



Argyll and Bute Council: Education

CONSULTATION REPORT

Report on the outcome of the consultation relating to the Proposal to close
Kilchrenan Primary School

August 2024

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.

CONTENTS

1. Summary of the Proposal	3
2. Reasons for the Proposal	3
3. Introduction.....	3
4. Background	4
5. Equality and Socio-Economic Impact	5
6. The Consultation Process.....	5
7. Pupil Engagement	6
8. Responses to the Consultation Exercise	7
9. Education Authority Response to Written/Oral Representations	8
10. Education Scotland Report.....	11
11. Education Authority Response to Education Scotland Report	11
12. Rural Schools – Compliance with Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010	12
13. Alleged Omissions or Inaccuracies	18
14. Opportunity to Make Representations to the Scottish	Repr

1. Summary of the Proposal

- 1.1 It is proposed that education provision at Kilchrenan Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 29th November 2024.
- 1.2 The delineated catchment area of Taynult Primary School shall be extend-0.004 Tw 1.93ol s

- Explain the opportunity that may arise to make representations to the Scottish Ministers in connection with Section 15(4) of the 2010 Act.

4. Background

4.1 On 10th March 2022, Argyll and Bute Council's Community Services Committee approved the mothballing of Kilchrenan Primary School. It was agreed that the premises be retained for two years on a care and maintenance basis and that a review of the School's mothballing would be prepared for the Committee's March 2023 meeting, when Members could decide on a continued period of mothballing, or request that officers begin an engagement process carried out in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the 2010 Act, to consider the future options for the School. It was also agreed that the community could have pre-arranged access to the School premises for community functions during the period of mothballing:

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Community Services Committee, 10/03/2022 10:30 \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

4.2 On 9th March 2023, the Community Services Committee approved the continued mothballing
the the

6.3 Hard copies of the Proposal Paper were also made available for inspection at the following locations:

Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ

Oban Public Library, Albany St., Oban PA34 4AL

Lochgilphead Service Point, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD

Taynuilt Primary School, 2 Strathview, Taynuilt, PA35 1JF

Oban Education Offices, Willowview, Soroba Road, Oban PA34 4SB

Kilchrenan Village Hall, Kilchrenan, PA35 1HE

- 6.4 It was possible for anyone to request a copy of the Proposal Paper in an alternative format, translated to another language, or requests could be made for the services of an interpreter.
- 6.5 Copies of the Summary Proposal (including information about where copies of the full Proposal Paper could be accessed) were emailed to notify Education Scotland and all of the relevant consultees (as prescribed by Schedule 2 of the 2010 Act) of the Proposal and consultation exercise. All consultees were invited to make representations as part of the consultation process.
- 6.6 The consultation exercise ran from 21st December 2023 until 23rd February 2024 – a continuous period in accordance with Section 6(4) of the 2010 Act.
- 6.7 A public meeting was held at Kilchrenan Village Hall on 25th January 2023 at 6.00pm. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting and participate was welcome to do so. Advance written notice of this meeting was given to all of the Relevant Consultees, in terms of the 2010 Act. The meeting was convened by the Education Authority, which presented reasons for bringing forward the Proposal. There was an opportunity for questions to be asked and comments to be made.
- 6.8 This Consultation Report is the Education Service's response to the issues raised regarding the Proposal during the consultation period. It will be published on the Council's website for a pe

January 2024 at Taynuilt Primary School, and consisted of five pupils, four of whom live within the current Kilchrenan Primary School catchment area.

- 7.3 All pupils in the two focus groups were deemed to be of suitable age and maturity to be able to communicate a view on the Proposal. The Proposal, the reasons for the Proposal and the process relating to the Proposal were explained to pupils. A series of questions were then put to them, to which they responded, enabling them to give their views, which were recorded as part of the consultation process.
- 7.4 Almost all pupils across both the focus groups, who had either attended Kilchrenan Primary School before mothballing, or who lived in the Kilchrenan Primary School catchment area, indicated their wish to continue their Education in their present schools.
- 7.5 Comments from pupils included the following:

Taynuilt Primary School Focus Group

[Taynuilt] *gives us lots of opportunities, like the London trip. It has lots of equippp04 Tw8 Tw 3.11*

reduction in teacher and Head Teacher vacancies since the consultation was launched, it is the view of the Education Service that recruitment of teachers continues to be a particular challenge in Argyll and Bute.

- 12.4 In addition, given the passage of time since the consultation exercise opened, officers have also reviewed and updated the financial information pertaining to this Proposal. The annual cost of mothballing the school continues to be approximately **£13,317**, and the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the School continues to be approximately **£29,000**. However, the costs to Education of transporting pupils to Taynuilt Primary School have increased from £27,295 to **£28,827**. That figure would remain

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staffing the school would be a significant challenge in the current educational climate (see Paragraph 12.3, above).

12.6.4

There are also financial implications if the School is to be re-opened. The total annual running costs, including employees; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration, to re-open the School is approximately **£184,427**. The cost -9.d(t)2 (open)

12.7 Option to continue mothballing of Kilchrenan Primary School with the pupils zoned to Taynuilt Primary School

- 12.7.1 The School roll projections have been re-examined for Kilchrenan Primary School, and numbers of primary school pupils in the forthcoming years are not expected to rise significantly (based on pre-school aged children living within the catchment area).
- 12.7.2 Kilchrenan Primary School has been mothballed for over 2 years, and whilst mothballed, the building continues to deteriorate. The current annual cost of mothballing the school is **£13,317**. This includes electricity, heating oil and ground maintenance but does not include building maintenance and repair costs. It also does not take into account the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open which is **£29,000** and would rise year on year if the building remains mothballed. The current annual transport cost for taking pupils to Taynuilt Primary School is **£28,827**.
- 12.7.3 Those who attended the public meeting are keen to ensure a future for the building if possible and felt that mothballing the School for a prolonged period could potentially affect the sustainability for the community. The School roll is not projected to significantly rise in the near future.
- 12.7.4 There are no specific educational benefits from continuing the mothballing of Kilchrenan Primary School.
- 12.7.5 When taking into consideration assessment of the rural factors, the continuing education of pupils at Taynuilt Primary School would not change the current impact on the local community as these arrangements have been in place since mothballing. Pupil numbers at Kilchrenan Primary School are not expected to increase. Whilst mothballed, the School building would continue to deteriorate and would not be available for potential community opportunities such as a community hub. There would be no change to current travel arrangements. All schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching matched to children's needs. Within current arrangements children are benefitting from the nursery at Taynuilt Primary School and the increased opportunities to socialise with a wider peer group. The building's mothballing is not of benefit to the community or the Council. Therefore, continued mothballing would still be viewed as not a reasonable option.

