

Argyll and Bute Council

Education

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: June 2023

- 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 3 Mid Argyll)
- Furnace Community Council
- West Loch Fyne Community Council
- Lochgilphead Community Council
- 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
- Lochgilphead Library, Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8XQ
- Lochgilphead Service Point, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD
- Lochgilphead Joint Campus, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, PA31 8AA
- Furnace Primary Furnace, By Inveraray, Argyll PA32 8XU
- Minard Village Hall, Minard, By Inveraray, Argyll PA32 8YB

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 Executive Director, Argyll and Bute Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT.

Jezeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymaO ten dokument w innym języku lub w innym formacie albo jeeli potrzebna jest pomoc Uumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.



1 Introduction

[Agenda for Community Services Committee on Thursday, 25 August 2022, 10:00 am - Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#) (Agenda Item 8)

- 1.3 The statutory process for the closure of a rural school is laid out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Act, as amended, introduced a presumption against closure of a rural school and details specific requirements which the education authority is required to follow if they are formulating a proposal to close a rural school. This includes the 41p(1)(d), (1)(e), (1)(f), (1)(g), (1)(h), (1)(i), (1)(j), (1)(k), (1)(l), (1)(m), (1)(n), (1)(o), (1)(p), (1)(q), (1)(r), (1)(s), (1)(t), (1)(u), (1)(v), (1)(w), (1)(x), (1)(y), (1)(z), (1)(aa), (1)(ab), (1)(ac), (1)(ad), (1)(ae), (1)(af), (1)(ag), (1)(ah), (1)(ai), (1)(aj), (1)(ak), (1)(al), (1)(am), (1)(an), (1)(ao), (1)(ap), (1)(aq), (1)(ar), (1)(as), (1)(at), (1)(au), (1)(av), (1)(aw), (1)(ax), (1)(ay), (1)(az), (1)(ba), (1)(bb), (1)(bc), (1)(bd), (1)(be), (1)(bf), (1)(bg), (1)(bh), (1)(bi), (1)(bj), (1)(bk), (1)(bl), (1)(bm), (1)(bn), (1)(bo), (1)(bp), (1)(bq), (1)(br), (1)(bs), (1)(bt), (1)(bu), (1)(bv), (1)(bw), (1)(bx), (1)(by), (1)(bz), (1)(ca), (1)(cb), (1)(cc), (1)(cd), (1)(ce), (1)(cf), (1)(cg), (1)(ch), (1)(ci), (1)(cj), (1)(ck), (1)(cl), (1)(cm), (1)(cn), (1)(co), (1)(cp), (1)(cq), (1)(cr), (1)(cs), (1)(ct), (1)(cu), (1)(cv), (1)(cw), (1)(cx), (1)(cy), (1)(cz), (1)(da), (1)(db), (1)(dc), (1)(dd), (1)(de), (1)(df), (1)(dg), (1)(dh), (1)(di), (1)(dj), (1)(dk), (1)(dl), (1)(dm), (1)(dn), (1)(do), (1)(dp), (1)(dq), (1)(dr), (1)(ds), (1)(dt), (1)(du), (1)(dv), (1)(dw), (1)(dx), (1)(dy), (1)(dz), (1)(ea), (1)(eb), (1)(ec), (1)(ed), (1)(ee), (1)(ef), (1)(eg), (1)(eh), (1)(ei), (1)(ej), (1)(ek), (1)(el), (1)(em), (1)(en), (1)(eo), (1)(ep), (1)(eq), (1)(er), (1)(es), (1)(et), (1)(eu), (1)(ev), (1)(ew), (1)(ex), (1)(ey), (1)(ez), (1)(fa), (1)(fb), (1)(fc), (1)(fd), (1)(fe), (1)(ff), (1)(fg), (1)(fh), (1)(fi), (1)(fj), (1)(fk), (1)(fl), (1)(fm), (1)(fn), (1)(fo), (1)(fp), (1)(fq), (1)(fr), (1)(fs), (1)(ft), (1)(fu), (1)(fv), (1)(fw), (1)(fx), (1)(fy), (1)(fz), (1)(ga), (1)(gb), (1)(gc), (1)(gd), (1)(ge), (1)(gf), (1)(gg), (1)(gh), (1)(gi), (1)(gj), (1)(gk), (1)(gl), (1)(gm), (1)(gn), (1)(go), (1)(gp), (1)(gq), (1)(gr), (1)(gs), (1)(gt), (1)(gu), (1)(gv), (1)(gw), (1)(gx), (1)(gy), (1)(gz), (1)(ha), (1)(hb), (1)(hc), (1)(hd), (1)(he), (1)(hf), (1)(hg), (1)(hh), (1)(hi), (1)(hj), (1)(hk), (1)(hl), (1)(hm), (1)(hn), (1)(ho), (1)(hp), (1)(hq), (1)(hr), (1)(hs), (1)(ht), (1)(hu), (1)(hv), (1)(hw), (1)(hx), (1)(hy), (1)(hz), (1)(ia), (1)(ib), (1)(ic), (1)(id), (1)(ie), (1)(if), (1)(ig), (1)(ih), (1)(ii), (1)(ij), (1)(ik), (1)(il), (1)(im), (1)(in), (1)(io), (1)(ip), (1)(iq), (1)(ir), (1)(is), (1)(it), (1)(iu), (1)(iv), (1)(iw), (1)(ix), (1)(iy), (1)(iz), (1)(ja), (1)(jb), (1)(jc), (1)(