

# Argyll and Bute Council

## Education

### Review of Education Provision

#### Luing Primary School

P4 (Oi208 (SAo)-08 (L )0.5 Di209 (Oi2075 (C)-08 (UC)-09 (M)-1.6 ENi209 (Tu)-9.2(: 13.6(Jc)-2- [u

## SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that education provision at Luing Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

The catchment area of Easdale Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Luing Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

This is the best option to address the reasons for the proposals which are;

- Luing Primary School has been mothballed for almost 3 years. The school roll is very low and not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 8.59 fte vacancies for teachers in Argyll and Bute.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budget for maintenance. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building £12,064.

This document has been issued by Argyll and Bute Council in regard to a proposal in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended. This document has been prepared by the Council's Education Service with input from other Council Services.

## DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council website:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/school-consultations-and-proposals>

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils, deemed to be of suitable age and maturity to be able to communicate a view on the proposal, at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- Argyll and Bute Councillors – Ward 5 (Oban North and Lorn)
- Easdale and Luing Community Councils
- Community Planning Partnership
- Relevant users of the affected schools

- The Constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Chief Superintendent, Police Scotland
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Fire Scotland
- Education Scotland

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Easdale Primary School, Easdale by Oban, PA34 4RF
- Easdale Island Community Hall, Easdale Island, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4TB
- Atlantic Islands Centre, Cullipool, Isle of Luing, PA34 4TX

This document is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English.

If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please apply to the Exe84gs

# 1 Introduction

1.1 On 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020, Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Luing Primary School. As no pupils have been attending Luing Primary School since 7 761.52 Tm( )Tj-0.001 Tc 0

4 776.4 Tm2 65jE lllngovleLiotberng Lu

is committed to ensuring that Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population.

1.8 In the corporate plan for 2018-2022 our agreed priorities were to ensure that:

- The education we provide meets the needs of all our young people and their families
- We make the most of our assets to build the local economy
- We support individual and community wellbeing
- We strengthen and empower our communities
- We ensure there are homes for all, we tackle poverty and build opportunity
- We have greener and cleaner communities
- We are an employer of choice
- We manage our finances prudently

1.9 The Council, as an Education Authority, has a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand. This is reflected in "Our Children, Their Future" which is the Education Vision and Strategy for Argyll and Bute Council.

## 2 Proposal

2.1 It is proposed that education provision at Luing Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Easdale Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Luing Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

2.2 This is the best option to address the reasons for the proposals which are:

- Luing Primary School has been mothballed for almost 3 years. The projected school roll is very low and not predicted to rise significantly in the near future. In the last year the school was open, families with children of primary school age expressed their desire for their children to attend a bigger school.
- Along with several other rural councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges

- This proposal will bring educational benefits and assist in ensuring that the Education budget is more sustainable into the future. This proposal document contains an Educational Benefits Statement;
- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high;
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect the educational attainment of pupils; and
- There is no realistic possibility at present of the Council being able to bring its whole school estate up to a satisfactory condition. The present condition is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate.

### 3 Preliminary requirements

- 3.1 The Council is required to consider the future of Luing Primary School, as it has been mothballed for almost 3 years. The Council have considered the reasons for making this proposal, and have also considered other viable alternatives, the likely effect on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements as a consequence of this proposal. Financial implications were also considered. Some of these figures have been recalculated since the Options Appraisal was produced.
- 3.2 The Council considered how the implementation of this proposal would impact on the education of the children affected. The Council also considered the impact on the children who currently live in the catchment area but attend other schools, as well as children who may potentially live in the catchment area in the future.
- 3.3 The place of the school in the community was also considered, in terms of the impact this proposal would have on the sustainability of the community itself. Since the mothballing of the School, the building has been used on one occasion for a community event and by a local parent and toddler group. The island has an active community council who have indicated that they are continuing to try and attract families to the area.
- 3.4 Impact on the environment was taken into account during the initial pre-consultation process. This included a consideration of the transport implications if this proposal was to be implemented, as children would have to travel by minibus, ferry and service bus to attend Easdale Primary School.
- 3.5 Three options were presented to the local community by the Council for consideration during the pre-consultation phase, as required by section 12A of the 2010 Act.
- 3.6 Of the three options which were considered by the community and the Council; (c) was established as the Council's favoured option (at the Community Services Committee meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022), as it was considered it most adequately addressed the reasons for the proposal.
- a) Re-open Luing Primary School,
  - b) Continued Mothballing of Luing Primary with pupils zoned to Easdale Primary School,







4.13 The Council has carefully considered and reviewed the steps it has taken to address the underlying reasons for the proposal (as outlined at Section 2.2, above), prior to formulating this Proposal Paper.