12.8 Option to re-open Kilchrenan Primary School and realign/extend its catchment area

12.8.1 Community feedback gathered before and during the consultation exercise generally supports the closing of Kilchrenan Primary School with potential for the School to be used as a community asset.

12.8.2 There were no written responses to the consultation received. Therefore, there were no suggestions that re-opening Kilchrenan Primary School and realigning its catchment area would be a preferred alternative to the Proposal as consulted on.

12.8.3 There are no specific educational benefits from re-opening the School as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence, ensuring effective learning and teaching matched to children's needs. Taynuilt Primary School is a rural school. Children from the Kilchrenan area who attend Taynuilt Primary School did not move from a school that is completely different from their home environment. At Taynuilt Primary School children benefit from increased opportunities to socialise with a wider peer group. The re-opening of Kilchrenan Primary School and the realignment of the catchment area would therefore still be viewed as not a reasonable option.

12.9 Option to close Kilchrenan Primary School and rec 0.0(ec 0.0(eEMC /Span <</MCID 8 BDC

- 12.9.4 There are no specific educational benefits from re-opening the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence, ensuring effective learning and teaching matched to children's needs. Both Kilchrenan Primary and Taynuilt Primary are rural schools. Children from the Kilchrenan area who attend Taynuilt Primary School did not move from a school that is completely different from their home environment. At Taynuilt Primary School children benefit from increased opportunities to socialise with a wider peer group.
- 12.9.5 After further assessment of the Proposal, the underlying reasons for it, the consultation feedback, Education Scotland's report, and careful consideration of the rural school factors, it has been assessed by officers that implementation of the Proposal would still be viewed as the most reasonable option to address the underlying reasons why the future of Kilchrenan Primary School is being considered.
- 12.10 Officers of the Education Authority have listened carefully to the points made at the public meeting and have considered equally carefully the Education Scotland report. The Proposal was reviewed to consider whether any of the representations led the Council to reconsider any other options as being reasonable alternatives to the proposal to close Kilchrenan Primary School. As outlined above, none of the representations led officers to conclude that any of these options should be reconsidered as reasonable alternatives. The Educational Benefits were reviewed in respect of the Education Scotland report and representations made. There were no factors included in the Education Scotland report or representations made requiring any aspect of the Educational Benefits to be reconsidered. Further consideration was also given to the likely effect on the local community. Having reviewed the Education Scotland report and feedback from consultees in respect of the proposal and each of the reasonable alternatives, officers are of the view that implementation of the Proposal continues to be the most appropriate response to the underlying reasons for its formulation.
- 12.11 Officers concluded that the educational benefits of the Proposal far outweigh any potential disadvantages. Formal closure of the School will allow any plans to acquire the building to be progressed by the local community, which in turn will increase the availability of the premises to the community and even benefit the sustainability of the community. Implementation of the Proposal would have a neutral impact on travelling arrangements, as these have been in place since the mothballing of Kilchrenan Primary School in 2022. The overwhelming majority of consultation feedback received is not in support of Kilchrenan Primary School being re-opened for educational provision. Education Scotland's report is also supportive of the Proposal.
- 12.12 The Education Service has carefully considered the points made at the public

meeting, at the pupil focus groups and within Education Scotland's report. Officers duly carried out a review of the Proposal and all the reasonable alternatives, and have concluded that the Proposal remains the best solution to address the underlying reasons for the Proposal, as set out at Section 2 of this Report. Implementation of the Proposal will allow children in the present Kilchrenan Primary School catchment area to have access to increased learning opportunities, wider experiences and better socialisation through being part of a larger school with more modern facilities. There are insufficient parents/carers within the Kilchrenan Primary School catchment area indicating a wish to place their children there to make the school viable for re-opening. If the school were to remain mothballed this would be a continuing drain on the Council's resources. Implementation of this Proposal will assist the Council to to the ope02 T8 Tc 0 o.op rot(f)-8 an (nc)4J-0.01(l)6 d1531(i)2 (h)a4 Tw y

- 14.2 The Scottish Ministers will have a maximum of eight weeks to call in any closure decision made by the Education Authority in certain circumstances. This eight week timeframe would consist of an initial three weeks from the date of decision, during which representations can be made to the Ministers, and a further five weeks for the Scottish Ministers to decide whether to issue a Call-In Notice. During this period the Education Authority will not proceed to implement any closure decision. If the Scottish Ministers call-in a closure proposal, it will be referred to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels. The Convener must constitute a School Closure Review Panel within seven days for determination. The Education Authority may not implement a closure decision in whole or in part until the Panel has made its determination. It will usually issue a decision within eight weeks of the Panel being constituted.
- 14.3 If the School Closure Review Panel refuses to consent to the closure decision, or following publication of the Consultation Report, the Education Authority decides not to implement the closure proposal, the Education Authority cannot publish a further closure proposal in relation to the school for five years, unless there is a significant change in the school's circumstances.

15. Conclusion

- 15.1 It is proposed that education provision at Kilchrenan Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 29th November 2024; and that the catchment area of Taynuilt Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Kilchrenan Primary School.
- 15.2 This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the Proposal which are:

Kilchrenan Primary School has been mothballed for over two years. The School roll is currently zero and not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.

Along with several other rural local authorities, Argyll and Bute Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 10 fte (full time equivalent) vacancies for both teachers and Head Teachers in Argyll and Bute.

Whilst the School is mothballed, the building is deteriorating, with limited budget for maintenance. The costs of continued mothballing, and of bringing the fabric of the school to the required standard for any re-opening, are also considerable.



