only dilute the help that is available."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"This will be a huge loss to the community and the future education of the blackness and surrounding areas children."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Concerned for my nieces & nephews"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"The proposal would have a significantly negative impact on our family. It will be a massive upheaval for our young children at an important time in their development. They will be split up from friends they have grown up with and thrown into a hugely different learning environment. One which will have a negative impact on not only their education but also their mental wellbeing, which has already been affected by the ongoing proposal.*

*The attention, amount of opportunities and quality of education they currently receive at Blackness Primary is second to none and would be nowhere near what they would receive at Grange Primary.*

*Currently our 9-year-old cycles to and from school along with his friend. This gives them an increased sense of independence, helps them learn important road skills and helps them keep fit. This will not be able to happen with the distance and main roads that are used to get to Grange Primary."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"This will significantly affect my daughter's upbringing. We specifically chose a smaller, more intimate environment where our daughter could be at school without mass amounts of children being in her class. Whilst numbers are encouraged to grow, and might I add, they have DOUBLED since she has started, this school functions within our values, with its strong community connections from beach cleans, door to door offerings of winter soups, tea and coffee fund rasings, food offerings for the homeless,*

*just to name a very few things that are educated at this school which are not offered at the Grange, or, any other school in Bo'ness. This is my daughter's future you are affecting. And telling me that the Grange is a better school than Blackness is ludicrous. My daughter was originally in catchment of Kinneil, which was 2 meters from our house, and we chose to drive our daughter 15 minutes down the road to have her schooled at Blackness. We have since become a resident at Blackness and thus, my daughter is now a catchment child."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Our child would have to move schools for the second time in a year and our other two children would not be able to attend the wonderful school we know and love. We would very likely not send any of our children to school at all as we it was a very intentional and thought through decision to both not send our first child to school for P1 and further to not send him to his catchment school - or any other school within our vicinity in Bo'ness. For these reasons, if Blackness Primary School were to close, we still would not feel that the schooling options are adequate and would choose to homeschool our children instead."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"

*"The proposal will have negative direct and indirect effects. We moved to this area to join, and contribute to life in, a thriving small rural community. A local school attended by neighbours, and in walking distance from our home, was a big draw for us. As a young family we would have reconsidered moving here if this were not the case; it is likely that the school contributes to the diversity of households in the area (based on studies of rural community composition following school closures). Our current child, and any future children, would no longer have the option to attend a rural school, grounded in their community, within an active travel distance. Our child, and others in the catchment area, would be asked to move to a school where they cannot play on grass. This is, to us and many others who have chosen a rural home, almost unbearably sad. As a family that walk and cycle from our doorway regularly, this is a hugely important value for us, and one that contributes to child health. A weakening of community, of community events led by the school, and likely outmigration of families from this area would detract from our and the community's quality of life."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"My child (and future children) will not have access to a primary school in their local area. My family and the community will be affected by the loss of school arranged activities through-out the year (e.g., Christmas markets, wreath making, easter egg hunts, Macmillan coffee mornings, remembrance day events). These are all vitally important to keep the community coming together, especially as a lot of the area are an aging population."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"Children will drop out of school system as Grange is inadequate and home-schooling will be better."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

**If you do not support the proposal, what are your reasons?**

*"The school gives so much to the children and their community it has been there for so long and brings so much joy" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Inaccurate figures and lies"(FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"The distance & the kids mental health going from a small class size to a larger class size, I don't see why you would want to shut a school that supports the mental health of children by having smaller class sizes and more 1:1 time with children" (OTHER)*

*"The school offers quality education, small class sizes and learning opportunities which are different to those that larger mainstream schools can manage. Attainment is better than Falkirk average as a result. The learning environment is particularly good for neuro divergent learners, of which there have been many passing through Blackness Primary. The community enjoy engaging in events at the school and there are no/ very few other community gathering opportunities locally, especially during the day, which is more suited to our elderly community. Children of the school have been instrumental in caring for the environment in Blackness too, for example campaigning for 'bag it and bin it' responsible dog walking and regularly attending the beaches of Blackness to clean them.*

*Consideration should be given to using the school and surrounding area to boost the opportunities for other Bo'ness learners to experience quality outdoor learning opportunities that are available in Blackness in a significantly more diverse space." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)"*

*"I do not want my children to attend any other school. They are settled, thriving & very happy at Blackness primary. It such a fantastic school and I do not want my children going into larger classroom of 30 plus pupils & to school that is nearly full . With all the new houses getting built in Bo'ness blackness primary should be an option as catchment. If the school does close my children will not attend the grange." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"The school is more than just a school it supports system for the children and parents it a family - to have the school close down will have a detrimental effect on children who attend" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Impact on my son directly as we've come from a bigger School 2 years ago in Kirkliston, and this was nowhere near as good as an education my son receives now. The class sizes are far to big so I disagree with the thoughts this is for the better of my son, also to remove this rural school will have a much wider impact to the community." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Rural community where all the kids work well within their friends' group." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"A great family and rural school! I have experienced school life at this school and all of my family have gone on to be successful from schooling at Blackness" (OTHER)*

*"I had my primary education there and it's a wonderful school"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I don't agree with the proposal to close Blackness Primary as the school has been opened since long before I went to school, it's essential for the blackness community and the families that live and go to the school. Like any area peoples kids grow up and move on but you need to allow the community to build up and younger kids to come to an area. The families of the kids who go to the schoolwork so hard to raise funds for the school, a lot more work than a lot of other schools. It's a worthy school to be kept open."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"The choice to our young people needs to remain. It is an excellent environment and education facility for pupils."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"The grange is already full and the extra amount of cars traveling from blackness will add to an already unsafe school area in morning"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"This is a brilliant school and could thrive from growth!"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Blackness Primary School is a valuable resource to the community. The school is essential for pupils living in the village and provides an excellent curriculum with close community links. Closing it would not only affect the families and staff but also the wider community who engage with the school. The loss of the primary school would make the area less attractive to new families moving into the area and would affect the future of local businesses."* (OTHER)

*"Removing a parent's freedom of choice and the ability to make the right decision for my child's education because nobody knows my child and her needs better than me. Taking her away from an educational institution that provides a true breadth of experiences that are more meaningful as she has more time and personal input being in a smaller class. Her teacher has the opportunity to know her better with her being in a smaller class. Her current social relationships and sense of belonging to the Blackness community will be affected resulting in increased levels of anxiety and stress. Forcing a move to another school may result in a childhood trauma. Taking away the school from the community will result in removing the heart from the community."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"The school has been subject to managed decline by the Council for years. The threat of closure since the shared headship has been off putting for families to move here. The Council have a perception that the children have a lesser educational at the school, nothing could be further from the truth when you look how high achieving former pupils have become. The Council will need the school places with the amount of housing being built in the Grange catchment."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Small rural schools are an important part of our community."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"As above, the school places will be needed."* (OTHER)

*"I have many friends with children at this school, I feel it would be very upsetting for the family and children to have to be moved, and my own kids went to that school."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"I believe that the children receive a more rounded education at Blackness as they have to get along with the other pupils, making friends for life. Due to all the building in the Grange catchment area the school will be at capacity in the next year or so, where will the children go then? It would make more sense to increase the catchment area for Blackness and ease the load at the Grange, saving the council the expense of building a new school."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Grange Primary school is already oversubscribed and with the new houses being built, closing a school makes absolutely no sense. Blackness is a small school in a beautiful area, we need to be prioritising protecting these schools. As a primary school teacher myself, I know how damaging for the children, staff and community, a school at capacity can be. I have a number of new mum friends in the area who would like to put their child into Blackness when the day comes."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Funding cuts need to happen in the correct areas. Not from Schools especially a small school that is the heart of such a small community. The impact this closure would have is detrimental to the children and the area."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Closing down a well-run family school"* (OTHER)

*"Negatively affecting the quality of our daughter's education. Possible trauma from forced move to another school, our daughter's health and wellbeing being negatively affected because of the impact on her social relationships and sense of belonging."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Losing community links. Blackness area becoming a ghost village. Children being bullied at a larger school. Issues with transport"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"By the time my child starts school (2027). Grange Primary will be at 110% occupancy. I cannot understand how this will continue to function well, and how this will be a better experience for the Blackness children. If Grange Primary is oversubscribed, children will likely be made to learn in additional temporary structures such as portacabins. There will not be enough staff to cover all the pupils. There will not be enough space. I worry about safety, and the experience and stress this will bring to pupils attending an oversubscribed school. If the council know this is going to be the case, why are they insisting on sending the Blackness children to Grange Primary? Surely a more reasonable suggestion would be to keep Blackness School open and make the new house building development part of the catchment area for Blackness. The children here could bus to Blackness, with less stops needed to collect them all than a minibus around the Blackness area would take. They would prevent Grange Primary being*



*oversubscribed and provide enough catchment pupils for Blackness to function efficiently.*

*The proposal states that children will benefit from attending a larger school in terms of making friends, this is a specious argument. Many children will not find a larger school easier, and many do not need this to expand their peer network. Children who attend Blackness primary tend to come from families with a good income, and the majority of them attend after school and weekend classes where they have opportunity to meet different peers. I find this argument to be concerning as in particular, neurodivergent children would actually find this more difficult to cope. Being neurodivergent myself, there is a high chance my child will also be and may require support when they get to primary school age. Forcing them to attend a large school may be detrimental. With larger class sizes comes a higher chance of bullying. Neither of these points were discussed in the proposal. It is also a possibility that a child with additional needs attending Grange may be put into a separate class from their peers, thereby negating the reasoning that a move to Grange would be good for making more friends.*

*The literacy rates at Grange are concerning compared to Blackness. The attendance at Blackness is also consistently higher.*

*I also believe that the projected school roll for Blackness is incorrect as I know that for my child's starting year of 2027 there are at least 5 children in the Blackness area for P1. The proposed numbers seem inaccurate and low." (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)"*

*"As a former pupil of the school and also as a parent of 3 former students, I cannot recommend the school highly enough. The standard of education has been excellent as shown by my three daughters who attended the school, moved on to high school and then excelled at university which I believe reflects on the outstanding start they received at Blackness Primary. The school is an excellent example of what can be achieved in a small rural school where everyone is valued and encouraged to do their best. The school is a very valuable part of our local community and closing the school will be detrimental to the entire community. Moreover, the local community hall is adjacent to the school, and I believe that closure of the school will adversely affect the hall as parking for the hall is in the school playground, so how could this problem be resolved if the school is closed? Would this not actually lead to the school simply being left to deteriorate which would be awful to witness?" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"It would take away from the community of Blackness if the school wasn't there and the pupils had to attend Grange primary. As a small school it provided a great education for me and still does for children especially those that need additional support and care from staff. The size of school allowed us to have friends from all years and a strong sense of being part of a community" (OTHER)*

*"I believe the quality of education offered at a small rural is far superior to that offered at a larger school. It gives pupils a more rounded experience and better equips them to face their adult future. This is purely a financial based motive driving this proposal. No-one can deny that a lower pupil to teacher relationship provides a better quality of*

education. I have had 3 children come through this school and be nurtured into successful adults." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

"The school is beneficial for children who need more support than is provided at other schools and smaller classes provide better environment for a lot of children. The school is an important part of the community including the adjoining hall including elderly members with. As a former pupil the quality of education and closeness with pupils of all ages would not have been possible at a larger school." (OTHER)

"As a previous pupil of this school we benefited greatly from the smaller school environment, and I know personally would have struggled in a large school environment such as the Grange. The move will add on time to travel between catchment area and Grange (presumably provided by the council if proposal goes ahead) extending the time pupils are away from home but also and also removing ability to walk to school." (OTHER)

"It is a amazing school that can give more 1 to 1 than any other children learn to work together in different age groups therefore learn so much more social skills, the young children can learn to be more mature and look up to the older children and the older children can learn how to look after, respect and learn from the younger children it's a brilliant way to grow up" (YOUNG PERSON)

"Schools within and outside of our catchment area are already full and oversubscribed. Blackness Primary is a hidden gem with a lot of potential. We were very happy to learn about this school and that was the reason for us to choose Blackness Primary which is outside of our catchment area but not very far from our house.

My son has been loving the school, the teachers and his school mates. We have seen a big improvement in his confidence, and we would like to see it improving going forward in Blackness Primary.

All parents are united and in agreement that closing Blackness Primary school in Jun 2025 would be hugely detrimental to the education and moral welfare of our children, to the community of Blackness as a whole and also to the current teaching staff" (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

"Rural living is socially isolating the school and its hall are vital for connecting the community. We pay equitable council tax but get less access to facilities ie transport. We don't even get a Christmas tree. Local children deserve to be educated local to their home. The village needs a hall for community activities" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

"1. The amount saved by closing the school is paltry in terms of the overall Council budget- equivalent to the salaries of two senior officers.