jd), (1)(je), (1)(jf), (1)(jg), (1)(jh), (1)(ji), (1)(jj), (1)(jk), (1)(jl), (1)(jm), (1)(jn), (1)(jo), (1)(jp), (1)(jq), (1)(jr), (1)(js), (1)(jt), (1)(ju), (1)(jv), (1)(jw), (1)(jx), (1)(jy), (1)(jz), (1)(ka), (1)(kb), (1)(kc), (1)(kd), (1)(ke), (1)(kf), (1)(kg), (1)(kh), (1)(ki), (1)(kj), (1)(kk), (1)(kl), (1)(km), (1)(kn), (1)(ko), (1)(kp), (1)(kq), (1)(kr), (1)(ks), (1)(kt), (1)(ku), (1)(kv), (1)(kw), (1)(kx), (1)(ky), (1)(kz), (1)(la), (1)(lb), (1)(lc), (1)(ld), (1)(le), (1)(lf), (1)(lg), (1)(lh), (1)(li), (1)(lj), (1)(lk), (1)(ll), (1)(lm), (1)(ln), (1)(lo), (1)(lp), (1)(lq), (1)(lr), (1)(ls), (1)(lt), (1)(lu), (1)(lv), (1)(lw), (1)(lx), (1)(ly), (1)(lz), (1)(ma), (1)(mb), (1)(mc), (1)(md), (1)(me), (1)(mf), (1)(mg), (1)(mh), (1)(mi), (1)(mj), (1)(mk), (1)(ml), (1)(mm), (1)(mn), (1)(mo), (1)(mp), (1)(mq), (1)(mr), (1)(ms), (1)(mt), (1)(mu), (1)(mv), (1)(mw), (1)(mx), (1)(my), (1)(mz), (1)(na), (1)(nb), (1)(nc), (1)(nd), (1)(ne), (1)(nf), (1)(ng), (1)(nh), (1)(ni), (1)(nj), (1)(nk), (1)(nl), (1)(nm), (1)(nn), (1)(no), (1)(np), (1)(nq), (1)(nr), (1)(ns), (1)(nt), (1)(nu), (1)(nv), (1)(nw), (1)(nx), (1)(ny), (1)(nz), (1)(oa), (1)(ob), (1)(oc), (1)(od), (1)(oe), (1)(of), (1)(og), (1)(oh), (1)(oi), (1)(oj), (1)(ok), (1)(ol), (1)(om), (1)(on), (1)(oo), (1)(op), (1)(oq), (1)(or), (1)(os), (1)(ot), (1)(ou), (1)(ov), (1)(ow), (1)(ox), (1)(oy), (1)(oz), (1)(pa), (1)(pb), (1)(pc), (1)(pd), (1)(pe), (1)(pf), (1)(pg), (1)(ph), (1)(pi), (1)(pj), (1)(pk), (1)(pl), (1)(pm), (1)(pn), (1)(po), (1)(pp), (1)(pq), (1)(pr), (1)(ps), (1)(pt), (1)(pu), (1)(pv), (1)(pw), (1)(px), (1)(py), (1)(pz), (1)(qa), (1)(qb), (1)(qc), (1)(qd), (1)(qe), (1)(qf), (1)(qg), (1)(qh), (1)(qi), (1)(qj), (1)(qk), (1)(ql), (1)(qm), (1)(qn), (1)(qo), (1)(qp), (1)(qq), (1)(qr), (1)(qs), (1)(qt), (1)(qu), (1)(qv), (1)(qw), (1)(qx), (1)(qy), (1)(qz), (1)(ra), (1)(rb), (1)(rc), (1)(rd), (1)(re), (1)(rf), (1)(rg), (1)(rh), (1)(ri), (1)(rj), (1)(rk), (1)(rl), (1)(rm), (1)(rn), (1)(ro), (1)(rp), (1)(rq), (1)(rr), (1)(rs), (1)(rt), (1)(ru), (1)(rv), (1)(rw), (1)(rx), (1)(ry), (1)(rz), (1)(sa), (1)(sb), (1)(sc), (1)(sd), (1)(se), (1)(sf), (1)(sg), (1)(sh), (1)(si), (1)(sj), (1)(sk), (1)(sl), (1)(sm), (1)(sn), (1)(so), (1)(sp), (1)(sq), (1)(sr), (1)(ss), (1)(st), (1)(su), (1)(sv), (1)(sw), (1)(sx), (1)(sy), (1)(sz), (1)(ta), (1)(tb), (1)(tc), (1)(td), (1)(te), (1)(tf), (1)(tg), (1)(th), (1)(ti), (1)(tj), (1)(tk), (1)(tl), (1)(tm), (1)(tn), (1)(to), (1)(tp), (1)(tq), (1)(tr), (1)(ts), (1)(tt), (1)(tu), (1)(tv), (1)(tw), (1)(tx), (1)(ty), (1)(tz), (1)(ua), (1)(ub), (1)(uc), (1)(ud), (1)(ue), (1)(uf), (1)(ug), (1)(uh), (1)(ui), (1)(uj), (1)(uk), (1)(ul), (1)(um), (1)(un), (1)(uo), (1)(up), (1)(uq), (1)(ur), (1)(us), (1)(ut), (1)(uu), (1)(uv), (1)(uw), (1)(ux), (1)(uy), (1)(uz), (1)(va), (1)(vb), (1)(vc), (1)(vd), (1)(ve), (1)(vf), (1)(vg), (1)(vh), (1)(vi), (1)(vj), (1)(vk), (1)(vl), (1)(vm), (1)(vn), (1)(vo), (1)(vp), (1)(vq), (1)(vr), (1)(vs), (1)(vt), (1)(vu), (1)(vv), (1)(vw), (1)(vx), (1)(vy), (1)(vz), (1)(wa), (1)(wb), (1)(wc), (1)(wd), (1)(we), (1)(wf), (1)(wg), (1)(wh), (1)(wi), (1)(wj), (1)(wk), (1)(wl), (1)(wm), (1)(wn), (1)(wo), (1)(wp), (1)(wq), (1)(wr), (1)(ws), (1)(wt), (1)(wu), (1)(wv), (1)(wz), (1)(xa), (1)(xb), (1)(xc), (1)(xd), (1)(xe), (1)(xf), (1)(xg), (1)(xh), (1)(xi), (1)(xj), (1)(xk), (1)(xl), (1)(xm), (1)(xn), (1)(xo), (1)(xp), (1)(xq), (1)(xr), (1)(xs), (1)(xt), (1)(xu), (1)(xv), (1)(xw), (1)(xx), (1)(xy), (1)(xz), (1)(ya), (1)(yb), (1)(yc), (1)(yd), (1)(ye), (1)(yf), (1)(yg), (1)(yh), (1)(yi), (1)(yj), (1)(yk), (1)(yl), (1)(ym), (1)(yn), (1)(yo), (1)(yp), (1)(yq), (1)(yr), (1)(ys), (1)(yt), (1)(yu), (1)(yv), (1)(yw), (1)(yx), (1)(yz), (1)(za), (1)(zb), (1)(zc), (1)(zd), (1)(ze), (1)(zf), (1)(zg), (1)(zh), (1)(zi), (1)(zj), (1)(zk), (1)(zl), (1)(zm), (1)(zn), (1)(zo), (1)(zp), (1)(zq), (1)(zr), (1)(zs), (1)(zt), (1)(zu), (1)(zv), (1)(zw), (1)(zx), (1)(zy), (1)(zz)