4.13.1 In relation to the decline in the school roll, and no material increase being predicted in the forthcoming years, the Council mothballed the school almost three years ago as a result of a change to the School's circumstances – i.e. the school roll falling to zero as of August 2020. The Education Authority therefore decided to mothball the school as a temporary measure – in order to monitor the situation and assess whether there was any likelihood of the school roll increasing to the extent that the School became viable again in the near future. The mothballing was subject to review at least annually and the Education Service undertook to review the position should any further school age pupils move into the catchment area and/or if they demonstrated a sufficient level of demand for the School to justify its re-opening. As mentioned above, the School has been mothballed for almost three years, and its roll is not predicted to rise in the forthcoming years to a level which would make the School suitable for re-opening. As there has been no material change in circumstance evidenced, and having kept the position under review via mothballing for almost three years, the Education Service are of the view that matters should now move forward in the form of a statutory closure consultation in order to determine the future of Luing Primary School. This approach aligns with that suggested by the Statutory Guidance for the 2010 Act, and Paragraphs 63-65 in particular. Fu.ic8 (c)margPe(n p (aphs)-e(n p (aph mati4 (neen(n i)1 (n(er)-3 (v)-1 (i)1 (c)-6 (e )-3 (hool)o

uses of the School property to be progressed, as it will need to be permanently discontinued as an educational establishment in the first instance.

4.14 The Council has also undertaken an assessment of likely educational benefits or effects which this proposal may have if implemented on:

- The pupils of any affected school;
- Any other users of the school's facilities;
- Any children who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school; and
- The pupils of any other schools in the Council area.

4.15 In addition, the Council has also considered how to minimise or avoid any adverse educational effects that may arise from the implementation of this proposal.

4.16 The Council has also taken special regard to the following factors if this proposal was to be implemented, as Luig Primary School is classified as a remote rural school.

Likely effect on the local community to be assessed by reference to:

Table 2:

Luing PS

Easdale PS



- 8.3 The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. There are no specific educational benefits from reopening Luing Primary School as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children, however the closure of the School and continued attendance of pupils at other schools allows children to experience a curriculum which is matched to their needs.
- 8.4 Luing and Easdale Primary Schools are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). There are currently 2 school aged children in the Luing Primary School catchment area. Children from Luing who have attended Easdale Primary School, since the mothballing of Luing Primary School, continue to benefit from education in a locality familiar to them, and still relatively close to home.
- 8.5 The co-location of the Early Learning Centre (ELC) and the primary classes at Easdale Primary School enables a strong transition process between the ELC and school and includes joint early level learning every week.

## 9 Learning and Teaching

- 9.1 The curriculum includes a broad range of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, to help every child and young person to develop knowledge, skills and attributes for success in learning, life and work. In Easdale Primary School, children are encouraged to be eager and active participants who are engaged, resilient and highly motivated during their learning. Children know that their views are sought, valued and acted upon.
- 9.2 The learning environment encourages high level of achievement, providing a wide range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential within the four contexts of learning. In Easdale Primary School children may be taught in classes composed of children from more than one year group. Children benefit from being part of a social context in which they can build relationships with different groups and individuals, develop social skills, meet challenges and exercise responsibilities as members of a social group. They are able to interact and socialise with groups of children, take part in team activities and move with their peers to secondary school.
- 9.3 There is a continual challenge for all schools to deliver a school improvement agenda and deliver effectively the principles and outcomes of curriculum for excellence. The National Improvement Framework priorities include raising attainment for all, and closing the gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.
- 9.4 The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community.
- 9.5 At Easdale Primary School, staff are challenged and supported through a range of continuous professional development and review opportunities gained by working and

learning with a range of colleagues. Easdale Primary School is part of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Cluster, which means that staff can be supported together, moderation and tracking of pupil progress is enabled and staff work across stage appropriate groups. Colleagues within Easdale Primary School are able to support and challenge each other on a daily basis. The whole staff are able to bring a range of talents and skills to benefit outcomes for learners.