2. Bussing children to Grange taking them out of their local community and proximity to their parents is never ideal. I know from my experience as a teacher at Boness Academy that it's hard for rural community kids to keep friends who they can't interact with after school - they always have to catch that bus - or participate in after school activities

3. *The education offered at Blackness is first class and perhaps could offer a lesson to other schools in the quality of one-to-one teacher-pupil interaction. It should be celebrated by the Council not closed.*

4. *This proposal is short-termism at its worst. Which condemns future local PS children to never again having a local school" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)"*

*"Lots of new build houses being built, Grange school will struggle with the numbers over the time, Blackness is an additional resource - parents may choose to send kids there as housing numbers grow. This was my plan as a resident of the new builds in Bo'ness." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"Not all children learn best in a large environment. Blackness affords the children to beat engage with teachers and the community. I have bought several plants previously to support the kids and staff purchase new equipment" (OTHER)*

*"When I taught at Blackness, the majority of children attended not solely because it was local but because it was small and unique. The majority of children I knew there would have struggled in the larger Grange school. The relationships fostered there are very nurturing and locale, unique. There are very few rural schools left, and I feel it removes parental choice / alternatives." (OTHER)"*

*"Minimal cost savings and whole thing going against what the council says. School numbers are above the figure you stated would close the school. Changing the goal posts to suit your agenda." (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"My children had a strong start to their education at BPS, so I'm acutely aware of the advantages of attending a local, rural school and my lack of support for closing the school are for the following reasons:*

*-children with SEN (2 of mine were dyslexic) can be more sensitively helped in a smaller school*

*- better communication with parents as staff more accessible, so parents can support staff*

*- loss of child centred education, as there is not the time or staff to focus on individual needs*

*- demanding children in larger classes can monopolise teacher time to the disadvantage of quieter ones. Children that are middle of the road can be left out*

*- a smaller school gives more opportunities to pupils to participate actively in different events. BPS pupils are used to speaking out and develop into confident individuals*

*- discipline, which is an issue in larger schools like the Grange, are non-existent in BPS giving our pupils a more secure educational experience*

*- children in smaller schools learn to play with children of all ages*

*- it is easier to be all inclusive in a small school where there are smaller class sizes mean more input by all children*

*- after next session, our children will be attending a crowded school. Figures of projected numbers of children, including those in the houses being built, at the Grange (p22 of Proposal Paper) don't include the pupils of BPS. If they were included, the*

*Grange would be oversubscribed in August 2026 onwards. Is the solution portacabins and a resulting loss of playground? Will the supposed budget being allowed for this - in excess of £1m - be subsumed by more pressing educational needs closer to central Falkirk and Grangemouth*

*- lack of strong links to the community fostered by the school, enabled by parents will be diluted in a larger school several miles away" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)"*

*"I believe that blackness primary should remain open. The school provides an excellent standard of education to its 16 pupils and plays an important role in the local community. When I met with the headteacher regarding sending my daughter next year he assured me they have capacity to take more pupils and already had interest from other families regarding children starting primary 1 there next year." (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)*

*"With the number of new houses being built within the Grange Catchment area, surely Grange primary school will struggle to cope with the increased school role. I appreciate Blackness only has a small number of pupils in comparison but that's not going to help. People from Bo'ness have been known to send their children to Blackness so that their kids can benefit from smaller class sizes and more 1:1 opportunity, to avoid bullying and these kids thrived." (OTHER)*

*"Blackness as an area has been left with nothing supported by the council except the school which has been facing the threat of closure for over 5 years, at no point has there ever been any strategy to grow the school roll. The publication produced for this consultation repeats the same points that the council needs to save money and that children will perform better in a school with more peers. I agree that council finances are extremely stretched but that goes way beyond a small rural school when you look at the amount of money being allocated to other areas within the council region. As a previous student of Blackness with only 8 pupils in my year I have gone on to achieve an Honours degree in Rural Business Management and now run my own business in the area, a small number of class peers has never affected my confidence if anything has helped me become more rounded as a person as we all had to be understanding of other people's needs at different ages. I also firmly disagree with the council's financial accounts that accompany the consultation drafted by Kenneth McNeill. If Blackness was to close then the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher would be allocated as full time equivalents to the Grange Primary budget but the salaries budget differences do not correspond with the proposed savings at Blackness of £165,956 to the added expense of £14,500 at the Grange. These totals work out that the 1.8 FTE staff at Blackness share a salary pot of £151,456. Further to this the FTE equivalent for a Headteacher and Deputy Head of 0.2 at Blackness means that 20% of their salary should come from the Blackness budget given standard wage rates for 1 year's experience is around £60,000 this would equate to £12,000 per 0.2 FTE in basic terms. This money should then be allocated as extra expenditure in the Grange budget but not so, raising the question of where the head teacher and deputy are going to be working on this day after the closure. The £14,500 suggests that both these teachers*

are only on a salary of £36,250 per annum, which is simply not true when the real total should be in excess of £24,000. I find it really infuriating when people manipulate numbers to tell exactly what they want to, which is clearly the case here. There may be money to be saved at Blackness by closure, but it will not materialise to the amounts the council is portraying of over £200,000 per year. Another major issue is the oversight in the Grange primary school roll which will be overcapacity in 2 years with projected intakes of children with new house building. The design of the Grange does not easily allow additional extensions being a Victorian style schoolhouse and with existing restrictions in space with the nursery, parking, location and playing fields it is unclear how and when these alterations would be undertaken. Given that Blackness has capacity to take more pupils it should be used as the overflow and promoted as a high-class teaching establishment. It is beyond belief to be told that children will perform better in classes in excess of 30 pupils with one teacher trying to cater to all teaching needs and possibly in the future with the use of temporary buildings. Everyone understands that councils are under pressure, but every business is feeling these pressures, the amount of money being spent on wages, expenses and projects that are not beneficial to the area is ridiculous and the fact of the matter is that council efficiency is getting worse. Another issue is the Blackness Community Hall which is a key resource to the area hosting many events weekly for parties and local groups and without the school support it is unclear if this could continue which is a major loss to the area. The council fail to see the bigger impacts of their actions as can be seen with the closure of Bo'ness Recreation centre which has left the whole town with no proper designated leisure facilities, which has no doubt started to influence the anti-social behaviour which is rising in the area. The in-person meeting held in the hall showed the true community spirit in the area something that should be praised and showcased to other areas." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

"As a parent of 3 children all of whom went through Blackness School with a school roll fluctuating between 19 and 50 over a period of 17 years I have always had the best experience with the school. All my children had excellent opportunities through the school and have gone onto do very well in the careers and with a wide group of friends and connections. Peer group size seemed to be a major portrayed benefit for children in the public meeting consultation, which is simply not true as the values instilled in children of blackness school meant they could go from a class of 2 into any environment and strive onwards knowing the true meaning of friendship between ages and the local community, values i do not see being portrayed at the Grange Primary. I was previously involved in many school activities with parent councils and youth club these have been carried on at Blackness but i have been told that these are no longer in operation at the Grange due to lack of parent volunteers. The school has had the threat of closure for many years which will have ultimately put parents off the idea of sending their children to be educated at the school. For many years I was fortunate to attend the Annual Prize giving ceremonies at Bo'ness Academy at which there was always a greater percentage of students from Blackness Primary achieving excellence given its size compared to other catchment schools and the number of pupils showed the education and values they were educated with." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

"Degrading the cohesion of a largely rural community which is based around the school." (OTHER)

"I do not support the proposal as I've stated above. I also believe that the proposal is factually incorrect, financial figures, expected projections, the one-sided benefits of sending my child to the grange, and with the new houses and potentially a lot more houses in Bo'ness is quite frankly disgusting to take away a high achieving school and place our children into a near capacity school where their education and love for learning will be compromised." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"

"We would like to send our future children to blackness primary and the current primary school is still quite far from where we live." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

"I do not support the proposal.

1. Our older child has benefitted, and our younger child currently benefits from learning and working with older and younger peers. Mixing age groups promotes turn-taking, improves social skills, sharing, and reduces conflicts (kids have different needs and interests - there's a lot of research supporting this too).

2. New houses being built in the Grange school catchment will add to a school role that is already reaching capacity, with limited scope to extend the building due to site constraints and type/style/age of building. Where's our kids going?

3. Larger class sizes make it more difficult for teachers to give kids individual attention and manage the classroom thus leading to more disorder which can have a negative effect on learning. Utilise additional classrooms at Blackness by extending existing catchment area. Taxi service funded by Falkirk council takes kids from Caridean brae to Grange currently.

4. Long-standing Government policy is against rural school closures. The school act as informal meeting point where people get to know each other and maintain friendships - at the school gate. This interaction helps our community to thrive, combat isolation and loneliness by enabling people to talk and meet. The proposed drop off and pickup by bus will put an end to this.

5. Children in smaller schools are academically more successful, have higher graduation rates, take more advanced courses, and participate in extra-curricular activities to a higher degree.

6. Costs/figures presented previously were incorrect. I would challenge the costs in Appendix 1 - i.e. teaching staff for full financial year. Has it factored in Mr Burnett, Principal Teacher works 4 days at Blackness Primary and 1 day at Grange Primary per week?" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"

"Grange School is apparently incapable of being extended economically and the forecast roll is for it to be overcapacity. Re zoning the new houses, of which there are many, to attend Blackness Primary will give the Council complete flexibility and contingency in dealing with an increase in pupil numbers." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Blackness primary is a critical part of the community with children waiting to attend and new families joining the village and surrounding areas to Blackness.*

*Pupils receive a much higher level of education, they work with the community to bring everyone together at times of events, such as beach cleans, harvest festivals and visiting the older residents with soup packs.*

*All children are included and never left out*

*They all attend more outdoor activities*

*More school trips to places to learn and explore away from the classroom*

*Hold a meaningful conversation with adults ahead of their years due to smaller class sizes and better teaching*

*Better level of work, higher attendance, zero bullying, healthier attitude to schoolwork and happy teaching staff.*

*Blackness is a semi-rural village that has children looking to attend however what has been found that the families that aren't attending were told at the time of pupil placement that Blackness Primary was closing and this is going back years!!*

*Catchment numbers will remain where required and will increase over the years.*

*There is children that will be coming through the school from blackness but also the massive housing build in Boness. The Grange Primary will not be able to accommodate all of these regardless of what your forward planner has reported - children will be crammed into what is already overcrowded classes and then spilling out into the playground in huts/containers.*

*Widening the catchment for Blackness is what needs to happen.*

*All three reports have been factually incorrect with budget figures increasing and decreasing to make the school unviable to run, heating costs for example is considerably incorrect along with adding in teachers' salaries that do not work full time at Blackness.*

*Our school is a fundamental part of the community and should remain open."  
(PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"*

*"I strenuously object to this proposal and the closure of Blackness Primary School.*

*Falkirk Council have had the axe hanging over Blackness Primary School now for a number of years. The council and their officials have actively discouraged parents from enrolling at Blackness Primary. I know myself when we moved into the catchment and went through the enrolment process, the mothballing proposal was in progress, and I was told the school could be closed.*

*This continued negativity from Falkirk council and the lack of promotion and support for Blackness Primary School is an absolute disgrace. I believe there are a number of parents who have also been put off enrolling which will have negatively impacted the*

*school role. Despite this negativity, the school role has increased significantly in the last year and the forecast is for this to continue.*

*Having come from a large primary school and having another older child in High School, I can see a huge difference in the standard, quality of the education and learning experiences my child has the opportunity to take part in at Blackness Primary School whilst also actively supporting the local rural community.*

*For example, the PTA have worked hard in order to raise funds for a Greenhouse for the children by running lots of events for the community such as, Easter Egg Hunts, Christmas Fayre, Wreath Making. The children have developed their Award-winning greenhouse and planters and have made their own vegetables which have been used in class for cooking. In addition, the children regularly walk down to Blackness village and beach clean, another great learning opportunity for them. As well as this the children have made soup parcels and handed these out to the elderly members of the community. These are just some examples of the opportunities my child would not have if Blackness Primary closed and the negative affect it would have on our community.*

*In regard to the statistics, the proposal clearly demonstrates the Blackness Primary has higher attendance rates and is significantly ahead on academic achievements in literacy and numeracy in comparison to both the proposed Grange Primary and Falkirk region.*

*It should also be noted that Blackness Primary building suitability & condition is also scoring higher than the Grange and the Grange is forecast to reach and exceed capacity in the near future. Surely it would make more sense to consult on amending the catchment area taking in some of the new housing developments to alleviate the strain and increase the role at Blackness which in turn would bring down the average costs in line with the council averages.*

*I'm also aware of Drumbowie Primary School which has recent glowing inspection report and now has a lower role than Blackness Primary.*

*The National Discussion on Education also identifies that children should have broad range of learning experiences this is actively provided by Blackness Primary.*

*Falkirk council should be proud of the service and children at Blackness, and they should be putting more effort into promoting the school and consultation on alternative options which could easily expand the role to enable Blackness Primary to exist for another 110 years to come.*

*I don't believe the financials in the proposal are accurate and the limited savings are not material to warrant the closure especially as the role has increased and should Falkirk Council support Blackness Primary by reviewing catchments it could easily come in line with the region avg costs." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"*

*"I object to this proposal and the closure of Blackness Primary School.*



*Falkirk Council have had the axe hanging over Blackness Primary School now for a number of years. The council and their officials have actively discouraged parents, and this will have impacted the school role.*

*This continued negativity from Falkirk council and the lack of promotion and support for Blackness Primary School is an absolute disgrace.*

*I can see a huge difference in the standard, quality of the education and learning experiences my grandson has the opportunity to take part in at Blackness Primary School whilst also actively supporting the local rural community.*