- 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 Minard Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment areas of Lochgilphead Primary School and Furnace Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Minard Primary School as identified in 2.2 and illustrated in Appendix 3.

2.2 It is proposed that children in the Minard catchment area would be directed to Lochgilphead Joint Campus or Furnace Primary, depending on where they live in the catchment area. The proposal is that children living in the north section of catchment area from Achagoyle Bay to Blackstone Bay attend Furnace Primary (with that section of Minard’s catchment area being subsumed by Furnace Primary School) and children in the south section of the catchment area from Achagoyle Bay to Kilmichael Beg attend Lochgilphead Joint Campus (with that section of Minard’s catchment area being subsumed by Lochgilphead Primary Prima subsumeT5(

- 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 primary vacancies for Head Teachers and 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 is £10,382.

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. The school has not been used by the local community since it has been mothballed.
- 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 bus to attend Lochgilphead or Furnace Primary Schools.
- 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) is the favoured option by the Council, as it was considered it most adequately addressed the reasons for the proposal.
 - a) Re-open Minard Primary School,
 - b) Continued Mothballing of Minard Primary with pupils zoned to Lochgilphead Primary and Furnace Primary schools.
 - c) Close Minard Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochgilphead Primary and Furnace Primary schools (The Proposal).
- 3.7 When considering the above options; the positive educational benefits of Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools alongside the factors of projected low pupil numbers, the challenges in recruiting teaching staff and the considerable expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard at Minard Primary School, in addition the lack of local support for reopening Minard Primary School, option (c) was considered the most appropriate response to the underlying reasons behind consideration of this proposal.
- 3.8 Following from an initial Options Appraisal which was presented to the Council's Community Services Committee on 25th August 2022, it was agreed that the preliminary requirements were satisfied enabling the draft closure proposal to be formulated, with the option to close Minard Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools (in the manner described at Paragraph 2.2, and Appendix 3, of this Paper) being identified as the most adequate means of addressing the reasons for possible proposal.