- 9.6 Easdale Primary School encourages nurturing and positivity. One aspect of this work is a successful Buddy System. Children from different stages work and learn together. This vertical support is particularly evident on sports day and in the dining room when groups of children are together in a social context. This system develops and benefits both the 'buddy' and the 'buddied'. This system works well and benefits the wide range of children in the school.

## 10 Meeting learners' needs

- 10.1 Through the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), practice model, meeting the needs of every child continues to be a priority and teachers carefully plan and assess to ensure each child has the opportunity to reach their potential. Careful tracking and monitoring procedures are in place to evidence pupil progress. This includes professional dialogue with teachers, learning discussions with children, classroom observations, assessment and looking at pupil work.
- 10.2 The school also has planned meetings and discussions with parents. These discussions between home and school improve parental engagement whilst focussing on next steps for learning. Where appropriate, intervention is put in place, while working effectively with other agencies and parents to ensure the needs of each child are met. In the primary classes, standards of attainment have been maintained over the last three years. Most children are achieving national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy. Health and Wellbeing continues to develop within the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) programme, which supports positive behaviours and relationship within the school.
- 10.3 The staff, parent body and partner groups also bring opportunities for increased collaborative working. This applies both in terms of the wider curriculum and within aspects of the curriculum that may be enhanced by staff individual expertise e.g. PE, language, science, expressive arts teaching.

## 11 Broadening the Range of Opportunities

- 11.1 Children are offered a range of active, planned experiences which help them develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing both now and in the future.
- 11.2 There is also a strong transition planning process between Easdale Primary School and Oban High School, which involves increased opportunities for children to participate and to make new connections.
- 11.3 Children are provided with a variety of experiences to develop their sense of responsibility, independence, confidence and enterprising attitude.

11.4 Across the school children are engaged with learning and contribute well in lessons. Staff promote positive relationships at all levels, the impact of this being that children enjoy good relationships with their peers, young leaders feel confident and entrusted to take these developments forward.

## 12 Environment for Learning

12.1 Easdale Primary School is a suitably-equipped and well supported school, situated on the Isle of Seil. The entire building is well maintained and along with the surrounding scenery provides attractive accommodation for the Easdale Primary School. The building has facilities for pupils and visitors with special access needs.

12.2 The children maintain links with friends who live in their own village as well as creating links



13.3 The co-location for the Early Learning Centre (ELC) and the primary classes at Easdale Primary School enables a strong transition process between the ELC and the school and includes joint early level learning every week.

14 Assessment of likely educational benefits on any children who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school.

#### Existing and future pupils

14.1 Children who may live in this catchment area in the future will benefit from the broad range of educational opportunities which are presented through this proposal, as detailed above.

14.2 There would be positive educational benefits associated with this proposal. The management arrangements of the school would be strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies.

14.3 The proposal could increase the roll of Easdale Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities.

14.4 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Luining Primary School would (e at)whc(P)1 (up.s8Ay60

16 Consideration of how to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the implementation of this proposal

16.1 The main adverse effect from this proposal would be the length of the journey to school for children who live on Luing. However, these travelling arrangements have been in place for almost three years now, since the school was mothballed. Funded school transport would also continue to be provided for pupils should this proposal be implemented.

17 Summary of educational benefits statement

17.1 Educational benefits of this proposal, such as the ability for children to participate in a broad range of experiences, the development of the strategic leadership of the head teacher in taking forward improvements in learning and teaching, and the ability to meet the educational, social and emotional needs of the children are significant benefits to this proposal. During the assessment process, the following details from the community engagement and the assessment to include the details of the proposal and the assessment are attached in Appendix 5.

17.2 Whilst the educational benefits are numerous, there are two negative aspects that outweigh the negative aspect of some additional travelling for children. The second negative aspect is that if the ELC

- a strong and diverse rural economy, harnessing traditional strengths and with an appetite for change,
- thriving rural communities where everyone can enjoy a decent quality of life, where the young are not forced to leave their communities to get on and where the vulnerable are no longer excluded,
- strong, community focused public services that are accessible, of the highest possible quality and with the greatest possible choice,
- a rural Scotland whose natural and cultural heritage flourishes in all its diversity

18.4 In rural communities, the challenges and opportunities are largely defined by the local area and can often best be met by a bottom-up, community-led response. Strong community leadership is vital to articulating local priorities and driving forward change and growth.