*The children have developed their Award-winning greenhouse and planters and have made their own vegetables which have been used in class for cooking.*

*In addition, the children regularly walk down to Blackness village and beach clean, another great learning opportunity for them.*

*In regard to the statistics, the proposal clearly demonstrates the Blackness Primary has higher attendance rates and is significantly ahead on academics whilst also benefiting from the outdoor education opportunities unique to Blackness Primary" (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"*

*"The school is the heart of a very small community, the students/parents support people of all ages in the community." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"I don't want the school to close as my children have a better education at this school. Our children live in a rural community and attend the local rural school, our kids do a lot for our rural communities from beach cleans, handing out soup packs ect. I do not want my children attending the grange school." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"*

*"This is an amazing school where year by year numbers are improving and now the whole of Bo'ness is being built upon, we will need more schools not taking schools away" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Fantastic school, a huge loss to the community and the children and teachers. So sad the council are trying to close this." (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Although not viewed as cost effective this is an important and powerful primary school with a strong community value behind it. Fewer pupils provide the school with the opportunity for a child centred approach and the school is what makes the community." (OTHER)*

*"Boness schools will soon fill up, especially with all the new build housing estates, I believe blackness should be an option for these new housing estates, allowing local people from the village to have their own school as well as a much-needed school for the Bo'ness over flow which we all know will happen." (OTHER)*

*"I do not support the proposal for so many reasons! Blackness Primary offers its pupils more opportunities than I've seen or heard of in any other school in the area. We*

*should be looking at Blackness Primary as an example of how we should be doing things. Children are engaged with their learning and thriving socially and academically. The children are a vital part of the community helping through beach cleans and making and delivering soup packets to residents. They go on lots of educational school trips, enhancing their learning further. All the children are very involved with the school greenhouse and raised beds, where they plant, grow and harvest their own vegetables and fruit which they sell in their honesty shop. The money raised funds school trips and resources for the children.*

*I do not believe there is another school in the area that could provide the social skills, education and opportunities that my children enjoy at Blackness Primary.*

*The teachers and staff at Blackness all know all the children so well. Not only do the teachers tailor learning to each child and quickly spot any support needs, they also give our children the opportunity to share their passions and encourage their uniqueness. Every child is noticed and important.*

*Numbers have risen significantly since the mothballing proposal and will continue to rise in the next four years, after that is unknown as the children are not born yet. But I imagine that the role will increase significantly for years to come once there is no threat of closure to the school and parents are not discouraged from enrolling their children by Falkirk Council staff who have been telling prospective parents that the school is closing, and they would be better choosing an alternative school.*

*My P5 child currently cycles to and from school every day. This is so good for his wellbeing and confidence. He can get overwhelmed with life and cycling to school seems to have really helped him overcome this. There are no other schools in cycling distance from our house. My other child is in P2, we occasionally cycle down to school together and she can't wait until she is old enough to go on her own.*

*Please do not let Blackness Primary school close, it's a safe, happy place where our children love learning. Let's keep getting it right for every child, let them stay at Blackness Primary and continue to thrive socially and academically in a place they love." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"*

*"Purely financial driven by Falkirk Council which will have a detrimental effect on the individual child and the wider community. Negative consequences of closure have been well documented through correspondence and recent public meeting. There is no positive consequences of closure." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"The proposal is purely for financial reasons for Falkirk Council and does not reflect that education is a priority of the government" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"It does adversely affect the community- they depend upon the £ generated from renting the community hall to the school.*

*A school encourages families to move into the area- this will be lost if the school closes.*

*New housing developments nearby- our school can offer them an education that is individualised to the child- unlike already overcrowded schools nearby.*

*Parents should have a choice as to what education best suits their child- this choice is being removed.*

*The council have been trying to close the school for years by telling any new parents it may close when they try to enrol their child. despite this our numbers increase!*

*A smaller school with less noise offers an ideal environment for learning for my daughter who has additional needs." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Grange will struggle even more than they are already with increased class sizes:*

*- Support at the Grange is already scarce (Pupil Support teacher only being available 3 days a week for example) so it will stretch this even further.*

*- It is going to put vulnerable pupils in an even more of a disadvantaged position*

*- With the cutting of services due to budget cuts, Grange already don't have access to other kinds of outreach support for an example Barnardos. This will only increase social & emotional issues within the school, with more pupils being added to that.*

*- Blackness is a thriving community school, the people in the village do not need this kind of uncertainty and stress regarding their child's education.*

*- The current car park at Grange cannot meet the demand of organised transport for the kids, along with surrounding roads at peak times." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL) "*

*"Other rural schools have been closed in the past with dire consequences for the community. The quality of the learning there is second to none, thriving kids with no mental health issues. Schools like this cure issues. The cost of dealing with issues in teenage years is astronomical. Children from grange could come to Blackness for a better education" (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"The negative impact that it will have on the current pupil's education moving to a larger class size. The lack of opportunities resulting from a smaller percentage of pupils at Grange be able to take part in trips and music tuition. The negative impact it will have on the local area not having a primary school. Families with young children or planning to have children will be put off moving in due to the lack of a local school.*

*The impact on the local community through the ceasing of activities carried out by the school and the parent Council such charity events raising money, delivering soup to elderly local residents and beach cleans.*

*The school roll is predicted to rise in the coming years, which would also be helped if the school were to no longer have the axe of potential closer being held over it.*

*Increased housing being built in Bo'ness means that the primary schools there will start to struggle for capacity, and no matter how much money is offered to improve Grange cannot change the fact it is a Victorian building closely hemmed in on all sides*

*with very little scope for improvement." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Because you are saying the Grange is better than Blackness which is so far from the truth. If I thought a larger school was more fitting she would have went to Kinneil which she would have been in the Queens class, and for many, that's brilliant, for us, an intimate setting, smaller settings, smaller numbers, more school outings and learning about their community, actually knowing who their neighbours are, supporting them and getting to know them and them knowing our children. There's a very good saying that it takes a village to raise a child and that's what we have. And you, the council, are trying to tell us that their learning "s going to be "so much better" from being at the Grange? Are you mad? How many parents know each other? How many of them work together to raise each other's children? Blackness school goes way beyond the children and what is offered for them, this is a community where we all work together to help each other. If at any point anyone needs anything, I don't just have one parent behind me, I have a whole school of parents who are open, willing and supportive of me and my daughter, and likewise. You don't get that in Bo'ness, because I am considered an outsider, and I know that because I lived there for 5 years and was well educated on that. Blackness outweighs the Grange 1000 times over." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Blackness Primary School offers an extremely unique educational opportunity being a small, mixed age classroom council funded village school with strong community ties.*

*When researching educational philosophies, benefits and challenges of mainstream schooling, the education systems and impact of schooling over the past 7 years as parents with a wide range of personal experience of schooling in Wales, England, Austria, Poland and the USA, we put a lot of thought and research into what environment we felt would give our children the best educational opportunities as well as allowing them to develop socially, emotionally, psychologically and physically.*

*It was a decision fuelled by not only many years of gathering knowledge and researching but visiting many schools, trialling many educational systems- with years at Steiner/Waldorf schools and figuring out what the benefits and challenges of each were and what we felt would most align with our values and what we wanted for our children and their school experience to be.*

*We came across Blackness Primary School after we had initially committed to remaining within Steiner Education. We made the conscious decision not to send our then 5-year-old to P1 in his catchment school as we felt the educational provision would not be adequate for him and would not be able to meet his basic needs - such as having an adequate outdoor space. Let's note that prisoners often get more time outdoors than a British school child despite the NHS and WHO recommendation being a child at the age of 5 to have a minimum of three hours of free play outdoors and a minimum of 1-hour intense physical activity a day, which they cannot get inside a classroom.*

*We were also concerned about the mainstream classroom having up to 33 children with only 1 teacher and it appeared most “teaching” was left to a BBC program on a big screen whilst the teacher practiced behaviour management.*

*It is well established within literature that children learn better and have improved outcomes when in smaller classrooms. Research consistently shows that smaller class sizes can have significant long-term benefits for academic achievement. Studies have found that reduced class sizes allow for more individualized attention, which is particularly beneficial for students who may need additional support or struggle in larger classes. In smaller groups, teachers can more effectively address the specific needs of each student, facilitating deeper engagement with the material and better understanding.*

*Evidence suggests that smaller class sizes lead to improved academic outcomes, particularly in early education. A recent study found that students in smaller classes (13-17 students) performed better in reading and maths, with effects lasting through high school. Smaller classes also promote stronger teacher-pupil relationships, enhancing motivation and fostering a positive learning environment.*

*Moreover, students in smaller classes are more likely to actively participate in discussions, ask questions, and receive timely feedback, all of which contribute to higher achievement. Research has shown that these benefits are more pronounced for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, where additional support can be particularly impactful.*

*Smaller class sizes are associated with improved academic performance, increased engagement, and better long-term outcomes, especially when students are provided with a personalized learning experience, which has consistently been the case at Blackness*

*Apart from the obvious benefits of being in a smaller classroom, the unique situation at Blackness Primary School also offers a mixed age classroom environment. The benefits of this again are countless:*

*Peer learning is a key advantage, with younger students benefiting from the guidance of older peers, while older students reinforce their knowledge by teaching younger ones. This reciprocal learning fosters a deeper understanding for all students.*

*Social and emotional development thrives in mixed-age settings, as students engage in diverse social interactions. Younger children look up to older students as role models, and older students develop empathy and leadership skills through mentoring. This creates a supportive environment where students feel less pressure to conform to age-based expectations.*

*The structure of mixed-age classrooms also supports individualized learning. Students can progress at their own pace, receiving appropriate challenges whether they are ahead or behind their peers. This flexibility reduces the reliance on rigid grade-level curricula and allows for more personalized education.*

*Furthermore, mixed-age groups help build self-esteem and confidence. Younger students feel validated by older peers, and older students gain confidence by taking*

*on leadership roles. This dynamic fosters a positive learning environment where students of all ages can thrive.*

*Collaboration and critical thinking are emphasized in mixed-age classrooms, where students from different age groups work together, bringing diverse perspectives to problem-solving. This environment mimics real-world settings, teaching adaptability and teamwork.*

*Overall, mixed-age classrooms foster a strong sense of community, encourage lifelong relationships, and offer an enriching learning experience that values personal growth over age-based competition. The blend of peer learning, social development, and flexible education makes mixed-age classrooms an effective and inclusive approach to learning.*

*The praise we have for Mr. Burnett, Mr. Jamieson and the other staff involved in teaching our son at Blackness is endless. We are incredibly grateful for the exceptional dedication and passion their teaching brings to our child's education. Their attentiveness and ability to make learning exciting have truly made a positive impact, turning lessons into engaging experiences that our child looks forward to every day. They have a remarkable talent for bringing subjects to life, sparking curiosity, and encouraging a genuine love for learning, and that ability to foster connections between all the children of all different ages and backgrounds.*

*We also deeply appreciate the strong sense of community fostered by the school. The initiatives like beach clean-ups and providing soup packs to the elderly show a commitment not only to academic growth but also to social responsibility. These actions teach our children valuable life lessons about compassion, teamwork, and the importance of giving back to the community. It's inspiring to see how the school cultivates a caring, inclusive environment that extends beyond the classroom and truly makes a difference in the world around us and we feel so grateful to have been part of it.*

*Blackness Primary really does offer an incredible unique educational opportunity which we feel truly privileged to have access to. We would be extremely saddened to see such a wonderful school close and for our younger children not to be able to attend the school.*

*I would like to add, we do not feel the council has been supportive of ensuring catchment children have the opportunity to attend the school, advertising the school as an alternative space within the area and keeping the school open/increasing student numbers. When we first discovered the school and completed a placing request we were called by the council and "warned" the school will likely close so we should choose an alternative. Again, when we sought to send our 4 year old school aged daughter to school in the summer alongside her brother, both the council and Mrs. Veneroni dissuaded us of this and pushed to keep her at nursery for another year despite her academic capability being far beyond her age and stage (she was reading level 4 books at the age of 4 before the summer and can easily count in 5s and 10s and do simple maths...). Her nursery also felt she was more than ready for school. We*

*can't help but feel the council and Mrs. Veneroni dissuaded us of sending (first both and then) our daughter to keep numbers low in light of pursuing closure...*

*We know of other families who have also been told the school would close and they then chose to send their children elsewhere, which lowers numbers that would have otherwise been there." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"*