- 3.9 During the preliminary engagement regarding the future options for Minard Primary School there were a range of viewpoints gathered from parents, young people and members of the community.
- 3.10 The community reflected that Minard Primary School had been an integral part of the community, and there were contrasting views on the proposals for the future of Minard Primary School.
- 3.11 Closing the school would have no impact on staff or pupil travel from the current arrangement. There would be no alteration to the current environmental impact.

Alternatives to the Proposal

- 3.12 The community engagement process prior to the drafting of this proposal considered the views of members of the community and also considered any other alternatives to the closure of Minard Primary School. Full details from the community engagement and the findings from the preliminary requirements, including assessment of the reasonable alternatives, are attached as Appendix 5.
- 3.13 In conclusion, after the pre-consultation with the community, the Council

4.12 This includes an assessment of:

- The school roll and predicted school roll;
- Teacher numbers; and
- The condition of the building.

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 2.3, 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 School was mothballed over four years ago as a result of a change to the School's circumstances – i.e. the school roll falling to zero. 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 over four 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 several 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 Minard Primary School. This approach aligns with that suggested by the Statutory Guidance for the 2010 Act, and Paragraphs 63-65 in particular. Further details in relation to the School roll are set out at Section 5 of this Proposal Paper

4.13.2 In relation to the underlying reason for this proposal in regards to recruitment of teachers, the issues that have been faced by the Education Service regarding the recruitment of teachers to Minard Primary School are detailed at Section 6 of this Proposal Paper. Since the School's mothballing, in order to address this particular issue, and prior to formulating this proposal, the Education Service have offered a number of posts across the Authority area on a permanent basis to a locality,

rather than to a temporary school, as an attempt to increase the likelihood of attracting a permanent post. The Council has also entered into a strategic housing agreement with social housing partners to support staff with sourcing accommodation (which is a particular pressure in remote areas of Argyll and Bute), as well as offering relocation packages. Furthermore, the Education Service continues to work with UHI Argyll to recruit more local candidates for teacher training. Notwithstanding these efforts, the recruitment of teaching staff within Argyll and Bute remains a considerable challenge, hence why it is still a main underlying reason for this closure proposal.

- 4.13.3 In relation to the underlying reason for this proposal concerning the condition of the school premises, the school property will continue to deteriorate whilst it remains mothballed. As mentioned at Paragraph 4.13.1, above, there is currently no evidence to suggest that the School will become viable for re-opening in the near future. Whilst the School remains mothballed, it costs the Council £10,382 annually. Accordingly, the Education Service are now seeking approval to proceed with a statutory closure consultation which, if subsequently implemented, will allow the Education Service to use any

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

- Likely effect on the local community to be assessed by reference to:
 - The sustainability of the community; and
 - Availability of the school's premises and other facilities for use by the school community.
- Likely effect caused by different travelling arrangements by reference to the effect caused by such arrangements on:
 - Environmental impact; and
 - The schools pupils and staff and other users of the schools facilities.

4.17 Finally, the Council has also considered the financial implications of implementation of the proposal and information on this is set out later in this document.

6 Teacher numbers

6.1 Teacher numbers been improving nationally 2016 - 2021. In 2022 there was a small reduction of 0.2% in the total number of teachers in Scotland. In Argyll and Bute there has been a 5% reduction in the fte number of teachers from 2021 and 2022.

6.2 As the school has been mothballed for over 4 years, the issue of recruitment of staff has not improved. At the time of writing this report there are 8.59 fte primary vacancies for Head Teachers and teachers in Argyll and Bute. Despite a sustained effort to secure permanent staff, there is no reason to think that staffing would not continue to be a considerable challenge for Minard Primary School

6.3 At the current time, if the proposal was to be accepted and implemented following consultation, there would be no impact on staffing levels at Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools.

7 Condition of the building

7.1 Outlined in the Options Appraisal (Appendix 5 – section 6.3) are the full financial details in reference to costs for the re-opening the building or continuing to retain the building as mothballed.

7.2 As part of the consultation process the Council would be open to exploring with the community options in regard to the future of the school b]TJ -9 -1.225 T (n)-5 (r)-3 (egar)-3245 1.21 Td po3x/P <</M a impact on staf6ht()-5

- Broadening the range of opportunities; and
- The environment for learning.