Argyll and Bute Council
Education



Review of Education Provision

Kilchrenan Primary School

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: December 2023

Proposal for the closure of Kilchrenan Primary School

SUMMARY PROPOSAL



1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 10th March 2022, Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Kilchrenan Primary School. It was agreed that the premises be retained for two years on a care and maintenance basis and that a review of the school's mothballing would be prepared for the Committee's March 2023 meeting, when Members could decide on a continued period of mothballing, or request that officers begin an engagement process, carried out in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, to consider the future options for Kilchrenan Primary School. It was also agreed that the community could have pre-arranged access to the School premises for community functions during the period of mothballing.

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Community Services Committee, 10/03/2022 10:30 \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

- 1.2 On 9th March 2023, the Community Services Committee approved the continued mothballing of Kilchrenan Primary School and agreed that the Education Service begin gathering necessary information and carry out the exercise of assessing the options for the future of Kilchrenan Primary School, in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Community Services Committee, 09/03/2023 10:30 \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

- 1.3 The Community Services Committee received a report on 24th August 2023 providing details of the Options Appraisal for Kilchrenan Primary School, carried out in accordance with the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended. The Committee agreed to note the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements and requested that officers formulate a draft proposal for consideration at the meeting of the Community Services Committee on 14th December 2023 which, if approved, would subsequently trigger the formal consultation process under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

[Agenda for Community Services Committee on Thursday, 24 August 2023, 10:30 am - Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

- 1.4 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 introduction of certain preliminary requirements which must be satisfied prior to the formulation of a proposal.

- 1.5 In addition, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out a statutory right for community organisations to request the transfer of local assets into local community ownership/management. This may be something that the Community wish to consider as part of or as a consequence of this process. Public bodies including Councils must consider such requests and make a decision within six months of receiving a valid request.
- 1.6 Kilchrenan Primary School has had zero pupils enrolled since elected members approved its mothballing.
- 1.7 There is a requirement to have special regard to the rural schools factors prior to formulating a proposal to close a rural school. In particular it is necessary to consider any reasonable alternatives before considering closure. It is also necessary to consider the impact on the wider community of a potential closure and the impact of any different travel arrangements. These factors have been considered in the preliminary requirements which were undertaken prior to this proposal being written. A full assessment of the preliminary requirements is set out in the Options Appraisal, which is attached as **Appendix 5**.
- 1.8 A new Corporate Plan (2023-2027) was agreed by the Council on 29th June 2023. The Plan contains the new set of Council Priorities. The Argyll and Bute Corporate Plan 2023-2027 states its vision of a successful and vibrant Argyll and Bute with a growing population and thriving economy. The area has a rich mix of remote, rural and island communities. The Council will use its strong track record in partnership working, at all levels, to secure the best possible outcomes.

In the Corporate Plan for 2023-2027, through the agreed priorities, the Council undertakes to ensure the following:

- Children and young people will attain and achieve at all stages We will improve outcomes for our children and young people;
- Our schools are effective, sustainable learning environments;
- Continued support for all of our children and young people with additional support needs across Argyll and Bute, within our schools and other service areas;
- We will support connections to, from and within Argyll and Bute;
- Recognition of the importance of marine connections to and from our island and mainland communities and our role in maintaining these links;
- We will reduce our carbon emissions;
- We seek to increase availability of all types of housing, including affordable homes;
- We build up and strengthen our communities as attractive, vibrant places to live, work and do business;
- We make assets work now while we plan for and invest in the future;

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 its entire area for the current school population 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 Kilchrenan Primary School, as it has been mothballed for almost two 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 have also been considered. Some of these figures have been recalculated since the Opt10 (t) f04p (ear)aopos(o)1n14 (h)10 (av)14 (e be)10 (-)3 (u)10

When considering the above options during the Options Appraisal process, the following factors were key in arriving at option (d) as the most appropriate response to the underlying reasons behind consideration of this proposal:

4.11 As part of the preliminary requirements in the drafting of this proposal, the Council considered four options. The favoured option by the Council is (d), below, as it was considered it most adequately addressed the reasons for the proposal.

- a) Re-open Kilchrenan Primary School;
- b) Continued Mothballing of Kilchrenan Primary with the pupils zoned to Taynuilt Primary School;
- c) Re-open Kilchrenan Primary School and realign its catchment area;
- d) Close Kilchrenan Primary School and realign its catchment area to Taynuilt Primary School (The Proposal).

4.12 Having considered these other alternatives the Council does not consider them to be viable alternatives to the closure proposal at this juncture, and will proceed to consult on the proposal to close Kilchrenan Primary School and extend the catchment area of Taynuilt Primary School to include the current catchment area for Kilchrenan Primary School.

4.13 The Council has undertaken an appraisal of impact were this proposal to be implemented.

4.14 This includes a copy of the appraisal of impact were this proposal to be implemented. (a)10 [(P)-1603-0.0046 (ud)10 (ro)2wd5l04 TcTw 3

any other users of the school's facilities;
any children who would (in the future, but for implementation of the closure proposal) 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 As Kilchrenan Primary School is classified as a very remote rural school, the Council has also given special regard to the following factors if this proposal were to be implemented:

the likely effect on the local community, as assessed in terms of:

- the sustainability of the community; and
- availability of the school's premises and other facilities for use by the school community.

the likely effect caused by different travelling arrangements, as assessed in terms of the impact of such arrangements on:

- the environment; and
- the school's pupils and staff and other users of the school's 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.

5 SCHOOL ROLL

5.1 The information in relation to school rolls as shown below is drawn from the yearly pupil census which takes place in September each year. Past pupil numbers are historic data from past pupil censuses. Pupil projections are based on the 2022 pupil census. School rolls by their nature may fluctuate slightly on an ongoing basis due to changes in pupil numbers as a result of pupils moving to and from the catchment area and parents/carers exercising their right to make placing requests.

The school roll of Kilchrenan Primary School has seen a considerable and consistent declining trend since 2006.

Table 1 shows the historic and current pupil numbers for both Kilchrenan and Taynuilt Primary schools. Table 2 shows the predicted roll for both schools until 2026-2027. It should be noted that the projected roll figures for Kilchrenan Primary School are based on the number of primary school-age children projected to be within the catchment area, and does not take account of parental decisions to send their children to other schools in the authority.