*"The proposal as presented is problematic, and impossible to support, for three major overarching reasons, and several specifics as outlined below. With respect to concerns that span the report as a whole: First, the absence of an appropriate evidence review (this was confirmed at one of the public meetings). It does not seem unreasonable that policy change affecting children and communities should be underpinned by extensive and rigorous reviews, ideally independent, of available evidence. There is no evidence in the report that this was undertaken and when questioned at a public meeting those present implied this had not occurred. There is a wealth of data and peer reviewed evidence concerning the impact of school closures on communities, the importance of active travel for health, the importance of the school's physical play environment, as well as a complex and important evidence base pertaining to the effects of school and class size, and composite classes, on attainment and development, for example. The proposal did not refer to, engage with, or reflect this evidence. To give one example, this latter data concerning sizes and composite classes is complex and equivocal, and could have been dealt with thoughtfully, with reference to (but, crucially, not exclusive use of) Falkirk based data, given as was admitted at the public meeting this data quality is poor. This raised huge concerns for us, as the report's presentation of the likely effects of moving schools for pupils did not reflect this evidence. Therefore, it reads as a 'case for', as opposed to a balanced and critical evaluation leading to a recommendation. Given this, in turn it raises our second major issue, serious concerns about the impartiality of the process underpinning the report's construction. In many places the phrasing 'the council believes....' is used, often linked to no or weak anecdotal evidence. This is unacceptable for work that underpins such an important decision. Third, the report's treatment of both equality- and equity- related considerations was inadequate. It was not clear if an equality impact assessment had taken place, as this was not shared. Several elements were discussed that did not appear to recognise or respond to observed inequalities or were presented from one perspective only. For example, the rejection of rezoning a catchment area on the grounds that to do so would be 'disruptive to families living in Bo'ness and likely to face opposition', yet not applying the same consideration to the changes for Blackness-based families. Of note this section is another example of speculation, not evidenced based assertions, inappropriate grounds for rejection of an option. Overall, it was problematic that an equity lens was not used in much of the discussion, a particularly important consideration as economic arguments based on equality rather than equity are often inappropriate when considering rural service provision. With regards to specific reasons I could not support the proposal, the lack of consideration of child health outcomes from removing active travel options for the Blackness community (had there been engagement with the public health team?), the absence of consideration of*

*creative options for promoting and using the school, the contrast with movements for greater citizen choice (e.g. in health care), and the inclusion of broad generalisations that do not reflect our lived experience here (e.g. stating there are no suitable walking routes, when we as a family walk this regularly), removed confidence I had in both the process of producing, and content of, the report. Thus not only could I not support, but I have serious concerns about, its recommendations."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"As an active, environmentally conscious family who like to promote a healthy active lifestyle to our child (and future children) we will not have active travel opportunities to get to school (walking, cycling etc). When moving to the area we were drawn by a close rural community, with local, small schooling opportunities, the positives of rural education are composite classes and smaller class sizes (and therefore more 1-1 attention from the teacher). Taking away our local school may also prevent future families moving to the area, affecting the diversity of the community. Grange Primary School would be more difficult for us to arrange pre and post school collection/childcare as our neighbours (who help us with childcare) would be less able to assist us than Blackness due to the necessity to have car access (and child seats). Grange is also nearing capacity in the coming years and with more housing being built in Bo'ness the school will be over capacity and stretched - this is not an environment I would like my child to be educated in and one that will cost the council money to rectify. Extending Blackness's catchment towards Eastern Bo'ness/Muirhouses would help this and keep Blackness's numbers up - making use of a resource that is already available and allowing children to attend who may require additional support in the form of more attention and smaller class sizes. Blackness is very involved in the community, and is proud to be a rural farming area, my child would miss opportunities and special education surrounding rural life e.g. attending royal highland show and their passion for teaching about food/growing - something we are very passionate about. Rural communities are being gradually depleted, this is something we should be trying to preserve, closing the school will only further this. The community will be hugely affected by the school closure as it is the school/PTA who organise the majority of community events in the area. Without their energy and passion, the community would be hugely affected - they would be unlikely to be able to continue their community events if their children were educated elsewhere and our community are unlikely to attend events in Bo'ness and at Grange Primary School where they have no connection to."*(A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"Having spent considerable time and research into choosing how to educate our children, we figured Blackness was the best option due to the mixed-age group setting, where children learn more from peers (like the older children), and children learn to interact and navigate an environment with a more diverse set of abilities (since friends are not the same age).*

*The alternative (Grange) puts the children in overcrowded classrooms. Our child will not be attending. We believe homeschooling will offer a better education."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"



**The Proposal Document considers a range of alternative options to permanent closure. Do you have any comments on these or any suggestions for other alternatives to closure that should be considered?**

*"There is absolutely no need for blackness to close. It needs to remain open for the children that are there and those in the future. Make the catchment for blackness wider and include those new properties that are being built rather than put those children to Grange. If you can run a bus from blackness to Bo'ness, then why can't you run a bus from Boness to blackness."* (OTHER)

*"Option 3... Blackness Primary can provide adequate space as a base for outdoor learning in a natural, rural environment, for all Bo'ness children to engage in. This would significantly enhance the Bo'ness learning offerings linked to nature, the environment and the Sustainable Development Goals. Many children in Bo'ness do not otherwise have these opportunities. The proposal says Blackness has 3 classrooms and only 1 is being used, so one room could be dedicated to become a hub. Contrary to Falkirk Council understanding presented in the proposal, there is an adequate and safe, pavements walk from the school to the village from which the John Muir Way is fully accessible, as is Blackness Castle and Hopetoun Woods. All perfect spots for a diverse range of learning opportunities."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Keep blackness primary open, the children all love it and will affect people who stay in blackness and will encourage people to move out of blackness"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I agree with option 1 and 2. , this will be beneficial as numbers have increased at Grange school due to the increase in new houses being built in Grange catchment"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Option 5, but option 2 was always possible but declined by council"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Blackness primary school remains open"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"All the options that would keep the primary school open would be worthwhile considerations."* (OTHER)

*"Option 5. Create a shared zone that will include the new estate being built by Miller homes on the East side of Bo'ness where parents can choose to send their child to either the Grange or Blackness (without the option of a bus being provided to reduce costs). This will help to future proof educational provision on the East side of Bo'ness as I understand that the Grange is already at 90% capacity with large class sizes. Encourage local wrap around care providers to include Blackness making it easier for residents who work to utilise the school. Look at reducing staffing costs. Can the office*

*staff and dinner lady roles be merged."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Option 3, the outdoor learning opportunities at this school are unlike any other school in the area. Particularly with the paved safe walking route to the village, castle, foreshore and woods."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Option 1 or 2 as there are many new houses being built in the nearby catchment area for the Grange school which are as close if not closer to Blackness primary and it would make sense to use the school and the building to provide more school/nursery places using an existing building rather than having to find new land and build on."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Options 1, 2 and 5 would be the most cost effective as this would reduce the cost per pupil significantly."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I believe a combination of option 1 and 2 is the perfect solution. That way we could put our daughter into the school nursery and allow her to attend this school, despite living outwith the catchment area."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Keep it open"* (OTHER)

*"Option 5 school remains open, only option"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Rezoning the catchment area to the new housing estate in Bo'ness. This would cause less disruption than moving it to Carriden and Muirhouses. People already with children at Grange could make the informed choice if moving to these houses. If the Blackness catchment was moved to the new houses, this would provide catchment numbers for Blackness without adding to the proposed overpopulation to Grange as outlined on p21 of the document.*

*The children at the new houses could be collected by minibus and driven to Blackness as is being proposed vice-versa. Collecting children from the new estate would require less stops and less driving around than having to collect many children from a wider area around Blackness. This would allow these children the opportunity to attend a school with higher literacy and attendance rates."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)"

*"Option 5 is definitely the best option but perhaps rezoning some of the rural area between Blackness and Bo'ness would help to increase the role at Blackness Primary."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Option 2 - I think there is ample opportunity for areas of new housing within Bo'ness to be reckoned to Blackness and increase the number of pupils attending the school.*

*Option 5 - The preferred option would be for Blackness school to remain open"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)"

"Option 2 increasing the catchment area to make the provision for pupils more achievable" (OTHER)

"Options 1 & 2 seem like reasonable solutions to this issue by expanding access to rural school setting if that makes the school more viable." (OTHER)

"I don't believe the projected savings have been correctly calculated, nor do I believe the assessment of the impact of new housing in the town has been assessed correctly.....in particular for Grange School" (OTHER)

"Option 1, 2 and 5 would definitely attract more kids to the school" (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

"I believe option 2 is a viable option and should be seriously considered. But as of now option 5 should be implemented." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

"Option 2 - extend catchment area to accommodate the new builds in Bo'ness, makes it more feasible for it to stay open. Easy access to the school from Borrowstoun Road (where lots of the new builds have access to). Drive time is similar to that of Grange school. Grange school is too far from Kinglass Meadows (new builds) to walk anyway. This may also reduce costs by negating the need for a new primary school to be built in future to accommodate growing population numbers." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

"I believe that blackness primary should remain open as it is. I will not be in catchment but plan to submitting a placing request to send my child to blackness. Allowing children from our of catchment to attend blackness primary will help the school to continue to thrive." (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

"Option 5 would be ideal, but an acceptable alternative would be option 2.

	Projected school roll				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Grange roll	253	283	315	322	310
Est. new build	18	34	38	25	14
Blackness roll	17	18	18	17	17
Total	288	335	371	364	310
Grange capacity	287	287	287	287	287
Grange excess	+1	+48	+84	+77	+54

Figures for rolls taken from Proposal Paper p17 and p21

In session 2025/26, GPS will exceed capacity and grossly exceed capacity thereafter. Therefore, it makes sense to give the parents in these new housing developments the option to send their children to BPS by rezoning the BPS catchment area or other way

*of permitting this. Thus, using BPS spare capacity and giving more children access to the acknowledged excellent teaching at BPS as demonstrated by their exemplary literacy, numeracy and attendance figures.*

*In addition to the 5 options listed, a further option could be, perhaps, for a year group, say, P5, to be relocated to Blackness for a year to enjoy the rural life and all the extra facilities that BPS has with its larger playground and equipment. It also has ground for growing vegetables and plants, connecting pupils with their food, fund raising by selling surplus etc. It is merely a question of thinking out of the box." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)"*

*"Option 3 - Reallocate available capacity in Blackness Primary School for other purposes. Utilise additional classrooms at Blackness by extending existing catchment area. Additional housing at Grange catchment area the Grange school role is already reaching capacity. There is limited scope to extend the Grange building due to site constraints and type/style/age of building." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Option 2 makes complete sense and will manage an increase in pupil numbers arising from the continuing expansion of the housing to the east of Boness" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"I completely disagree with the Option 2 summary. Which seems to suggest that it's ok to disrupt the families of Blackness and not Bo'ness.*

*There are a number of new housing developments close to Blackness, with houses still being built you couldn't disrupt them as they are not yet in situ!*

*The consultation to review of catchment area makes sense as it would negate the impact to the grange capacity issues which are forecast. This should happen before any catastrophic decisions are made on the future of Blackness Primary school.*

*If Falkirk council could positively promote the services of Blackness Primary and educate families that there is an option to send children to Blackness without the axe hanging over this could easily increase the role." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"*

*"Option 2 summary. Which seems to suggest that it's ok to disrupt the families of Blackness and not Bo'ness.*

*It would be harder for me to get to my grandson at Grange.*

*There are a number of new housing developments close to Blackness, surely a consultation to review of catchment area makes sense as it would negate the impact to the grange capacity issues which are forecast. This should happen before any catastrophic decisions are made on the future of Blackness Primary school.*

*If Falkirk council could positively promote the services of Blackness Primary and educate families that there is an option to send children to Blackness without the axe hanging over this could easily increase the role and reduce avg costs which appears to be the only driver and benefit to Falkirk Council" (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"*

*"Blackness Primary School should remain open. I have emailed with my reasons for this in detail."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Option 5 - once there is no threat of closure and prospective parents are not discouraged from enrolling their children at Blackness, the numbers will go up. This is the school model we should be striving for, and parents are looking for schools with smaller class sizes and a more individual approach."*

*Option 2 - Stop focussing on catchment areas. Every school in Bo'ness has large numbers of children from other catchments. Let Blackness grow by including all children in the numbers and encouraging those from the new houses to consider Blackness as a choice."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"

*"This is a fully functioning community facility in the heart of semi-rural community. Options one and two would bring positive outcomes for all service users."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Options 1 and 2 are desirable as these would bring additional children into the school. This would mean that the school would remain open (option 5)."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Option 1- the PTA would support this."*

*Option 2 would also be viable, particularly with the new housing developments close by."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"

*"Option 2. I believe by increasing the catchment area it will relieve some strain from Grange school whilst going towards the good cause of keeping Blackness open due to their role getting higher. Win situation for both schools."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Option 5 and option 2 I fully support."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Option 5 with the increased predicted roll in the coming years and offer any spare capacity to children within the council area that would benefit from a smaller school/class environment that might be struggling in a larger school."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"This on-going Mothballing, Proposal for closure has been a major deterrent to gaining more children to attend Blackness, making it a more financially viable school to run. When I requested to enrol my daughter, initially a non-catchment child and since has become one, I received a call from the Falkirk Council stating that Blackness would be closing. I have since heard this from one other parent (with 2 catchment children) and 2 other parents outside of the catchment zone. How many more are there? How many other children could already be attending Blackness but because of bad publicity it puts fears into them to make other choices."*

*The fact is, within 12 months the school size has doubled with increased numbers in catchment attending. There could have been more had the council not contacted*

parents to say that "Blackness IS closing", when, this is merely a discussion about the proposal of closure.

With the numbers of catchment children that will increase significantly due to the monumental amount of houses being built in Bo'ness, all of which, their catchment is the Grange, Blackness will, and should be a second School for Grange overflow.