8.2 This initial statement focusses on Lochgilphead Primary School, which is one of the schools that pupils from the Minard Primary School catchment area could potentially attend.

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 Minard 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 Minard and Lochgilphead Primary Schools are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a very remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Although there are currently 9 school aged children in the Minard Primary School catchment area, children from Minard Primary School area who previously attended Lochgilphead Primary School continued 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 Lochgilphead Primary School enables a strong transition process between the ELC and school.

8.6 Lochgilphead Joint Campus offers a 3-18 education experience which is seamless at transition points between ELC to Primary and Primary to Secondary. Children, young people and their parents/ carers benefit from familiar and established relationships with their peers and teaching staff across the sectors.

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 Lochgilphead 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.

- 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, the majority of children are achieving national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy. All of the schools in Mid Argyll continue to develop within the

co-operating, communicating and working collaboratively across the sectors to create a vibrant centre of learning for all.

12 Environment for Learning

- 12.1 Lochgilphead Primary School is a suitably-equipped and well supported school, situated in the town of Lochgilphead. The entire 3-18 campus, opened in 2007, is modern, well maintained and along with the surrounding scenery provides attractive accommodation for Lochgilphead Primary School within Lochgilphead Joint Campus. The school has an all-weather pitch adjacent to the school, which is well utilised. 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 with children from other rural communities.
- 12.3 Any mitigating effects around the adverse weather and transport issues are outweighed by the benefits of this proposal. There is no change to the travel arrangements that are currently in place nor to the environmental impact from these. The travel distance (sourced from Google maps) from Minard Primary to Lochgilphead Primary is 13.13 miles via A83. Travel time is approximately 19 minutes by car. The travel arrangements have been in place for more than three years.
- 12.4 In summary, there are a range of educational benefits for pupils if this proposal was to be implemented, as summarised in the paragraphs above. There are benefits for the development of social and emotional skills, as well as the educational benefits resulting from access to a more diverse curriculum. The learning environment in Lochgilphead Primary School also offers children the opportunity to participate in a wider range of active learning strategies.

13 Assessment of likely educational benefits on other users of the school's facilities

Implications for staff

- 13.1 If this proposal is implemented, there will be no new implications for teaching and ancillary staff in Lochgilphead Primary School.
- 13.2 If this proposal is implemented, the Council does not e3 (s ftj EMC 0.00ng)-5 (ean(y)-1

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT – FURNACE PRIMARY SCHOOL

This second statement focusses on Furnace Primary School , which is one of the other schools that pupils from the Minard Primary School catchment area could potentially attend.

Learning & Teaching

- 15.1 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 Minard 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.
- 15.2 Furnace Primary Schools is a remote rural school and set within a very remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from Minard Primary School area, who previously attended Furnace Primary School, continued to benefit from education in a locality familiar to them and still relatively close to home.
- 15.3 Furnace primary is presently staffed by a full time Principal Teacher and class teacher (0.2FTE) which supports personalised learning in a supportive environment. The school is also currently in a new and changed shared headship arrangement with Inveraray Primary School.

16 Learning and Teaching

- 16.1 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 Furnace Primary School, children experience good quality, personalised learning taught in a single multi-composite class bringing with that the opportunity to share learning experiences between the youngest and oldest pupils, as well as within the immediate peer group. Furnace Primary is part of a shared Headship arrangement with Inveraray Primary School, benefiting from close links with the larger school around educational experience and planning tasks and activities that are matched to children's varying needs. The children at Furnace Primary are able to

enhance their social skills and confidence by interacting with a wider range of peers through opportunities to learn at Inveraray Primary School in many aspects of their learning including Science, Physical Education and weekly outdoor learning.

- 16.2 The learning environment encourages high level of achievement, providing a range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential within the four contexts of learning. In Furnace Primary School children will be taught in a small class composed of children from more than one year group. Children benefit from being part of a small social context in which they can build relationships, develop social skills, meet challenges and exercise responsibilities as members of a social group. They are able to interact and connect with other children through shared Headship arrangement with Inveraray Primary. The Headteacher is committed to making proactive connections between the schools and the respective local communities.
- 16.3 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.
- 16.4 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.
- 16.5 At Furnace Primary School, the small staffing complement are challenged and supported through a range of continuous professional development and review opportunities gained by working and learning with colleagues at Inveraray Primary School. Furnace Primary School is part of the Mid Argyll and Kintyre Cluster, which means that staff can be further supported to collaborate, moderate and track pupil progress and work with other colleagues to support children's progress.
- 16.6 Furnace Primary School encourages positivity and an inclusive ethos through the individual support and attention delivered in a small school.

17 Meeting learners' needs

- 17.1 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 and assessment of pupil work.

- 17.2 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. Children are achieving appropriate national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy.