18.5 There is the potential if this proposal is implemented to capitalise on the existing will and drive in this community, with opportunities for local leaders to enable them to organise, motivate and inspire their neighbours. The opportunity for the local community to acquire the School building could be key to helping to make this community an independent, resilient place to live. Management of assets such as Luing Primary School may be an important

- 18.10 During the pre-consultation phase, members of the community had varying opinions on the closure of the school. There were a number of attendees who suggested that more time is required to attract more families to the area. Many were keen that the building and adjoining grounds could potentially be retained for community use. All people who attended the pre-consultation meeting felt that the school building should be retained for community use and not allowed to fall in to further disrepair, as that would adversely impact on the aesthetic of the community.
- 18.11 It is accepted that a school closure may have an adverse effect on a community, but a community hub could be an asset to the community. If any local plans for the future of the building subsequently progress, this could have a positive impact on the sustainability of the community and in particular the availability of the school's premises and other facilities for use by the community. Formal closure of the school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community.

#### The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements

- 18.12 The travel distance from Luing Primary to Easdale Primary is 5.95 miles with a stretch of water between. A local ferry link, minibus and West Coast Motors service bus currently transport pupils. The ferry crossing takes 4 minutes and total travel time is approximately forty five minutes depending on where children live on the island. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Luing community.
- 18.13 Implementation of the proposal would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Luing Primary School, in terms of current travel arrangements would have a neutral effect on the environment. The current annual transport cost for pupils to travel to Easdale Primary School is £21,676.
- 18.14 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of a-3 (he pr)-3 ((l)1 (s)-1 ( t)-3 (a)-4 (c)-1 (ept)-3 s)-1.1 (

be reopened, occupied and operational, the running costs per year are estimated at £198,773.

- 19.2 Column 2 of Table 1 at Appendix 4 shows the projected annual running costs of Luing whilst Column 3 shows the additional impact on Easdale Primary as the receiving school. The annual recurring savings (or costs) are shown in Column 4.
- 19.3 The main elements included within a school budget are teacher employment costs (i.e. basic salary costs plus related employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions plus any relevant individual allowances); Local Government employee costs and an allocation for discretionary expenditure incurred by the school (i.e. educational equipment, materials, staff travel, etc.). Teacher staffing budgets are calculated on an annual basis and within the primary sector are determined, taking cognisance of the SNCT class size maxima, by the number of classes required to provide for the specific number and age of the pupils in each school. When a school ceases to be operational the teacher staffing budget is adjusted (at the appropriate time), per entitlement information from Education HR, with the staffing budget resulting in a nil value.
- 19.4 In line with the national priority of maintaining teacher numbers, the Education Service operates on the basis that supernumerary teachers are redeployed and therefore their salary costs still exist with an increase to the receiving school's budget. Some of the costs noted in column 3 of Table 1 will not directly impact on Easdale Primary School but they will be a cost to the Authority as a whole, for example school transport, and the costs of maintaining the teachers employed in Luing Primary School.
- 19.5 The current annual transport costs for pupils to attend Easdale Primary School are £21,676. Transport costs per year to attend Luing Primary School, if it were to be reopened, are estimated at £18,427 per year.
- 19.6 Table 2 contains the notional 30 year lifecycle costs that would arise based on the GIA of the various schools irrespective of the number of pupils accommodated. Lifecycle costs are representative of the cost needed to keep the building in a good state of repair. The cost over the next thirty years therefore to maintain Luing Primary School is £258,795 and for Easdale Primary School this is £625,725
- 19.7 Table 3 contains the annual running costs during mothballing of Luing Primary School and these are estimated at £12,064 per year. This includes non-domestic rates, utility costs, insurances, etc. If the school was to be formally closed, this would allow the Council to take steps towards selling the school to a third party or local community.
- 19.8 The transfer of pupils from Luing to Easdale Primary School would impact on the council's Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) allocation for Easdale Primary School Teaching Staff as there would be a reduction in the Percentage of Primary Pupils in Small Schools. This reduction is estimated at £4,000. However Argyll and Bute Council is supported through the floor mechanism so would not see a reduction in their overall funding.