The fact that you are working off "current" figures, which has been confirm by the council themselves that these are far from current, the Grange's demand isn't listed yet. However, what happens in as little as 12 months when children start flocking into these new builds? The demand for The Grange increases significantly thus putting teachers into higher demand.

At Blackness, these children have annual nativity plays, beach cleans, service the community, inside the school and knocking of their doors to deliver goods that they have made for them, they serve tea and biscuits, they have a chat and yarn with the retired ones from Blackness, which there are massive studies that prove the benefits of mental, emotional and physical well-being that comes from the elderly from being with young ones. Our children go on outings, to the local shops and cafes, walks through the woods, parliament, theatres, just to name a few. These children at Blackness have an EXPERIENCE at school, not just classroom-based learning because "that's how it's always been", and that's the choice these parents make when choosing Blackness, ESPECIALLY from out of catchment, its why I originally chose Blackness.

Now I'm very aware that my values, beliefs and way of living mean very little to you, as we all know this conversation is about money, and not "better quality of learning", because Blackness outweighs The Grange, every time. The projected facts and not yet considered figures, remain the same. Boness is a town that is booming and thriving, already on the higher end of their capacity in schools with more coming with well over 183 houses with none being less than 3 bedrooms. Plus an additional 100+ houses being built by Persimmons Home DIRECTLY behind Millers homes, catchment also will be the Grange.

Blackness can contribute to this by rezoning of a section of these houses to Blackness, along with the security that Blackness will remain open, so that parents can choose Blackness with confidence that there is no treat, or disrespectful and unerring phone calls from the council to state that this school is closing. Then we will see Blackness school continue to thrive, numbers will grow, without that security, how can you expect people to commit." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"

"Option 1: We would very much welcome this seeing as the early years provision in Bo'ness and surrounding areas is dismal at best. It would certainly increase numbers long term as majority of nursery children would move up into the Primary School.

Option 2: We would agree with this and see this improving class sizes/quality of education for other schools nearby as most in Bo'ness and surrounding areas have very high numbers already that will continue to increase with the vast amount of new houses being built.

We do not agree with any other options." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"

*"As a nonspecialist in educational policy, I don't feel well placed to comment on this. However, as an interested and affected family, options 2 and 5 seem to have merit, potentially in partnership. A creative approach might be to allow catchment areas to overlap, providing choice for parents in both Blackness and Bo'ness and enabling them to choose a school environment that suits their children's needs. We know that children, especially those with additional or complex educational or social needs, may require different types of environments. Using the existing difference in offer that Blackness provides to other schools may work well for some families and children, potentially reducing costs required for wider support in less optimal environments."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"Extending the catchment zone (especially to Muirhouses/Bo'ness area) would help both the local children in Blackness and also those in Bo'ness to have the option of a small rural education. It would increase the occupancy of the school which would help reduce the 'cost per pupil' and also prevent the need for extending/finding increased capacity at Grange Primary School in coming years."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

### **Education Benefits**

*"My child would have to go to a bigger school which he isn't used to, and it would affect his learning"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"School is fully functioning and should continue to do so"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"From my experience and involvement with Blackness Primary School the children who attend have exceptional educational opportunities and experiences and I honestly don't see that their education could be better elsewhere.*

*You may talk about friendship groups, socialising in bigger groups etc but my children went from Blackness Primary to Bo'ness Academy and had no trouble in setting in to the Academy. They went with a positive mindset and confidence which was developed throughout their seven years at Blackness."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Grange school is already very populated, keeping Blackness open means that children will get the opportunity to have more 1-2-1 time with teachers."* (OTHER)

*"Children will have more opportunities to work in same stage groups"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"My children will not receive the same level of education if they were to move to a bigger school with bigger classrooms. Our children receive the very best of education in and out of the classroom. Walks down to the Beach, beach cleans, walks to the castle, woodland walks this will all be taken away from them and I feel it is imperative that the children learn outdoors as well as in the classroom. No other school I'm*

*Bo'ness can offer this.*" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Other schools will become overcrowded and children will not receive the support they need due to schools becoming overcrowded."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I understand There is not enough space at Grange school to accommodate extra pupils from Blackness."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I'm not seeing any. My son has come on leaps and bounds since leaving Kirkliston primary where it was also over stacked with class sizes you have highlighted in your paper for the grange."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It will reduce as there will be more children within one class."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Rubbish! A waste of a great school"* (OTHER)

*"Smaller schools receive better education and behavioural skills"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"None"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"The benefits are the ability for a child to know and trust a teacher and the educator to learn and trust the child and to have the time to move at their pace dealing with and hurdles and allowing them to reach their full potential.*

*My daughter had given up at school, was bullied and sad about learning. Moving her to Blackness was a fantastic move. She has gone on to gain First Class Honours in her Degree and a master's degree also. I firmly believe this would not have happened if she was left in the previous school where her needs were not being met. She was bored and sad before. Blackness gave her curiosity back and continues to do that for each child that is lucky enough to pass through. To close the school would be a travesty; some things are more important than money."* (OTHER)

*"Children will remain settled"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Small schools provide far better education thru more direct access to teacher"* (OTHER)

*"None"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Pupils would be negatively affected by the loss of pupils voice that they already have as part of a small community."* (OTHER)

*"No educational benefits. Removal of an educational facility that is closely connected with the community and understands the needs of the children from that community.*



*A small establishment is better able to meet the rights of child by incorporating more individual child choice and voice in their learning.it is also more meaningful as their educational is directly linked to their community." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"The children can work with a wider range of children their age. However, children who thrive in a smaller class environment would lose the opportunity to do so. The children would lose the opportunity to take a prime role in so many of the school events as there would be more kids competing for the same number of roles." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)"*

*"Smaller classes which the children are used to." (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Don't see any benefits for the children" (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"From what I have heard Blackness is a lovely school." (OTHER)*

*"No benefit" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"I do not see any educational benefits for the children only dubious financial benefits" (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"A smaller school means a potentially more tight-knit school community and IDL between classes is much easier. Also, where Blackness is located is a beautiful area with numerous opportunities for outdoor learning." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"These kids have the best education. The mix of ages helps development. They learn into be inclusive." (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"None" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Not as many opportunities for learning as classes will be bigger. Older childhood help the young ones, this won't happen." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"Less educational benefits if Blackness school was closed and children had to attend Grange. The literacy rates are significantly lower at Grange. There would not be the holistic, community focused educational opportunities that Blackness affords the children. The education they will receive at Grange will be worse, particularly by 2027 when the school is expected to be at 110% occupancy rate." (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)*

*"I feel that any benefit to the children of moving to a larger school would be far outweighed by the fact of losing the personal touch of being educated at a small rural school." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"Blackness school is what I believe schooling was aiming for. Small, safe environment where children grow and learn and develop into confident, caring children."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I can only see losses to the standards in education by attending a larger school."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"More personal education experience at smaller schools. The teaching can be tailored easier for different needs"* (OTHER)

*"The Grange School capacity will struggle to accommodate all the children from the many new build houses. The children at Blackness Primary are happy, polite children who benefit from all that is offered by school and the local community."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Negative impact on Blackness educated children..... attainment levels much higher at Blackness than Grange. I also do not believe the provision of buses for primary school age children will be to their educational benefit"* (OTHER)"

*"I am unsure on the benefits I think blackness primary school is a brilliant school I am a former student"* (YOUNG PERSON)

*"It will be decreased as they all get so much attention in Blackness"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Detrimental to the local pupil's education as larger less rural school likely to have more pupils with more discipline issues"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"None"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"I believe the educational benefits are best Manifested in this small local school. I think our local children would miss out on a lot by going to a much larger school which is out with their community. This does not reflect any problem perceived with Grange itself which is a very good school."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Potentially reduce class size numbers of Grange, more one on one time for pupils, more pupils at blackness increases interaction levels for current pupils."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"The children and their parents that chose the school for its merits will be forced into a traditional setting."* (OTHER)

*"Terrible for existing pupils. They love Blackness and benefit from the unique ethos. Moving them to the huge Grange building with such an increase in pupil numbers that they are used to isn't in their best interests."* (OTHER)

*"If the proposal goes ahead! You have already made the decision to close, just don't have the balls to come out and say it !!"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I don't believe there will be any educational benefits for the children by closing blackness primary. The children will be put into larger classes in grange primary and get less 1:1 from their teachers. This will negatively impact their education."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"Great rural school with great family connections"* (OTHER)

*"I do not see any benefits that would come from moving to a school with larger classes under more pressures out with the community."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"I am not able to comprehend any benefits to children"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"These are limited but as with all things would depend on the individual child. We made the decision to send our two sons to Blackness as they were both very quiet and would not have coped well with a large school."* (OTHER)

*"There are none!"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Less overcrowding in primary school classrooms"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"None I'm afraid - Children in smaller schools are academically more successful - one local family of three kids, two went onto Bo'ness Academy to become Head Boy and Head Girl respectively - have higher graduation rates, take more advanced courses, and participate in extra-curricular activities to a higher degree. Mixing age groups (currently at Blackness) promotes turn-taking, improves social skills, sharing, and reduces conflicts (kids have different needs and interests - there's a lot of research supporting this too)." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"The smaller schools do better for their pupils"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"The education of the children would suffer, there is no educational benefits to this proposal"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I do NOT see and did not hear of ANY educational benefits at all as a result of this proposal. This was questioned at the consultation meeting and no sufficient response provided. I actually believe there to be many negatives to the proposal for my child as he would be moving to a school with lower attainment and attendance rates. He would not have the same outdoor learning opportunities or direct links to his own local community."*

*The Grange would also be negatively impacted by the additional numbers which would add to forecasted capacity issues as well as possible disruption caused by so many children being relocated into existing classes.*

*This disruption would likely negatively impact my child's wellbeing as Blackness Primary has a real family ethos." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"*

*"None, there are more disadvantages. My grandson went from a large primary school where they didn't think he could read to being one of the top readers on par with the children a year ahead." (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"It's a well known fact smaller class sizes are not only significantly better for children but also for the wellbeing of the staff." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"Reduce pressures on Bo'ness primary schools and allow Blackness to continue" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"There will not be any educational benefits in larger classes. Grange primary does not have the educational benefits that blackness primary has for our children." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"It's not all about books at blackness the kids get to go out in to the community and help support the elderly and also do beach cleans so all life skills" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"This is a building with plenty of space that could be used effectively for children with Addition support needs in the wider catchment. Create an ASC within the school for the ward one children and allow the remaining school to stay open," (OTHER)*

*"There are no benefits, this takes away a local school in a strong community." (OTHER)*

*"The Council's own statistics show that pupil attainment in the past two years has been equal to, or significantly better than the average for Falkirk. Attendance levels have been significantly better than the Falkirk average for ever year in the proposal document. By contrast, The Grange is at best equal to, but mostly below the average achievement and attendance levels when compared to the Council averages. It is hard to argue that any move from Blackness will be better for pupils.*

*The Council's projections show that The Grange is approaching full capacity (99% by 2026 and getting worse in future years). At recent consultation meetings I am unconvinced that the Council has sufficient plans to mitigate this increase. Furthermore, the Council admitted the uncertainty of their projections, and the impact of the rapid new housing developments on the requirements for primary school occupancy in the catchment area. By contrast, there is plenty of capacity at Blackness Primary School." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"Absolutely none! I was so disappointed with the presentation on this at the meeting. There were no benefits mentioned for our children at all and the statements made about learning in bigger groups were not backed up or referenced, I don't believe there is any benefit to attending a larger school.*

*At Blackness Primary, not only do the teachers tailor learning to each child and quickly spot any support needs, they also give our children the opportunity to share their passions and encourage their uniqueness. The mixed age and ability works brilliantly, my P5 child loves teaching the younger children 'while we teach we learn' and my P2 child enjoys learning from the older children and even helping some on the P1s with their work. Smaller classes are much better for all children, but especially those sensitive to noise. If people are talking (even quietly) and my P5 child has an individual task to do, he can find it too distracting. At Blackness the teachers have found him a quiet space where he can go anytime he needs to finish a task.*

*I believe pupil engagement is also much better at Blackness and in smaller classes where the teacher doesn't have to spend as much time managing noise and behaviour. There are definitely more opportunities at Blackness, in the classroom, outdoors including working in the greenhouse, when external visitors come to the school and all the children get to participate, in the community during beach cleans with a member of Marine Conservation and delivering soup parcels and the many excursions.*

*The children at Blackness grow in confidence because of all the opportunities they get. My P5 child is already a House Captain. Every child is in the nativity every year and there are countless opportunities for the children to speak in front of their classmates and the audiences that attend school assemblies and performances.*