Table 1

	Roll
2006-07	23
2007-08	20
2008-09	19
2009-10	18
2010-11	10
2011-12	10
2012-13	8
2013-14	7
2014-15	4
2015-16	4
2016-17	9
2017-18	6
2018-19	7
2019-20	8
2020-21	12
2021-22	6
2022-23	0
2023-24	0

Table 2

Capacity
2024 -2025
2025-2026

pupils who would be attending Kilchrenan Primary School because parents choose to send their children to Taynuilt PS or to the local denominational primary school for the area, St. Columba's PS in Oban.

- 5.3 Kilchrenan Primary School catchment area includes the following development management zones: Inverinan, Dalavich, Kilchrenan and Annat settlements,

has a more accessible location in a larger village. Children from the Kilchrenan area attending Taynult Primary School are benefitting from learning with a greater number of peers of the same age and stage as themselves, as opposed to expeynui oamT.15 Td()s7 (T.15 Td0.198-(s)4 ()Tj)Tj00 (e 4s)13.9 (am)7 (4d()Tas)4

8.4.6 The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of such professionalism in exercising autonomy, creativity and responsibility, in the context of broader good Td[(2)3

8.5 Educational Outcomes

- 8.5.1 Through the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) practice model, meeting the needs of every child continues to be a key priority for staff at Taynuilt Primary School, 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 analysis of pupil work. As a result of such practice, appropriate interventions are put in place, involving parents/carers and other agencies to ensure the needs of each child are met.
- 8.5.2 In Taynuilt Primary School, most children are achieving the expected levels for their stage in Reading, Writing, Listening and Talking and Numeracy. The attainment of children at Taynuilt Primary School is strong: between 2019 and 2023, attainment levels for P1, P4 and P7 pupils at Taynuilt Primary School in Numeracy and across the three areas of Literacy (Reading, Writing and Listening and Talking) were above the Argyll and Bute and National averages.
- 8.5.3 Taynuilt Primary School continues to develop positive relationships within the school through a focus on Nurture and Rights Respecting Schools. The larger staff, parent/carer body and partner group of the school naturally increases the breadth of talent and interest that may be available to share within a school setting. 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, languages, science, expressive arts teaching.

8.6 Experiences – Broadening the Range of Opportunities

- 8.6.1 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. Taynuilt Primary School has been evaluating its community links as part of its Covid Recovery Plans, providing enhanced opportunities for social interaction and skills development.
- 8.6.2 There is also a strong transition planning process between Taynuilt Primary School and Oban High School, which creates increased opportunities for children to participate and to make new connections.

8.8.1.2 Should this proposal be 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.

8.8.2 Implications h-1.13 898 Tw 127. (hi)6 (s)4 Td()1 e wme0 Tdr2 d

would be re-directed and therefore indirectly benefit other school pupils in Argyll and Bute.

8.10.2 There are no other significant impacts from this proposal, positive or negative, on other pupils in the authority or who attend other schools.

8.11 Placing requests

8.11.1 This proposal will not affect the right of parents to request that their child attend a school of their choice rather than the designated school in whose catchment area the family lives, as provided by the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

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

8.12.1 The main adverse effect resulting from this proposal would be the length of the journey to school for children who live in the Kilchrenan Primary School catchment area. However, children who previously attended Kilchrenan Primary School and who for the past 21 months have attended Taynuilt Primary School have made this journey daily, and families in the area engaged with thus far do not regard the length of journey as a major consideration. The village of Taynuilt is 6.7 miles from Kilchrenan. It is visited routinely by residents in the Kilchrenan catchment area as an aspect of everyday life, and it is the first village residents pass through when travelling to Oban. Funded school transport would also continue to be provided for pupils should this proposal be implemented, as a result of the catchment area extension. Pupil and parent feedback from the community engagement event provided positive feedback with regards to present transport arrangements.

8.13 Summary of educational benefits statement

8.13.1 Consequences of this proposal, such as the ability for children to participate in a more broad range of experiences and the ability to better meet the educational, social and emotional needs of the children, represent significant educational benefits. 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**.

8.13.2 While the positive educational benefits are numerous, the sole negative aspect identified arising from children attending Taynuilt Primary School centres around the fact that children have to travel by either bus or car to school. However it is considered that the positive aspects of this

10 FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 10.1 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 £9,888 to £13,317. This information gives details on the estimated cost if Kilchrenan Primary School were still an occupied and operational establishment. However, as Kilchrenan Primary School is currently mothballed, the cost for the mothballing is estimated at £13,317 per year. Should the school be reopened, occupied and operational, the running costs per year are estimated at £179,118. In addition, the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is £29,000.
- 10.2 Column 2 of Table 1 at **Appendix 4** shows the projected annual running costs of Kilchrenan Primary School whilst Column 3 shows the additional impact on Taynuilt Primary School as the receiving school. The annual recurring savings (or costs) are shown in Column 4.
- 10.3 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) of £11.982m (2015/16) and £15.8m (2016/17).

leaves from the same original starting point in Oban. As a result, no saving has been indicated in Appendix 4 (column 4 of Table 1), but neither is this an additional cost for Taynuilt Primary School.

- 10.6 Table 2 in Appendix 4 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 Kilchrey n Apcs

12.2 The proposal to close Kilchrenan Primary School and realign its catchment area to Taynuilt Primary School was considered at the Community Services Committee Meeting on 14th December 2023, where it was adopted as a “relevant proposal” in terms of the 2010 Act, to be issued as a basis for statutory consultation. No decision will be taken by the Council on the proposal contained in this paper until after the end of the consultation period. The Council will then receive a report on the consultation and will reach a view on the proposal.

12.3 A summary of this document will be issued free of charge to all of the consultees listed on page 2 of this document and it will also be published on the Council's website:

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

12.4 As part of a consultation process, the Education Authority must publish the proposal paper, advertise it and notify Education Scotland and all of the relevant consultees as prescribed by Schedule 2 of the 2010 Act, inviting them to make representations on the proposal. The consultation period will be from 21st December 2023 until 5pm on 23rd February 2024, which includes at least 30 school days.

12.5 A public meeting will be held at 6pm in Kilchrenan Village Hall on Thursday 25th January 2024. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting and participate is welcome to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Education Authority and the Education Authority will present reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions to be asked and comments to be made. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered. However, the Education Authority will also consider written comments which should be sent to Education Services, School Consultations, Argyll & Bute Council, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 5.00pm on 23rd February 2024.