## 20 Equality and Socio Economic Impact

- 20.1 The Council as a public authority has a duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, the Fairer Scotland Duty (Part one of the Equality Act) and the Islands (Scotland) Act (2018) to have due regard to their provisions when making strategic financial



- 21.6 Written representations may be made on the proposal and the alternatives to the proposal. Written representations may also suggest other alternatives to the proposal.
- 21.7 Following the close of the consultation, the Education Authority will provide Education Scotland with copies of the written representations submitted, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting and any other relevant documentation. This will allow Education Scotland to prepare a report on the proposal within a period of 3 weeks.
- 21.8 After receiving Education Scotland's report, the Education Authority will then prepare and publish a Consultation Report in accordance with Sections 9, 10 and 13 of the 2010 Act. The Education Authority will thereafter make its final decision on whether to implement the proposal. The decision will be published a minimum of 3 weeks after publication of the Consultation Report. If the Education Authority makes a closure decision, it shall notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and publish the fact that the Scottish Ministers have been notified, and that representations can be made to them. The Education





## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Consultation Letter

Appendix 2 - Response form

Appendix 3 - Maps

Appendix 4 - Financial template

Appendix 5 - Options Appraisal



representation and/or by attending the public meeting. This notice and summary tell you how to do that.

## The Proposal

It is proposed that education provision at Luing Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024. The catchment area of Easdale Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Luing Primary School.

## Reasons for this proposal

This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposals which are;

- Luing Primary School has been mothballed for almost three years. The school condition will continue to deteriorate with limited budgets for maintenance. The school roll is zero and is only predicted to rise slightly over the next 5 years.
- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 8.59 fte vacancies for teachers in Argyll and Bute.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for maintenance.

## The Council's education strategy Our Children Their Future

Together we will realise ambition, excellence and equality for all.

- Raise educational attainment and achievement for all,
- Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people,
- Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed,
- Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life,
- Ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement,
- Strengthen leadership at all levels.

## Alternatives to the Proposal

The following alternatives to the proposal were considered at the preliminary pre-consultation stage of this process;

- a) Re-open Luing Primary School,
- b) Continued Mothballing of

What will we do?

We will consult with people by:

- Providing a notice of the consultation and a summary of the proposal to the relevant consultees this is that notice and summary
- Placing an advert in the local press
- Putting information on our website <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/schoolconsultations-and-proposals>
- Holding a public meeting to explain the proposal
- Ask parents, carers, children, young people, teachers, support staff and others to tell us what they think of the proposals.

What to do now?

- Please read the full proposal document
- Please attend the Public Meeting which will be held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 1.30pm, in Luing Primthy

- Easdale Island Community Hall, Easdale Island, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4TB
- Atlantic Islands Centre, Cullipool, Isle of Luing, PA34 4TX

It is also available electronically via our website:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/school-consultations-and-proposals>

Yours faithfully,

Douglas Hendry  
Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Argyll and Bute Council Education

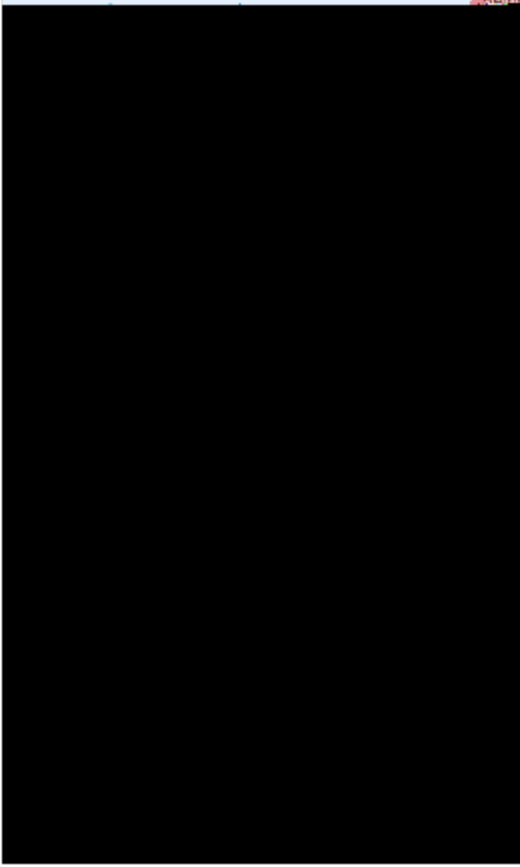
RESPONSE FORM

I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Elected Members and Council Officers of Argyll and Bute Council.

Proposal

APPENDIX 3 - MAP

MAP OF CURRENT ADJOINING PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREAS FOR LUING AND EASDALE PRIMARIES- THIS ALSO INDICATES THE PROPOSED CATCHMENT AREA FOR EASDALE PRIMARY



## APPENDIX 4 – FINANCIAL TEMPLATE

Table 1<sup>2</sup>

Name of School    Luing