*It's also wonderful seeing these children of mixed ages all playing together in school and socially. They learn to compromise due to varied interests and learn to share and take turns. If someone is left out, it's quickly noticed and fixed. My children tell me that everyone is friends with everyone at school and you just join in with the game you want to play." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Larger class numbers which ultimately means less one to one teaching time per child." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"No benefits as children would be moved to larger classes resulting in more diluted teaching time per child" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"Hugely unsettling and detrimental to our children." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"I believe it will only damage educational benefits by increasing class sizes, adding more strain to teachers in a profession that is currently seeing a decrease in workers walking away and whereby only 1 in 6 have permanent contracts. I think it will have a negative effect all round. Not to mention the lack of support already not there for the children and the fact that EPs will no longer cease to exist, therefore putting our most vulnerable students in a mainstream class where the numbers are already going to increase whilst support numbers diminish." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Would have a huge detrimental effect on the community. Children's education would suffer going in to a larger education setting where staff to pupil numbers are already strained."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Zero"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"None, studies have shown the negative impact of larger class size on education. Teachers prefer smaller class sizes. The children prefer smaller class sizes."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I absolutely disagree with the suggestions made in the proposal with regards to the educational benefits. Your document states clearly that Blackness is above the Grange for education whilst always having a biased view of the benefits of the Grange. As mentioned above, community outings, beach cleans, door to door knocking to hand out food, parliament visits, theatre, Blackness Castle, Mannerston for Carol singing and ice cream, Job learnings at the garden centre next door, helping the homeless and handing out food.*

*Inside the school, they have breakfast mornings where they get to take orders from other pupils and then serve them breakfast, they regularly give presentations to their peers with learning topics they have chosen. They have visits from parents educating them on pets that are owned by the children. On top of this, as representative of the information you have provided, Blackness comes out on top (EVERYTIME) attendance, and the ONLY time Blackness DID NOT come out on top was one year in numeracy and that was by a mere 1%!!! According to your own proposal, Blackness is superior school..."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"This would diminish the educational and social provision for the children of this community and diminish their identity within the parish."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Please see our initial response. We have a long list of evidence based negative education impacts in case of closure."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"This question on impacts should be framed neutrally (i.e. the educational impact). Its focus on benefits biases answers here. My understanding is that evidence would suggest that impact on education is likely to be minimal in terms of attainment outcomes, though literacy attainment in particular may experience small detrimental changes. Key for me is to consider this impact both at the general level (what the average impact might be for the average child), but also to recognise that there will be variation. Some children will benefit, and some will experience detrimental impacts, depending on their individual characteristics. This is why I would have liked to have seen more thoughtful discussion here and a stronger exploration of who might particularly thrive in smaller schools and classes in the report."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"That is assuming there is benefits to moving to a bigger school. My child would have a much larger class size and have less attention from any teachers within the classroom. The teachers have the potential to be more stressed due to large class*

sizes and an over capacity school (predicted in coming years). They would have less access to mixed age peers and composite learning which can have benefits to children/learning." (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

"None - the change would bring notable detriment to the children's education. Research has shown class sizes are the number 1 influence on educational outcomes, and the class sizes at Grange would be huge. The school is projected to be overcapacity in a couple of years" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

"Negative" (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

### **The impact on your local community?**

"The community of blackness would demonise without the school and hall" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

"This would not impact directly on the local community I live it, but it would have such an impact on the Blackness Community. This little school has such an important role within their community as does any school. It makes no difference just because it's small." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

"Loss of community due to no parent council/ child led activity which community can join in with, i.e. no more Christmas fair, no more Easter fair. Proposal states maintenance budget for the school would be reallocated by Falkirk Council, therefore a derelict building would be left to fall into ruin on our doorstep. Property prices will fall due to Blackness no longer being attractive to families as result if no school (recognising the constant threat of closure has driven many families away to alternative schooling already)" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

"Blackness primary is the heart of the community, bringing everyone together at our much loved school events & fundraising events by the PTA. Everyone all mucks in helps out whether it be donations of home baking or helping out on the day, it brings such a lovely feel to the school & blackness community. The closure of the school would also impact the community hall greatly as we use that for a lot of our fundraising events." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

"Less people will want to stay in blackness" (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

"Blackness have annual events which I have enjoyed attending with my grandchildren. This brings good community spirit to the area and helps their school." (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

"This would have a 2-fold impact, 1) events the school holds bring the whole community together for fairs, easter egg hunts and Christmas fair and coffee mornings where it's great to see elderly people visiting. Along with this, we are a rural school which means a lot of the parents and kids work on land and also support each other,

*to remove this connection would have a material impact on land management."*  
(PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"May deter people moving to the area as no school nearby."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Devastating for the local community"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Community would suffer deeply from this loss of their school in Blackness, and the community hall would likely not survive this either."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"I'm no longer resident however the school was a great refuge from isolation."*  
(OTHER)

*"Extending the catchment area would be a great idea as more houses are being built in Bo'ness and Linlithgow. Blackness primary is led by the local community and it is a wonderful school for children who require a more focus approach for learning with the class size being much smaller than Grange school."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"We already have little resources as it is, closing this school will be a joke."*  
(PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Blackness primary have a huge part to play in the community and taking this away will be a huge loss, no just for the children but for everyone"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Forced to travel"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Blackness would lose a valuable resource within the community which also creates links with the wider area, such as selling food and plants grown by the children."*  
(OTHER)

*"Increasing disintegration of the local community as school led local initiatives and events will disappear."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Loss of a community asset and the events associated with it. A deteriorating building attracting vandalism whilst it is mothballed or disposed of. Little or no police presence to deter unwelcome behaviour."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Closing the school would cause the hall next door to close as the oy way to the hall is through the school and the playground acts as the car park removing the cars from the road that is a 60mph roadway on a blind summit. Without this parking for the hall would become more dangerous and as there is no other way into the hall it would*



*remove the access to the hall."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Upsetting for children, the family's"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"The community supports all the school events this ensures that the children mix with all age groups."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"As a family we frequent Blackness a lot and closing a school undoubtedly has an impact on it's local community. If people are willing to travel to put their child into Blackness, that is bringing people into the village and making sure it thrives!"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Will have a huge impact of the community life. The school is the heart of Blackness. It brings a small village together."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Huge impact, blackness for a strong local community centred by its school. Already our child has been to a food bank, a beach clean and is supporting a local charity event that is bringing the community together."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"No community engagement with school, people become more isolated"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Blackness has a strong local community. They have a strong and passionate PTA and links with the community council. If my child goes to Blackness, I will be joining the parent council. If they are made to attend Grange, I would not be able to offer my services and volunteer. There would be a lot of anger in the community if the school was to be closed. It is going through a dip in population due to low numbers but is on the rise and will continue to grow."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"As mentioned already, the school is very much valued in the community and closure would be devastating. We feel really strongly that the school should be retained at all costs. The small financial gain to the Council of closing the school would be minimal in relation to the overall council budget deficit."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"The school is the community and holds it together"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Already explained"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Closing the school would reduce events for locals to come together as a community and the children would lose that sense of community in the school"* (OTHER)

*"Blackness is a small community who look out for its residents from 0 to 99. All events run by the school are well supported by the community. Properties in the area have been occupied by families for many years and as older residents choose to downsize there will be family homes for sale/rent. If there is no local school, there will not be the same incentive for families to move into this desirable area. The community spirit has been even stronger since Covid. Blackness residents know each other which was obvious from the meeting on 1/10/24. The children are the future of the community."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Closure will result in overcrowding at Grange School and will almost definitely directly result in the closure of not only the school at Blackness but the community Center facility as well"* (OTHER)

*"Less families might move to Blackness as they'd have to travel further for primary schools, Blackness is a beautiful countryside and such a wonderful natural place for children to grow up"* (YOUNG PERSON)

*"The community will hugely miss the children They are always helping the village with regular beach cleaning...Easter fair...Macmillan coffee day...Christmas Fair....Soup given to the village people"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Pride and connection to community. No facility for community groups"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Lost the Church, lost the school and then the Village Hall"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"The school is really the heart of our community as it is also the site of our community hall. I worry about its loss in that regard."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Will improve school pressures as over the last few years and to next year or 2, at least 300 houses to be built/are built that are in Grange catchment."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"It will not affect me but I think it will be a loss to the local community."* (OTHER)

*"Significant. A further gutting out of the Blackness community. Children and the school are a vital community resource."* (OTHER)

*"Taking away the school from Blackness will impact the community on many ways. These children although brought up in Blackness will lose a part of their Blackness life by schooling in Bo'ness."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"See statement on how it would affect me, as I am part of the local community."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"I believe that closing blackness primary would have a negative effect on the local community in blackness"* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"A massive impact to the town and also everyone in the surrounding area's"* (OTHER)

*"The closure of the Community Hall would have a huge impact as i have previously stated with many events held weekly within the hall from the Womens Institute to Pipe band practices all key social and community benefits. The School has always played a huge part in the community as a link from young and old with the events run by students and parents a credit to the people involved."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Blackness school has always been a close-knit group with students from 50 years ago still involved in the local area appreciating the true values that people need to have to succeed in life. This connection within the community will be lost with the closure of the school and possibly the Community Hall."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Blackness is a very rural area with very few community assets remaining. The school provides a focus for this community. The cohesion of this community would be severely degraded if the school were to close."* (OTHER)

*"Huge, the children would no longer be able to engage in school community events / projects like beach cleans, its a huge success and obviously the tourism that comes to Blackness is a benefit, the wildlife would suffer.*

*The residents in the area fully support our PTA fundraising events, and these are sold out very quickly, bringing community together through coffee mornings to wreath making and Christmas /Easter fairs. We all look out for each other.*

*The community hall would be at risk, perhaps not initially but once the council decide they can no longer provide funding."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"

*"Reinvigorating blackness as a hub for primary school educations"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"The school act as informal meeting point where people get to know each other and maintain friendships - at the school gate. This interaction helps our community to thrive, combat isolation and loneliness by enabling people to talk and meet."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"The community hall will become even more unused and potentially unviable financially"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Would break the community up"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It would be catastrophic, Blackness Primary is at the heart of the community. We are a small rural village and the children are regularly seen supporting the community. As*

*we're rural, the children all know each other and make bonds with local children regardless of age. This would be lost along with the events run for the community such as McMillan Coffee mornings. It would be extremely upsetting for Blackness to lose the school after 110 years, there has to be alternative options."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Devastating, as the school and children bring everyone together"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It will be disastrous our local community. The school is the heart of our community. The elderly in blackness count on our children as keeping our community alive. The villagers and surrounding areas love to see the kids out and about."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It's going to have a huge impact on many. The hall is used for many different occasions and the kids spend time in the community supporting the elderly give out soup packs"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It's detrimental as there is nothing wrong with the current school, it serves the community well and should be preserved."* (OTHER)

*""Blackness village is a vibrant community; the school and Blackness Community Hall are active parts of it. The multi-purpose use of the hall ensures its upkeep and availability for the wider community. If this fabric is gradually dismantled, it is easy for communities like Blackness to slip into inert, commuter villages. In short, the school and hall are irreplaceable assets for the village. My partner's daughter attends the school in P2. She has a growing sense of pride for her community. For example, the school facilitates beach clean-ups, tea and cake events for residents, and visits to the historic Blackness Castle. The school is an active participant in the fabric of the village."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)"

*"Blackness Primary is just down the hill from our house. We can walk or cycle there and I often run or drive past too. It is a thriving school that adds so much to our community."*

*The children and staff have worked so hard in their greenhouse that they have an honesty shop selling plants at the front of the school where locals and visitors to the area stop to buy plants, we all look forward to it opening each year. There is a real We often attend community events organised by the children and held at the school community hall including coffee mornings and Easter egg trails. These events bring together our community, especially some of our older residents many of whom attended Blackness and love seeing the children. The children also bring a smile to everyone when they chat to residents during their frequent beach cleans or when they deliver soup parcels in the winter months. We are so proud of all the children and the school, they set a great example and help their community significantly."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"

*"Loss of a valuable community resource. Less appealing to young families thinking of moving to the area."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Less appealing to young families moving into the area"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"As previously mentioned- hugely detrimental."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I think it will cause a lot of Social and Emotional issues due to kids not being able to freely foster relationships due to the geographical area they are staying in."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Nothing left after that."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Closure would be off putting for families to move into the area. The school forms part of a community hub with which people can gather for events such as easter egg hunts, wreath making at Christmas and McMillan coffee mornings. The charity work done by the school/parent council would cease. And an important part of the community would be lost."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Look, the adults and children have a very special bond. They know each other. My daughter talks to more people than I do!! I find it fascinating. But she will go do beach cleans and go door to door knocking and come home and tell me all these stories about the people she met that day. As a result, I have seen my very quiet and shy daughter go ahead and have a conversation with people I don't even know but have come to learn of because of her. In the opposite, yes, there is a higher age range for Blackness, and I believe these people require the younger generation to keep them interested, invested, involved as part of the community, as part of their own health and wellbeing. There has been monumental amounts of research to suggest that youth in and elderly environment and beneficial for both parties."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Children play their own part in any community and particularly in any rural community. To be herded into schools in areas already bursting at the seams (especially with new build housing occurring and consequential arrival of large numbers of families seems like a totally ridiculous proposal to be considered."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Please see initial response for the negative impact this would have on the community given the strong ties the school has to the community."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"There was completely inadequate consideration of impacts here in the report. Sentences such as "there is no suggestion that implementing this option would detract from the sustainability of the community" are not linked to evidence and any potential negative impact receives little to no critical discussion. This is important as there is an evidence based exploring the impact of closing community assets on communities. In*