12.6 Written representations may be made on the proposal and the alternatives to the proposal. c 0s ates tore (s)4 (w)16425pt(r)7 (e3r)7 (be s)10on Autt0 (m)7 consatlal15.9

minimum of three weeks after publication of the Consultation Report.

Appendix 2 – Response form
Appendix 3 – Maps
Appendix 4 – Financial template

APPENDIX 1

Argyll and Bute Council

Comhairle Earra Ghàidheal agus Bhòid



Executive Director: Douglas Hendry

Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA318RT

Telephone: 01436 657681 Fax:

Our Ref: Ref:

If phoning or calling please ask for:

e-mail: Simon.Easton@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Council Website: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Kilchrenan Primary School

Dear Consultee,

Review of Education Provision

Notice and Summary of Proposal for closing Kilchrenan 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 Kilchrenan 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 21st December 2023 and will conclude on 23rd February 2024. 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 Kilchrenan Primary School be discontinued with effect from 29th November 2024. The catchment area of Kilchrenan Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Taynuilt Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposal which are; 211be than 116 (h)6 (c)4 (h ar2 0 (e;))TJEMC /

- d) Close Kilchrenan Primary School and realign its catchment area to Taynuilt Primary School (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:

- f* Providing a notice of the consultation and a summary of the proposal to the relevant consultees. **This is that notice and summary**
 - f* Placing an advert in the local press
 - f* Putting information on our website <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/school-consultations-and-proposals>
 - f* Holding a public meeting to explain the
-

If the suggestion goes ahead, any children from Kilchrenan Primary School catchment area would be educated at Taynuilt Primary School.

Please note that this summary document is for convenience only. Full details of the consultation can be obtained from:

- f* Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- f* Oban Public Library, Albany St., Oban PA34 4AL
- f* Lochgilphead Service Point, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD
- f* Taynuilt Primary School, 2 Strathview, Taynuilt, PA35 1JF
- f* Oban Education Offices, Willowview, Soroba Road, Oban PA34 4SB
- f* Kilchrenan Village Hall, Kilchrenan, PA35 1HE

It is also available electronically via our website:

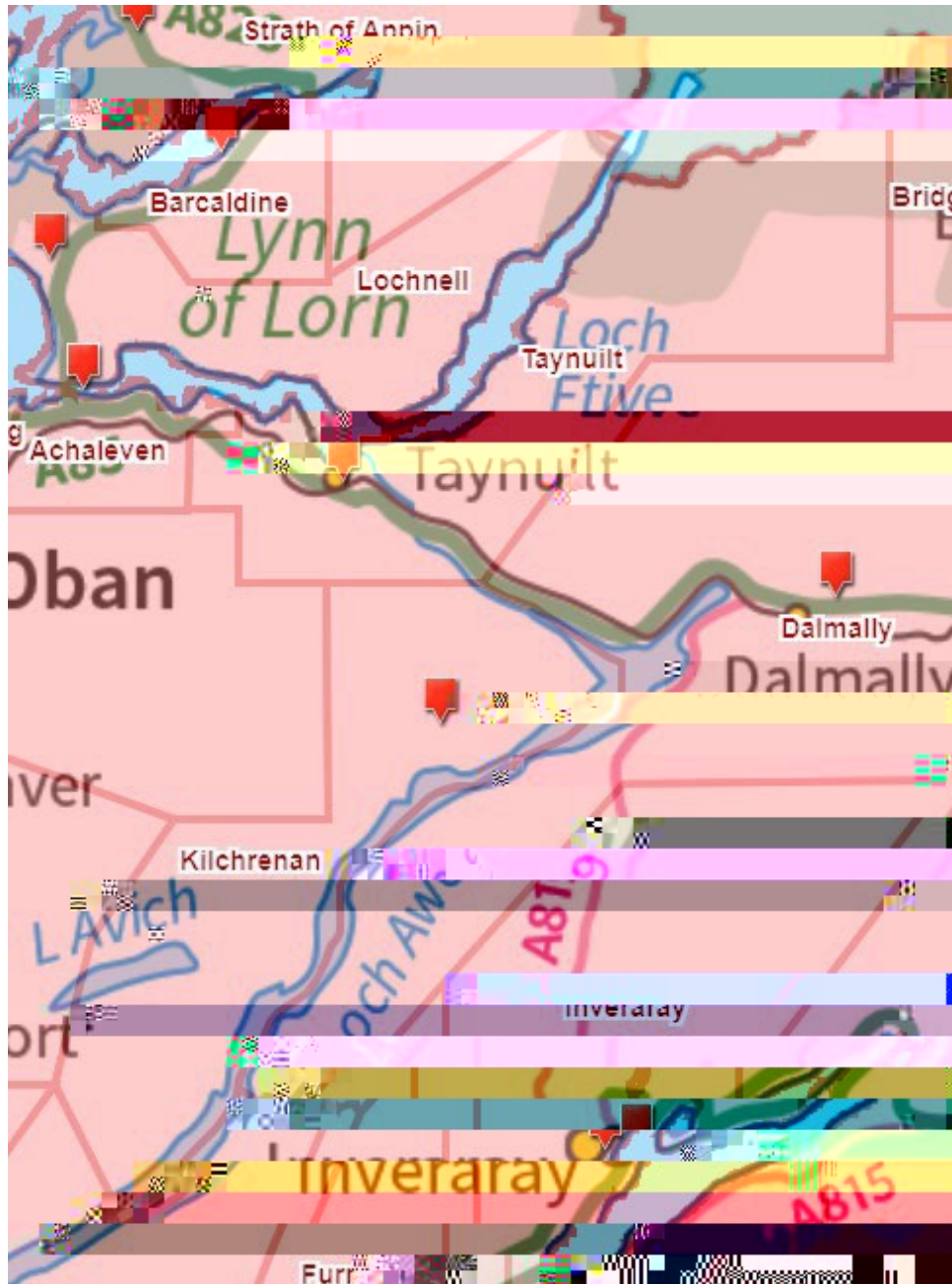
- f* <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/school-consultations-and-proposals>

Yours faithfully,

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director with responsibility for Education

APPENDIX 3 – Map of current primary school catchment areas

MAP OF CURRENT KILCHRENAN AND TAYNUILT PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREAS TO BE COMBINED



APPENDIX 4 – FINANCIAL TEMPLATE

Table 1²

Name of School Kilchrenan Primary School	Projected annual costs for full financial year 2023/24	Additional financial impact on receiving school – Taynuilt Primary School	Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)
School costs			
<i>Employee costs -</i>			
teaching staff	101,074	0	101,074
support staff	20,638	0	20,638
teaching staff training (CPD etc)	0	0	0
support staff training	0	0	0
Supply costs	3,030		3,030
Employers Liability Insurance	181	0	181
Public Liability Insurance	165		



EDUCATION

OPTIONS APPRAISAL

KILCHRENAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

AUGUST 2023

must consider such requests and respond to them within a reasonable timescale.