18 Broadening the Range of Opportunities

- 19.2 In Furnace Primary School the children maintain links with friends who live in their own village as well as creating links with children from other rural communities.
- 19.3 Any mitigating effects around the adverse weather and transport issues are outweighed by the benefits of this proposal. There is no change to the travel arrangements that are currently in place nor to the environmental impact from these. The travel distance (sourced from Google maps) from Minard Primary to Furnace Primary is 3.82 miles via the A83. Travel time is approximately 7 minutes by car. The travel arrangements have been in place for more than three years.
- 19.4 In summary, there are a range of educational benefits for pupils if this proposal was to be implemented, as summarised in the paragraphs above. The learning environment in Furnace Primary School offers children the opportunity to learn within a school with a strong sense of community and personalised learning, whilst benefiting from opportunities to expand those experiences with established links to Inveraray Primary.

20 Assessment of likely educational benefits on other users of the school's facilities

Implications for staff

- 20.1 If this proposal is implemented, there will be no new implications for teaching and ancillary staff in Furnace Primary School.
- 20.2 If this proposal is implemented, the Council does not envisage any adverse effects from the proposal in respect of staffing. Should issues arise however, these will be mitigated through the Council Educational Management Team support structure.

21 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

- 21.1 Children who may live in this catchment area in the future will benefit from the range of educational opportunities which are presented through this proposal, as detailed above.
- 21.2 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

catchment area. However, the current arrangements (children from the catchment area attending either Furnace Lochgilphead or Inveraray Primary Schools) have been in place since Minard Primary School was mothballed. Funded school transport would also continue to be provided for pupils to the new catchment schools should this proposal be implemented.

24 Summary of educational benefits statement

- 24.1 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 acting 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 pre-consultation phase, these benefits were explored in detail and details from the community engagement and the findings from the preliminary requirements, to include the alternative proposals and the authority's assessment of other likely effects of the proposal and the reasons for that assessment are attached as Appendix 5.
- 24.2 Whilst there are positive educational benefits, there is one negative aspect identified which arises from the Td ()Tj -0101 Tc -0.027 Tw 0

- 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

25.4 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.

25.5 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. A portion of the school grounds were previously acquired by the Minard Community Trust for purposes in furtherance of the community. In terms of the remainder of the School property, the Council would be willing to engage with any community bodies coming forward with an interest or proposals in relation to the same.

25.6 Research¹ has shown that when communities feel empowered, there is:

property, the Council would be willing to engage with any community bodies coming forward with an interest or proposals in relation to the same.

On the availability of the school's premises and its other facilities

25.14 Currently three children travel to Lochgilphead Primary School from the Minard Primary School Catchment area. One pupil travels to Furnace primary. Therefore, this option would have a neutral environmental impact on the current position and would have no impact on the current travel arrangements for staff and pupils.

25.15 If this proposal was to be implemented there would be little or no impact on the natural environment.

26 Financial Impact

26.1 The full breakdown of the financial analysis is detailed in Appendix 4 . Some of this information has been recalculated since the Options Appraisal was prepared. In particular the annual cost of mothballing the school has been recalculated from £8,956 to £10,382. This information gives details on the estimated cost if Minard Primary School was still to be an occupied and operational establishment. However, as Minard Primary School is currently mothballed, the cost for the mothballing is estimated at £10,382 per year. Should the school be reopened, occupied and operational, the running costs per year are estimated at £157,105.

26.2 Column 2 of Table 1 at Appendix 4 shows the projected annual running costs of Minard whilst Column 3 shows the additional impact on Furnace Primary as the receiving school at the time of mothballing. The annual recurring savings (or costs) are shown in Column 4.

26.3 The main elements included within a school budget are teacher employment costs (i.e. basic salary costs plus related employer's

column 3 of Table 1 will not directly impact on the receiving schools but they will be a cost to the Authority as a whole, for example school transport, and the costs of maintaining the teachers previously employed in Minard Primary School.

- 26.5 There are currently no annual transport costs for pupils to attend Lochgilphead Primary School. Transport costs per year to attend Minard Primary School, if it were to be reopened, are estimated at £1482 per year. Transport costs per year to attend Furnace Primary School would be £1,482 although use of the service bus would incur no additional transport costs.
- 26.6 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 Minard Primary School £238,140 and for Furnace Primary School this is £530,955.
- 26.7 Table 3 contains the annual running costs during mothballing of Minard Primary School and these are estimated at £10,382 per year. This includes non-domestic rates, utility costs, insurances, etc. If the school was to be formally closed, this would allow further consideration to be given to the future of the School premises and any transfer in ownership of the same.

27 Equality and Socio Economic Impact

- 27.1 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 decisions. This is done through assessing the potential impact of the decision on equality through Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (EQSEIAs).
- 27.2 The Council will undertake the process of assessment during the consultation process in respect of this proposal to ensure that due regard is given to such matters in the decision making process. A finalised EQSEIA will be produced alongside the Consultation Report.