*addition, our lived experience since moving here has been that the school is a vital fulcrum for hosting community events (e.g. coffee mornings, fairs, open sports days, charity events) that are some of the few opportunities for local residents, including those with limited mobility, to come together. They have been vital for us to meet people and build community spirit. In a more tangential way, having a school impacts the demographics of an area; removing a local school will make the area less attractive to families and undermine its diversity and sustainability."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"Blackness is very involved in the community, and is proud to be a rural farming area, my child would miss opportunities and special education surrounding rural life e.g. attending royal highland show and their passion for teaching about food/growing - something we are very passionate about. Rural communities are being gradually depleted, this is something we should be trying to preserve, closing the school will only further this. The community will be hugely affected by the school closure as it is the school/PTA who organise the majority of community events in the area. Without their energy and passion, the community would be hugely affected - they would be unlikely to be able to continue their community events if their children were educated elsewhere and our community are unlikely to attend events in Bo'ness and at Grange Primary School where they have no connection to.*

*It is also possible that the diversity of the community would be affected with younger people with/planning to have families less likely to move to the area - we were drawn to the area by the local rural community feeling and facilities, closing the school impacts this."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)"

*"Blackness would suffer detriment. We live in Bo'ness so impact on our community will be limited."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

### **The effect on travel arrangements for Blackness children to Grange Primary School**

*"Kids would have further to travel and it's not good roads round especially around the holdings"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Children who struggle with travelling will suffer."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It is not ideal for families having to travel to Grange. Parking at the Grange is very limited."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"If buses / taxis were put on, I could only see extra time being the issue, but if not then it's a significant impact as I'd have to travel the opposite direction of my work (Edinburgh) and from what I understand, parking is a nightmare bordering dangerous with people abandoning cars on the hill."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"In winter, children could miss school due to adverse weather, whereas with the school within walking distance to most of their homes they could still attend Blackness."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"These children have a school on their doorstep with the privilege of outdoor space. Why add more traffic on the road?"* (OTHER)

*"The use of the nursery requires parents to transport their children to Grange primary for the first two years however I think it is more beneficial for the parents and children to not need to travel as far for primary school attendance."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Could easily run a bus from new estate to blackness"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Walking to school would not be possible. Walking has huge mental health benefits"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Giving children an even longer day"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It would mean young children having to travel via car or bus where they can currently walk to school. This would have a negative impact on traffic and congestion around Grange Primary "* (OTHER)

*"This can't fit in with Falkirk Councils policy to reduce car travel in the area. If you miss the bus then parents will need to undertake pick-ups and drop offs"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Longer days which will be extra difficult in the winter months."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Why should Blackness children have to travel when they have a school in the village?"* (OTHER)

*"Not good"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"At the moment the children are picked up and are at the school within 10 / 15 mins. Travel to the grange would clash with the bus to the academy, Which children are going to be picked up first, or are you going to supply two buses, this will have an impact on net zero. much better to use the bus that takes the pupils to the academy and , instead of running empty, picks up the children from the extended catchment area bringing them to Blackness."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"In Scotland, children should be able to travel sustainably to school, preferably on foot if possible. Not all families can afford a car, and this might mean the council paying for transport to and from school for these children."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Public travel in the area is already berry poor. Moving the kids to the Grange will not only put the kids out but parents also. You are also making cuts to school transportation."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Issues with buses breaking down. Weather impact"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"I would prefer to be able to walk my child to school. Due to where we live, this is achievable, healthier for her, and helps to build on her road and safety awareness. I believe the catchment area should be extended to include the new houses being built and these children could minibus travel to Blackness."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)"

*"The local children can walk to the school from the village of Blackness and lots of the small holdings, so moving them to Grange will mean they no longer have the option to walk to school. In addition, the roads around Grange Primary are very congested already at school times and the addition of a school bus will only add to this congestion."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Most children in the community can walk to the school, offering multiple benefits to health and wellbeing. The area around Grange school is already severely congested at peak times. Additional vehicles attending the sim will only as to the chaos."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Would have to be provided by the council if it a rezoning decision. Removes opportunity to walk to school."* (OTHER)

*"Massive negative impact"* (OTHER)

*"Parents would have to drive further multiple times a day multiple times a week causing more emissions, some parents might not have the time/money to be making that drive everyday"* (YOUNG PERSON)

*"Unsafe to wait on a road with no pavements, unable to attend after school activities as awaiting bus back to Blackness. Parents in Blackness unable to attend school activities as poor public transport to Boness"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Page 30. Travel time up to 25 minutes each way. Nearly an hour a day. Too much for the youngest children."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"As noted above bussing children out of one community into another is never ideal and also is costly."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)



*"No doubt that Falkirk Council will bus them to Bo'ness, yet another cost that the taxpayers will have to cover. Has this been taken into account with the current school finances?" (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Bussing 4-year-old children would be a concern. Currently, the bus comes at the back of 8am which would leave very young children a busy playground for a long period, albeit supervised. This is likely to an increase of parents driving their children to school and traffic outside the school." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"Increased traffic leaving Blackness via a busy junction. What happens to the kids whose parents don't have access to a car and who walk?" (OTHER)*

*"Children would no longer be able to walk to school and take part in the many activities they undertake in the community with beach cleans, educational visits out and learning the essential skills of growing their own produce, selling these, participating in events and appreciating how a community should be, all of which can be done within walking distance." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"An increase in traffic to the Grange Primary school will make an already busy route even more congested and unsafe." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"The road network around the village is challenging. The lack of winter road maintenance could result in it being difficult for buses to pick up the children. In addition, it would make it a very long school day for those who would be picked up first." (OTHER)*

*"The lack of communication as parents would have before and after the school day with other parents and teachers. At Blackness we often chat and any small issues / events they may have happened during the day can be discussed or passed over. Isolation to meet new parents Safety and road area surrounding the Grange is already not ideal and this would only cause more issues." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)"*

*"Increased congestion at drop off and pick up at the Grange. Safety Concern as surrounding road bottle necks and would only cause more issues. The lack of communication as parents would have before and after the school day with other parents and teachers. At Blackness Primary we often chat and any issues/events that have happened throughout the day can be discussed or passed over. Could lead to isolation and loneliness as parents/carers will no longer talk and meet." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Increased emissions with extra transport required, increased anxiety for children and parents." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"This would impact my ability to combine school runs as timings are likely to change. There's no reason why a bus could not be put on to bring children from Bo'ness outskirts to blackness on the way back from high school drop offs. I'm not sure the*

*Grange could cope with bus traffic as it's heavily congested already with limited parking.*" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"No reason they could not go Bo'ness to blackness. Why one sided?"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It could be very difficult/dangerous for travel during winter months"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Increased costs"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"It being assumed that the kids will go to grange but I know for a fact people are not wanting to send their kids there as it's all read packed and we feel our kids will be lost in such a big school and not having the one to one learning they get a blackness so I do think our children are going to struggle"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Yes"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Working parents or grandparents who don't drive or struggle for transport now have a much longer journey than necessary."* (OTHER)

*"Blackness Primary School is situated a very short distance (less than 10 minutes' walk from the centre of the village by path). Any change in location imposed by the Council will have a significant impact on the daily work/life routine of parents."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"My son P5 cycles to school and back every day, something that has got him out of bed earlier and significantly improved his wellbeing. He wouldn't be able to cycle to Grange due to the distance and busy roads. My daughter usually gets the bus with her friends, which she enjoys. Occasionally I cycle with her to school, which she loves. She can't wait until she is old enough to cycle to school on her own."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Increased travel time and extension of the school day."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Longer days for children plus less time spent with family"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Costly and unnecessary. Carbon footprint."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Hiring transport and hiring chaperones doesn't come free. And as already touched upon, it is a worry when the roads are already so busy at peak times which makes it unsafe for the children."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Additional unnecessary costs, safety issues."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Children would have to get the bus or drive. There would be no opportunity for them to cycle to school."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"My daughter won't be able to walk to school with her dog which is a highlight of her day and where memories are made within our family."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Quite unnecessary when there is a perfectly adequate facility at Blackness School which parents/children are quite able to cope with under current travel arrangements."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"We think this is completely inadequate given the state of the school and high pupil numbers, as well as considering all new builds etc."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"See previous answers about active travel. This change would be a hugely detrimental outcome for us, the environment, and our family's health."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"As an active, environmentally conscious family who like to promote a healthy active lifestyle to our child (and future children) we will not have active travel opportunities to get to school (walking, cycling etc). Our child would have to be driven or take the school bus - neither of which are what we would like for our family. We would also have issues with pre and post school care as our neighbours kindly help us out on occasion and closing Blackness would mean they would have to have car and car seat access to help out instead of being able to walk to drop off/collect."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"The Grange is closer to us - but our children will not go to the Grange. Bo'ness is closer to us, but even then, homeschooling will likely become our option. For other children in Blackness the new travel arrangements will be more difficult"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Negative"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

### **Do you have any further comments on the proposal?**

*"I strongly hope blackness school will continue to run for many more years as it has done previously especially now number of children are rising each year and also the impact on all the new house being build in around Bo'ness where these children all need to be placed in a school which in my opinion are already over stocked. So I would think blackness will find its self-expanding in pupils number soon"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Blackness Primary is a village school serving local families and beyond. It will never have 'big' numbers.*

*My own children couldn't have had a better education in my opinion, it made my children the people they are today. I had that choice and after careful consideration and for a number of reasons I chose Blackness Primary for my children. If you choose to close Blackness you take this choice away from families.*

*I ask that you look at ways of developing this school through other options as opposed to closure.*

*I have never experienced such a positive, happy, thriving school in all my years working in education. I don't know in monetary terms how much you would save but it would have to be an awful lot to compensate what you would do to these children and their community." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)"*

*"Having threatened the Blackness Community with school closure for a number of years now it feels that Falkirk Council is being very unkind and is not recognising the negative impact that this constant cycle of threaten>retreat>repeat is having on parent and child wellbeing locally, never mind the gradual erosion of the community who hear regularly from prospective new families that they won't move to the area or place their child in a school which is under threat of closure." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"If you can put on a bus to take our kids to the grange & back why not lol at the catchment areas and extend to Blackness, with all these new houses getting built can the bus not bring the new children to this area to blackness and back.*

*Overall, I think the catchment area/schools need looked at in Bo'ness. I know of families that don't live in the catchment but send their kids to different schools because that's where they want their children to go, well I live in blackness & want my children to go to blackness primary.*

*I think you're making a huge mistake should you decide to close it.*

*Us parents will do all we can to fight to save our school and the heart of our community." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Keep blackness primary open. Not only for the children but for their parents and carers." (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Blackness Primary have also been a strong part of Bo'ness Fair and brings a lot of joy and excitement to everyone. It would be so sad to see the school close." (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"I really hope you give this a fair assessment and don't only look at financials as you will gut a fantastic community all to say some pennies." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"I hope the school remains open." (RESIDENT WITHIN THE GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"Keep it open" (OTHER)*

*"The best years of life are your school years. Please don't take this school away from these children, they have a brilliant day at school here, happy children make a happy life! The community put a lot into this school and the school returns the gesture with the soup packs for the elderly which is made up from their own grown veg, all their fundraising is by their own families for the community. It's a long standing and strong school which does not depend on any other school to keep them."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I believe that blackness primary deserves to stay open, it's a small school but has a large following and families willing to back it. The local children love their school, and it would be sad to have this taken away from them."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"There has to be other ways to save money than taking away services from children."* (OTHER)

*"This is the third time the council has proceeded to attempt to close Blackness Primary. The primary has demonstrated its continued increase in attendance the last few years and this number will continue to increase. The funding which is raised to keep the school running and enforce local engagement should be reassuring. With the increased housing in Boness followed by reduced local facilities (such as Boness recreation centre) the council should be focusing on the impact of those changes instead of the closing of a small local school. The increase in the new housing developments in Boness (miller homes and soon to be Robertson homes) will put a continued strain on Grange Primary school, both for the nursery and the primary school. Blackness primary should be provided as an option if not the main option in the catchment area for the drum area."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Look at a more creative way to find a solution. Money should not be more important than a child's education."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Small school provision offer many benefits that outweigh the financial costs. Closing the school would have wider repercussions than just the loss of an educational facility."* (OTHER)

*"Blackness appears to be targeted where other schools in Falkirk of a similar size are not. One school in Falkirk with less pupils has just been rated good by education Scotland providing exciting learning opportunities in contradiction to the argument that small schools limit learning opportunities"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I am concerned that some of the statements in the proposal are not correct. These have been pointed to the Council on previous occasions and not corrected. This is another community facility outside of Falkirk that the Council seem hell bent on closing without much regard to the impact on the community."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Keep Blackness Primary open, it's a vital part of the community."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Have another look at your figures as not always correct!!"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Keep the school open, keep the kids believing in community spirit"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Keep Blackness school open."* (OTHER)

*"I feel the school was hub of the community, and it would very upsetting for family's and the children ."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Stop having a blinkered attitude to closing the school by supporting only 1 option and see the benefits to the future education of the pupils both at Blackness and the catchment area of the Grange by extending the catchment area of Blackness"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Falkirk council seriously need to pull the cuts from other areas. You always hit Bo'ness and Blackness. While ploughing money into Falkirk"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Wrong and disruptive for young children in area"* (OTHER)