Kilchrenan Primary School has had no further pupils enrolled since elected members approved the mothballing.

At the aforementioned com (e)10h

industries of fishing, farming and crofting, sports such as shinty and in its world class musicians and artists as well as its modern commercial industries such as wind turbine production and fish farming.

Argyll and Bute is geographically the second largest authority in Scotland.

3.3 Kilchrenan and the Local Area - the Kilchrenan Primary School Setting

Kilchrenan is a village situated in a scenically beautiful area to the west of Loch
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-

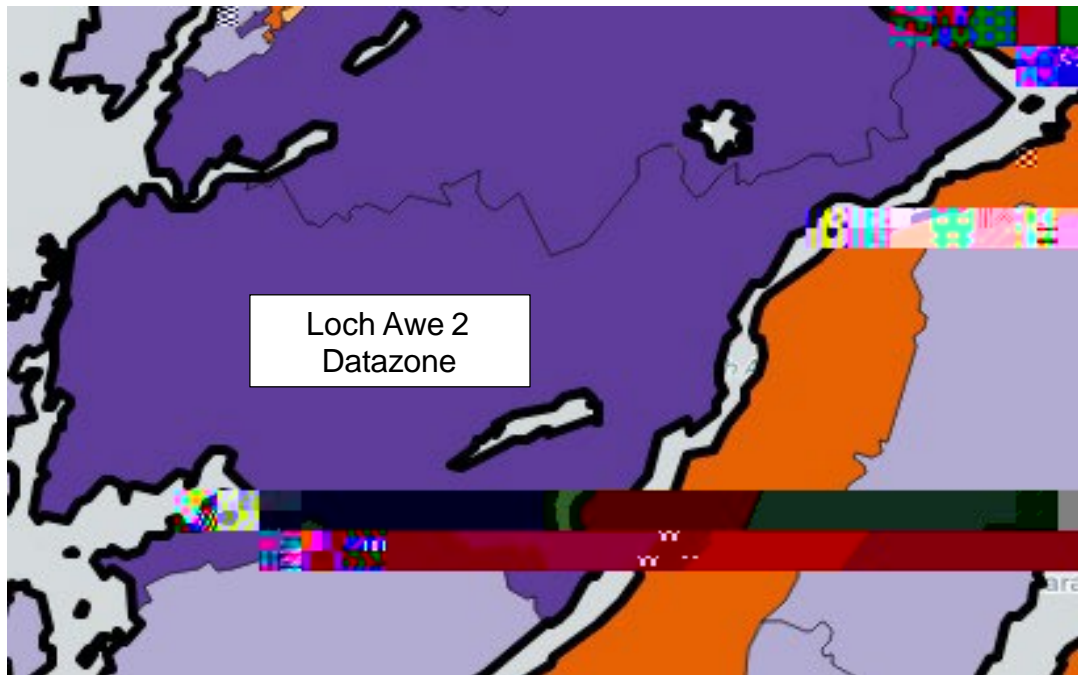
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Kilchrenan Area (Loch Awe 2 datazone) NRS Population Estimates			
2011		2021	
Total Resident Population	637	Total Resident Population	703
Population under age of 12	58	Population under age of 12	54
Population aged 12-67	486	Population aged 12-67	492
Population aged over 67	93	Population aged over 67	157

It can be seen that the population as a whole in the datazone has increased, and that the increase is primarily in the 67 plus age-group. The number of children under the age of 12 has fallen slightly in the last 10 years. It is recognised that the datazone area and the catchment area of Kilchrenan Primary School do not match exactly. The datazone also encompasses part of the Kilninver Primary School catchment area.

The map in Figure 1 below shows the extent of the Loch Awe 2 datazone:

Figure 1



3.6 Development and House Building

A new Local Development Plan (LDP2) is now available, which sets out planning and development proposals for the next 10 years from 2020, and a vision for 20 years. The Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan provides the local planning framework for the Council area, excluding the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park area. The Plan is divided into the written statement and proposals maps. The written statement provides the general

policy context against which planning applications for new development proposals should be assessed. This is supported by the proposals maps which show the range of development opportunities and constraints within the area, for example:

the key development areas i.e. the allocations for housing, industry and business, community facilities and infrastructure;
the potential areas for future development (Potential Development Areas);
areas requiring actions such as environmental improvement or regeneration (Areas for Action); and
environmental designations such as national Scenic Areas, Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas and Local Nature Conservation Sites.

Appendix 1 shows the LDP2 for Kilchrenan

Appendix 2 shows the LDP2 for Taynuilt

Appendix 3 provides the key for Local Development Plans.

3.7 Kilchrenan Primary School

Kilchrenan PS is situated in the heart of the village of Kilchrenan and was built in 1878. The school is co-educational and non-denominational. It has a catchment area extending from south of Dalavich to north of Kilchrenan, including Ardanaiseig to the northwest of Kilchrenan. The school comprises two classrooms and a smaller room which is used for storage and teaching smaller groups. There is a library/quiet room between the two classrooms and a kitchen from which the lunches, brought daily from Taynuilt PS, are served. The school grounds are used as an outdoor classroom, although areas of the grounds are considered unsafe for pupils to use.

Appendix 4 shows the Kilchrenan PS Floor Plan.