28 Consultation arrangements

- 28.1 Prior to formulating a rural school closure proposal under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* (the 2010 Act), as amended, the

Education Authority must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act. The Authority has previously identified its reasons for formulating a possible proposal, considered whether there were any reasonable alternatives to the possible proposal as a response to those reasons, and assessed each of the options in accordance with Section 12A(2)(c) of the 2010 Act. After considering a paper addressing these preliminary requirements, the Education Authority decided on 25th August 2022 that, having specific regard to the reasons for formulating a prospective closure proposal, the option to close Minard Primary School and redraw its catchment areas to Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools is the most appropriate

29 Conclusion

condition. The present condition is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate.

DOUGLAS HENDRY

Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Wendy Brownlie

Head of Education: Performance and Improvement

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

Policy Lead for Education

For further information contact:

Annette Trevelyan

Education Officer

annette.trevelyan2@argyll-bute.gov.uk

16th May 2023

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Consultation Letter

Appendix 2 - Response form

Appendix 3 - Maps

Appendix 4 - Financial template

Appendix 5 - Options Appraisal

APPENDIX 1

Argyll and Bute Council

Comhairle Earra Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

Executive Director: Douglas Hendry



**Kilmory,
Lochgilphead,
Argyll,
PA318RT**

Telephone: 01546 605522

Our Ref:

E-mail :

annette.trevelyan2@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Council Website:

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Minard Primary School

Dear Consultee,

Review of Education Provision Notice and Summary of Proposal for closing Minard Primary School Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010

Background

Argyll and Bute Council, through its Education Service, aims to realise ambition, excellence and equity for all.

The Council is consulting on a proposal to close Minard Primary School. This notice provides a summary of a proposal that you may have an interest in or are required to be notified of, giving you key information about the proposal.

The Council is conducting a public consultation process. This will commence on 15th June 2023 and will conclude on 13th September 2023. This is the period within which you will be able to make written representations to the Council in respect of the proposal. If you wish your view to be taken account of in the consultation exercise you must submit your written representation within this period. This notice and summary provides further information on where a full copy of the proposal may be obtained or referenced and also advises on how you can make written representations to the Council.

The Council will hold a meeting where officers will be able to provide information on the proposal. The details of the public meeting are contained in this notice and summary.

It is important that everyone we are consulting tells us what they think of the proposal. Please read this notice and summary and then consider the contents of the proposal document. You can then tell us what you think of the proposal by making written 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 Minard Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment areas of both Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Minard Primary School. The proposal is that children living in the north section of catchment area from Achagoyle Bay to Blackstone Bay attend Furnace Primary (with that section of Minard's catchment area being subsumed by Furnace Primary School) and children in the south section of the catchment area from Achagoyle Bay to Kilmichael Beg attend Lochgilphead Joint Campus (with that section of Minard's catchment area being subsumed by Lochgilphead Primary School).

Reasons for this proposal

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

- Minard Primary School has been mothballed for over four years. The school condition will deteriorate with limited budgets for maintenance. The school roll is zero and is not predicted to rise in the near future.
-

are 8.59 fte primary vacancies for Head Teachers and 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 Minard Primary School,
- b) Continued Mothballing of Minard Primary with the pupils zoned to Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools,
- c) Close Minard Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools (the Proposal).

Written representations may be made on those alternatives as well as on the proposal.

Written representations on the proposal may suggest other alternatives to the proposal.

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

- Lochgilphead Library, Lochgilphead Community Centre, Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8XQ
- Lochgilphead Service Point, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD
- Lochgilphead Primary School, Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8SY
- Furnace Primary School, Furnace, [By Inveraray, Argyll PA32 8XU](#)
- Minard Village Hall, Minard, [By Inveraray, Argyll PA32 8YB](#)
-

APPENDIX 2



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.

<u>Proposal</u>	
It is proposed that: Education provision at Minard Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31 st May 2024. The catchment areas of Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Minard Primary School – to the extent that the north section of Minard’s catchment area (from Achagoyle Bay to Blackstone Bay) will be subsumed by Furnace Primary School; and the south section of Minard’s catchment area (from Achagoyle Bay to Kilmichael Beg) is subsumed by Lochgilphead Primary School.	
This part of the form must be completed for a valid response:	
Name: (please print)	Address:
	Post Code:
I agree/do not agree (delete which does not apply) that my response can be made publicly available	
Signature:	Date:

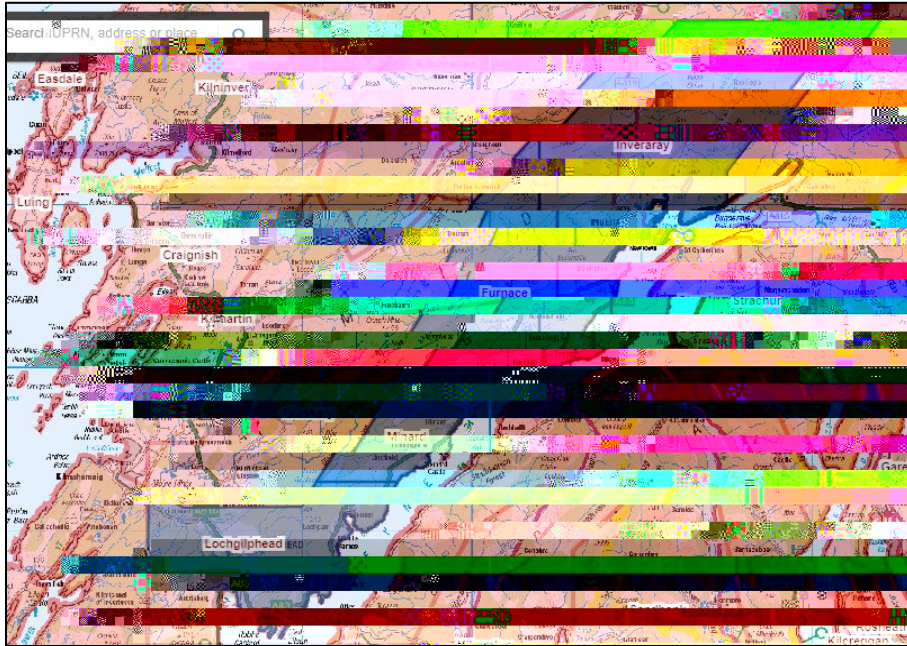
YOUR INTEREST: (please tick)

Parent <input type="checkbox"/>	Child / Young Person <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Other * <input type="checkbox"/>
Elected Member / MSP / MP <input type="checkbox"/>		Member of Community Council <input type="checkbox"/>	
*Other: (please specify)			

Please state your views on the proposal (continue overleaf if necessary)

APPENDIX 3 - MAPS

MAP OF CURRENT PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA S



MAP OF PROPOSED MINARD CATCHMENT SUBSUMED TO FURNACE AND LOCHGILPHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOLS

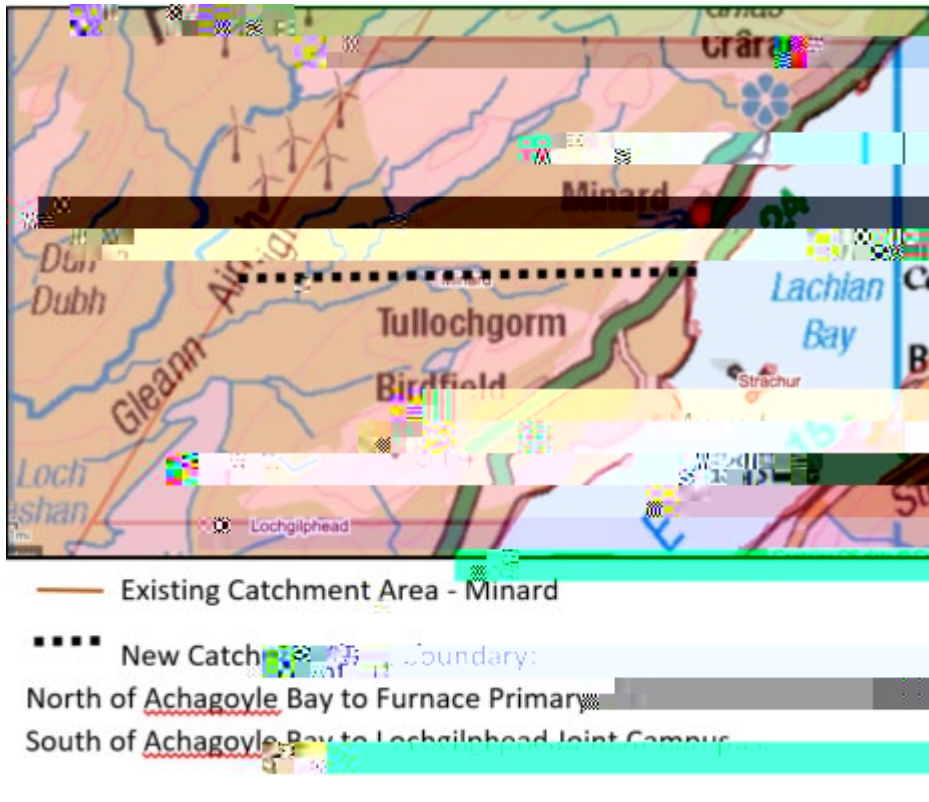


Table 4

Non-recurring revenue costs	Cost
Securing building	7,150