*"I hope the children's best interests at the centre of this, however if it was then this would never be considered."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"So many people will lose out on fantastic opportunities in a small learning environment. The children should be at the forefront of this process, but they are not."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"I feel the council is making a mistake. The proposal document is very one-sided and makes it clear that the alternate suggestions were never genuinely considered as a possibility. I would like to know what the planned suggestions are for when Grange Primary becomes 110% occupied. Closing a small school just to send them to one with too many children is foolish and shows poor future planning."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"Please remove the threat of closure from the school and allow the school to flourish again. The money being spent on this consultation could have been better spent on promoting the school to increase the school role. The strength of feeling in the local community was very evident at the meeting this evening and we sincerely hope that this will be recognised when the results of the consultation are published. Thank you."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"I feel it would be a tragedy to lose this country school, where children from rural areas are so deserving of it . The children put so much caring into it. Beach cleans, growing*

*veg, caring for those in the community. All qualities which are so important along with the excellent education it offers"* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Quality of education for the children needs to be considered rather than costs"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"The closure proposal does not encourage families to enrol for the school. Encouragement from the Education Department to promote the school would be far more beneficial to the children and the local community."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)"

*"The financial benefits presented are not a fair and correct representation of the impact of closure. Mothballing should not be considered. Either close or remain open."* (OTHER)

*"When I was going through a rough time at home being at blackness primary school made me feel safe, no other school made me feel this way please keep this beautiful school open"* (YOUNG PERSON)

*"Please take all the positives to consideration."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"This would also overstretch Grange Primary so not suitable for those pupils to accommodate more pupils from Blackness"* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Page 21. The Grange will be running at 99% occupancy from 2026/27 and over 100% without the children in catchment or placement from Blackness."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Simply this - please ensure this 'community consultation' is genuine. There is a distinct feeling hereabouts that you have already made this decision to close. We are the tail end of Falkirk Council region, but we'd like to feel we're being properly listened to."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Keep Blackness School open."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"It is with great disappointment to hear that Falkirk Council have actively been discriminating against BPS and promoting closure:*

*- the figures have been inflated by 25% in the report. A more accurate figure was given by FC's representative within the first 5 minutes of the meeting at the Community Hall meeting on 10.10.2024, albeit still high per pupil*

*- parents of prospective pupils have been discouraged from sending their children to BPS by being told that it is under threat of closure at the first point of contact. This has actively put off people from moving into the area and consequently, affecting the pupil numbers*

*I fail to understand that BPS is financing one fifth of the cost of a HT and DHT of a large school, particularly when they are infrequent visitors to the BPS*

*In addition, parents in our area are being deprived of parental choice as to where they educate their children and parents, living nearby, but out of the catchment area, will not have the choice and benefits of sending their children to a small, rural school."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"Keep Blackness primary school open and amend the boundary so that the numbers gradually increase eg. from Aug 25 all children due to start p1 who live in the new Millar Homes estate go to Blackness (if they have older siblings, they can go too or P1s can apply to go to same school as siblings) the following year it's p1s and p2s etc."* (OTHER)

*"I would like to reiterate my points that i think the council need to look more clearly about the true saving that would actually come from closing the school which will not be near the amount projected and also the effect on the children. Blackness could be promoted far more effectively as a centre for excellence and learning to ensure that it is operating efficiently and correctly ensuring the high standards it held for myself, and the past 100 years are continued. The local community has showed its support for the school relentlessly and it is high time the council do the same for a change instead of asset stripping and condensing."* (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)

*"As I have already stated the school is a central focus for the community of blackness. Both personally, and as a representative of NFU Scotland I oppose the closure of this important part of a rural community very strongly."* (OTHER)

*"I absolutely disagree with the consultation on the proposed closure of Blackness Primary School. If as much effort went into promoting this school as it has for closing it then we would not be in this situation. Any new / potential parent that googles blackness primary for the last few years have been faced with documents showing potential closure / mothballing. Is that really going to encourage new parents? It makes absolute sense to change the catchment boundaries. It states in the document Option 2 summary - There are no viable options for increasing the catchment area, any proposal to do this would be disruptive to families living in Bo'ness and likely to face opposition. But its ok to be disruptive to Blackness families? The council already pay to fund transport to Grange from Carriden Brae, why not to Blackness..."*

*There are many children that would absolutely thrive going to a school like Blackness, promote what is so great about it because believe you me it is an excellent school with excellent opportunities. Getting it right for every child...I really don't think so!"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I totally disagree with the proposal to close Blackness Primary School. Its alarming that little or no effort has gone into promoting this school. New/potential parents/guardians are put off due to the cloud hanging over the school - mothballing then potential closure. We will never really know the true enrolment figures. Education is a vital aspect of my boy's development. Our school has a family feel and treats my kid as an individual and there is continuity of teachers. The Grange does not have the personal touch and there is an open plan feel to some of the classes. He has a sense of belonging and connection to Blackness Primary school and this familiarity*



*has definitely promoted better motivation, engagement and improved his social skills - He's a quiet conscientious kid.*

*Blackness Primary is not solely focused on academic achievements but also on character development and practical life skills like growing fruit and vegetables which is sold, and the money put back into developing further. I believe this well-rounded education gives my child the vital skills to navigate through life successfully. There are many children who would benefit and thrive going to a school like ours. Promote what is great, give people the choice where to send their children. Once its gone, its gone...."*  
(PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Keep Blackness Primary open"* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I believe there are points within the proposal document which are not accurate -P21 attendance mentions blackness and its grange. P29 mentions the toilets, Falkirk Council have closed these too another blow to the community. The figures just don't add up and I believe the 0.6 teacher is incorrect as she's in for 1 day per wk.*

*I don't think a positive is for the headteacher to be based at one location is material, she's and the deputy are hardly at Blackness.*

*The children don't know the staff at The Grange as they have limited interactions. Blackness Primary School is an asset to Falkirk Council and should be given the support to increase the role rather than the negativity around financial costs which simply do not add up.*

*The consultation report should be more balanced as it feels very one sided.*

*At the consultation meeting we were advised that the recording would be shared. This has proved to be another lie.*

*I'd also like to add over the last week Falkirk council have had 2 senior officials (Jon & Deborah) meet in small groups with the children without additional supervision, they have been interviewed and asked probing questions. On top of this they have been asked to answer questions in writing. This really is so upsetting for the children and is causing them anxiety and stress which is not good for their mental health and well-being. I think a member of the PTA should have been able to supervise this.*

*Falkirk council should be able to subsidise Blackness Primary as it's shared head with the Grange so the incentive from house builders should be shared and children bussed to Blackness from Bo'ness*

*Keep Blackness Open and work with the community to increase the role."*  
(PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"Blackness Primary School is an asset to Falkirk Council and should be given the support to increase the role rather than the negativity around financial costs which simply do not add up.*

*The consultation report should be more balanced as it feels very one sided.*

*The children are thriving at Blackness and there's capacity to bring more children in, this should be the first approach in order to continue to provide this high level of education and also negate the need to extend and disrupt grange primary.*

*Could savings be made by reducing head and deputy costs as they don't appear to be v active within BPS...also the 0.6 doesn't seem right as that teacher is in one day."*  
(FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"I went to Blackness primary school 40 years ago and it certainly did not do me any harm. I have went onto become a successful agricultural engineer due to the fact I went to blackness primary and watched all the agricultural farms around the school. I wouldn't have had this opportunity had I attended a larger town school.*

*Hopefully my son and daughter will follow in my footsteps and hopefully they stay at Blackness primary.*

*Under no circumstances will my children be attending the grange primary under the headship of Mrs Veneroni , she has done nothing for Blackness primary and our children. She is not interested in our kids wellbeing or the future of Blackness primary. By closing Blackness primary this will not help Falkirk council get out of their 65-million-pound debt that they are in. If they had stopped building in the Falkirk area which does not affect us in Blackness, they may have been able to cut their costs, and we may not be in this situation. So instead, our kids have to suffer.*

*Instead of closing our primary look at the catchment area and start promoting our wonderful school.*

*With all the new builds in Bo'ness just exactly where are you planning on sending all the children. If you can bus our kids from Blackness to Bo'ness, why can't you bus kids from bon Bo'ness to Blackness... I think your answer at the meeting was because it would upset the b Bo'ness families, well what about the Blackness kids and our families!!!!" (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Do not close this school. You have new build houses in Bo'ness going up as we speak, and some kids should be allocated a space in this school. This is a fantastic school, and it will be great loss to everyone involved and in the community. How would you feel if that was one of your family members. Please consider those children, parent's and wondering staff!" (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Use the space within the school to better the educational opportunities within ward one rather than closing a catchment school or mothballing. Use the space effectively and support the children of Bo'ness and Blackness" (OTHER)*

*"It just seems like a cost saving exercise rather than prioritising the needs of the community for the children and parents. The data provided is incorrect and needs re-addressed." (OTHER)*

*"I have detailed my thoughts in my email, but in summary ...*

- My partner's daughter is thriving at Blackness Primary School*
- The school provides a community culture impossible to replicate at The Grange*
- The lower-density, more intimate environment suits her (and others) better than a higher-density school environment*
- Broader perspective:*
- Parents carefully chose Blackness Primary School above other viable options*
- Pupil achievement and attendance levels are generally better at Blackness*
- Provision of Blackness Primary School is more in line with the principles of the GIRFEC model*
- Assertions made in the proposal about "age and stage" advantages of The Grange are not supported by any cited evidence*
- The Grange is approaching maximum occupancy in the next two years (Blackness has plenty of capacity, of course)*

- *Closure of Blackness Primary School will have a significant negative impact on the fabric of the village community" (RESIDENT WITHIN THE BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT)*

*"I am just so sad that this proposal exists when the numbers of pupils at Blackness Primary has risen and will continue to rise, especially if prospective parents weren't warned against enrolling their children due to the closure. This is having a hugely negative affect on our children who have already been through this when they saved their school from mothballing last year. I really hope that our children will be heard, they are so happy at Blackness, engaged in their learning and thriving socially and educationally. Please keep Blackness Primary open and see more of its pupils go on to do great things thanks to their time at this amazing school." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Listen to the children and parents and the community. Keep BPS open." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Do not close down Blackness school. In a country that is promoting inclusion in schools so much - it just seems like children are being penalised and excluded from the working environment they know and love." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"I'd hope the true facts and figures are used in the final decision. This is a very well-run school where the children benefit from a smaller setting. The school council bring such a lovely sense of community which these days is rare. I hope the decision is made to widen the catchment area and keep blackness primary open." (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Why are we reviewing this again?" (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"The proposal report that was put through our doors by the council contained a number of inaccuracies in the data.*

*The information it contained on the benefits of the pupil's moving school was presented as fact and yet it was just opinion and not from referenced sources. This gave a biased opinion in what appears to be an official report that some people may be using as their point of reference when answering this survey." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"According to your proposal in 2023/2024 there are currently 256 pupils at the Grange at 86% capacity, with projection being 88% in 2025/26 and then raising in 2026/27 to 99%, rising again to a whopping 110% in 27/28. Yet, the Grange only requires 31 pupils to reach full capacity as it currently stands, which 10 could come from Blackness, leaving only 21 spaces left. Again, this is all according to your own proposal. Yet, there are over 200 houses being built within the Granges catchment and the Grange has ZERO ability to be able to cope with this massive growth. Furthermore, your information indicates that 13% that attend the Grange require additional support needs vs. the Falkirk average of 27.4%, this suggests there is potential under identification or neglect of additional support needs at the Grange." (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)*

*"Blackness School has always had a great reputation. Having attended there myself and my 3 siblings the standard of education has always been high and that's what every parent wants for their children. Not to lose their identity squashing into large classes where there's little care given to those who are most needy and forgotten about. Maybe that's what's wrong with the youth of today. It's not fair on the children. And that's what this is all about - the children. Not the cost or the politics. According to the recent budget there is more money coming from Westminster to Scotland. Surely there will be enough to keep Blackness School OPEN. And future numbers of pupils are on the increase."* (FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDS BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*"While being very critical of the proposal paper, I appreciate that this is a challenging issue to consider, spanning multiple remits and specialisms. Having said that, I do strongly advocate that such an important policy decision should be evidence based, impartially considered, and comprehensively constructed, which the proposal paper is not. I'm very happy and willing to discuss this further if that would be useful and appreciate the opportunity to engage in consultation."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"I would like to highlight how disappointed I was with the proposal/report document. Instead of offering well evidenced information and proposals, it was full of anecdotal evidence and disproportionately attempted to highlight benefits of schooling in a larger school rather than a balanced view on rural vs town opportunities. It failed to take into account our declining rural areas, active travel issues and did not seriously consider other options for Blackness Primary (e.g., extending catchment). Giving the reason of 'it would be disruptive to families in Bo'ness and likely to face opposition' as a reason for not considering extending the catchment is a ridiculous statement not accounting for the disruption to Blackness residents for closing the school."* (A PARENT/CARER OF AN EARLY YEARS AGED CHILD AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL)

*"The council have been warning off potential pupils of school closure. We experienced this when we put in a placement request for Blackness. This is unfair because without this action and rhetoric, pupil numbers would be comfortably above the threshold. The new Labour government expects £460M to be raised from VAT on private schools that they have said will be allocated to improving state schools. The council should keep Blackness open as the available funding will improve next year."* (PARENT/CARER OF PUPIL(S) AT BLACKNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL)