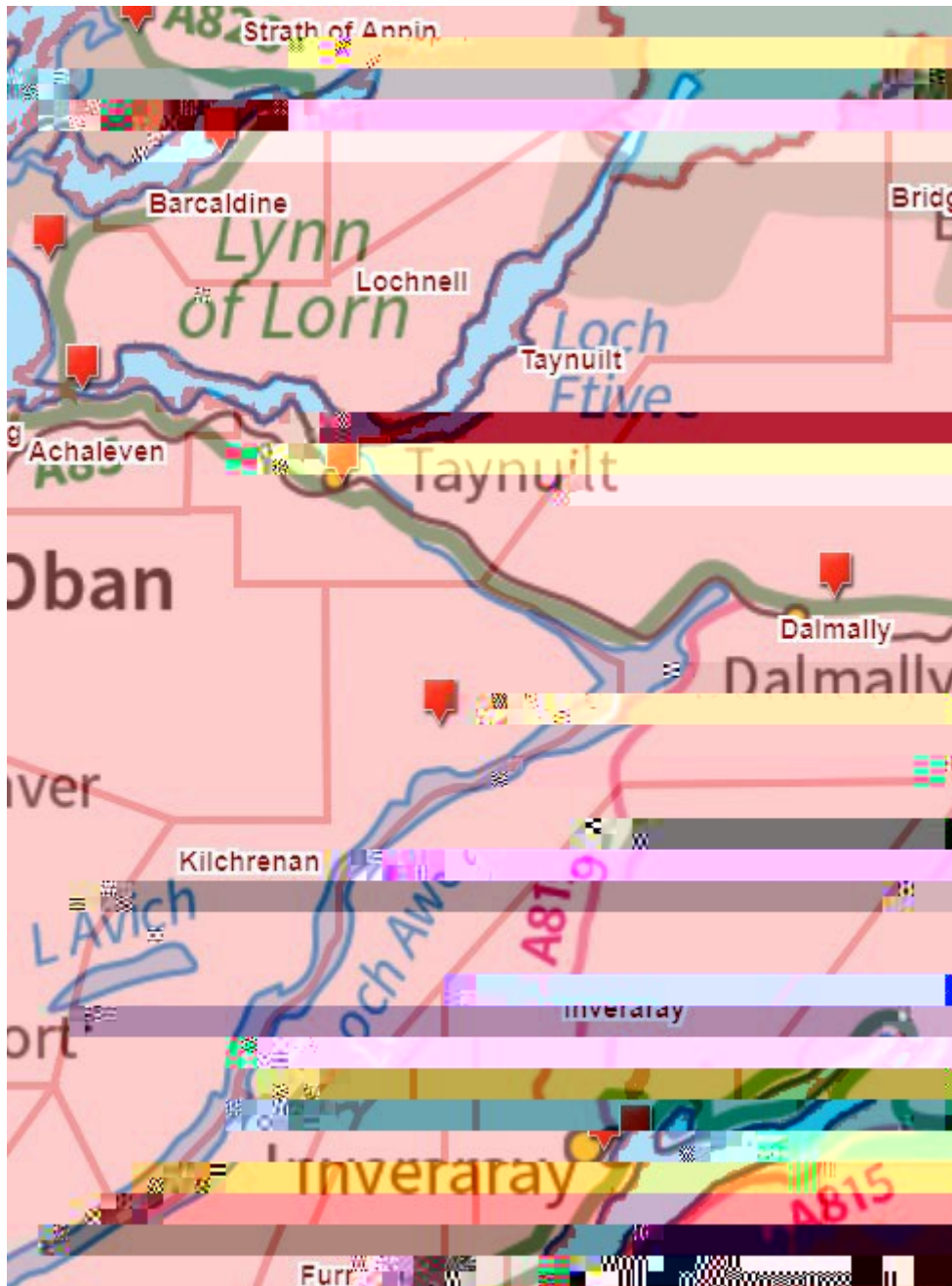
Kilchrenan Primary School is 6.7 miles from Taynuilt Primary School, along the B845, beside which Kilchrenan PS is located.

The Scottish Government's Rural School List 2021 classifies Kilchrenan PS as 'very remote rural'. This is defined as an area with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more. Kilchrenan Primary is one of 18 primary schools associated with Oban High School.

[Rural schools in Scotland - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

3.8 Taynuilt Primary School

Following the mothballing of Kilchrenan PS, children from the Kilchrenan catchment area have attended Taynuilt PS. Taynuilt PS is a non-denominational and co-educational school situated in the centre of Taynuilt



3.9 Pupil Numbers

Pupil projections, and data for 2023-24 are based on the 2022 pupil census, a return prepared annually for the Scottish Government. Past pupil numbers are historic data taken from past pupil censuses.

Table 2 shows the historic and current pupil numbers for both Kilchrenan and Taynuilt Primary schools:

Table 2

	Kilchrenan PS
Capacity	41
	Roll
2006-07	23
2007-08	20
2008-09	19
2009-10	18
2010-11	10
2011-12	10
2012-13	8
2013-14	7

PS or to the local denominational 759.84 T Tc 0.2[4 Tca006 Faldinast (Tj)(Tj)C:1658204

projections, and information relating to the recruitment and retention of staff, transport and on local services and facilities.

The questions put to stakeholders were as follows:

Over the last 18 months, what has been the effect of mothballing Kilchrenan Primary School on you, your family and community?

In your view what are the pros/cons of the following options:

Re-open the school

Continue with mothballing

Re-open the school but widen the catchment area

Close the school

4.3 **Feedback**

There was a range of viewpoints on the future of Kilchrenan PS:

Community and Parents

Almost all in the community felt that continuing to mothball the school was not an option. It was felt that a decision should be made as the building would only continue to deteriorate, although two parents with children of pre-school age suggested that mothballing could continue until such time as the school became a viable option once more, allowing pre-5 children in the area to get to the stage where they were ready to attend school.

Eight of those attending the Community Engagement Event supported the re-opening the school, only two of whom were parents of pre-school-aged children who might wish to attend the school, although some indicated they have families who may wish to move to the area, and that they wished there to be a school for their grandchildren to attend in such circumstances.

Some members of the community were of the view that the community of Kilchrenan would be negatively impacted by not having its own primary school. They felt the village would be less attractive to families who may wish to move to the area. They also suggested that attracting people to the area was key to ensuring more affordable housing for local people was built. The view was expressed by one attendee that, as a result of children travelling to Taynult every day, they and their parents were already spending significant amount of time in another community, to the possible detriment of the Kilchrenan community. The point was also made that the absence of a school in Kilchrenan was having a negative

The reopening of Kilchrenan PS was also seen by some parents as having a potentially divisive effect on the local community. They felt that, despite reopening, a significant number of parents/carers would nevertheless continue to choose primary education in Taynuilt or Oban. Parents spoke of the risk of resentment from

there can be travel problems in bad weather. Others said they had good fun on the bus and had special "bus friends".

When asked to sum up their feelings, only one pupil said that Kilchrenan should reopen and indicated a wish to return to Kilchrenan as a pupil. The other pupils were happy to remain where they were. Another indicated that the Kilchrenan building was in too poor a state for it to be used as a school, and it should be made into a sports centre, with football pitches and a tennis court. The other pupils were happy to stay in their current schools.

Staff

There was no contact with previous teaching staff from Kilchrenan PS in the area.

Along with several other rural councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 15.0 full-time equivalent vacancies for both Head Teachers and Teachers. Recruitment in the Oban, Lorn and the Isles area is challenging due to the rural location of almost all of its schools.

Of those who attended the Community Engagement Event on 31st May 2023, the majority were in favour of closing Kilchrenan PS permanently, including almost all parents/carers with children in primary education at present. A minority of attendees wished to see the school re-open, primarily on the grounds that the community is negatively impacted by the absence of a primary school, although a small number said they wished their pre-school- aged children to attend a re-opened Kilchrenan PS.

The Council is required to consider the future of Kilchrenan PS, taking all factors and views into account. The following options are explored within this paper:

- a) Re-open Kilchrenan PS;
- b) Continue the mothballing of Kilchrenan PS with the pupils zoned to Taynuilt PS;
- c) Re-open Kilchrenan PS and realign/extend its catchment area;
- d) Close Kilchrenan PS and realign the catchment area for Taynuilt PS to include the Kilchrenan PS catchment area.

6.0 OPTION A: RE-OPEN KILCHRENAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

6.1 Community Feedback

Eight of those attending the Community Engagement Event supported the re-opening the school. Their reasoning can be summarised as follows:

Parents/carers of children presently under the age of five wish their children to attend a local school which is within walking distance and which reflects the local context;

Residents with no children of school age foresee their families moving to the area and wish there to be a school for their grandchildren;

Community members believe the absence of a school makes it less likely that the community will be sustained by families moving to the area;

Travel to schools outside of the immediate community is inconvenient, potentially expensive and is at the mercy of adverse weather conditions.

6.2 Pupil Numbers

to the proposal which could respond to those reasons. For the proposal and any alternatives identified, the education authority is required to assess the likely educational benefits, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

The reasons why the future of Kilchrenan Primary School is being considered are as stated at Section 2 of this Report.

6.4.1 Community Impact

The reopening of the school would most likely increase opportunities for the school premises to be used by the community. It would also be possible that the school would invite the community to specific events. The presence of a school and the facilities/activities that may be offered could make the area a more attractive place to live. Reopening the school

able to walk or cycle to school. However, the lack of safe walking and cycle routes and the considerable distances involved would limit this. For example, it is 8.3 miles from Dalavich to Kilchrenan. Staff would either travel to the school by car, or if they live locally could walk or cycle. There may be a positive environmental impact as the use of vehicles to transport pupils may decrease. Conversely, reopening the school would mean increased car usage by staff with commensurate negative environmental impact.

6.4.3 Educational Benefits

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers in exercising freedom and responsibility in their practice, within the context of broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community, ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to such needs. All school in Argyll and Bute implement Curriculum for Excellence, and there are therefore no specific educational benefits associated with the re-opening the Kilchrenan PS.

However, the reopening of the school would entail those local children choosing to attend being part of a very small school roll, which a number of parents/carers, and indeed children, in the catchment area viewed as disadvantageous to educational development for a number of reasons, including limited social groups and interaction, fewer curricular opportunities and experiences and less individual attention on account of composite classes covering a wide range of age groups.

A small number of attendees indicated their views on the potential benefits of attending a school with a very small roll.

With respect to outdoor learning, community spaces could be used either in the school grounds or in the immediate neighbourhood if the school were to reopen. Outdoor learning is provided by all schools.

As a result of the continued mothballing of the building, there would be issues with respect to the current condition and suitability of the school buildings and facilities which could negatively impact learning and teaching. The building itself, when recovered from its mothballed state, would still present the limitations which impacted learning previously, including issues relating to its accessibility, the safety of its outdoor spaces and the absence of dedicated PE and catering facilities.

6.5 **Summary**

Of the 20 people who attended the Community Engagement Event, less than half supported the re-opening of Kilchrenan Primary School. If the school reopened, the school roll would still be unsustainably low, most likely standing at a maximum of one, five and six pupils respectively over the next three years, based on the projected numbers of primary one pupils.

There are financial implications associated with the reopening of Kilchrenan Primary School. The total cost of re-opening the school is **£150,763**, while the cost of bringing the property to the level and standard required for reopening is **£29,000**. The annual expenditure of **£9,888** mothballing costs would no longer apply.

If the School were to be reopened, the premises and facilities would be available

It can therefore be seen that to continue to maintain Kilchrenan PS in its mothballed state will have no positive impact on the local community, which is reflected in the views of almost all those consulted during the preliminary engagement exercise.

7.4.2 Travel Arrangements

The continuation of the mothballing of Kilchrenan PS would entail no change to the travel arrangements for children that are currently in place, nor to the environmental impact of such travel arrangements, both of which are detailed in section 6.4.2 above.

7.4.3 Educational Benefits

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers in exercising freedom and responsibility in their practice, within the context of broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. All schools in Argyll and Bute implement Curriculum for Excellence, ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to such needs. For these reasons, the continued mothballing would bring no specific educational benefits for pupils.

The continued mothballing of Kilchrenan PS would continue the arrangements which have been in place for the last 18 months. However, any continued deterioration in the fabric and fittings of the school building as a result of mothballing would exacerbate the issues associated with re-opening, as described in section 6.4.3 above, and their potentially negative impact on the quality of educational provision in the building in any future scenario.

7.6 Summary

Almost all of those who attended the Community Engagement Event were against continuing the 18 month mothballing of Kilchrenan Primary School. There was a view that mothballing the school over a long period was wasteful due to deterioration of the property and the costs involved, and that a decision to close or re-open the school should be made.

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The present travel arrangements have been in place for 18 months. Should the school continue to be mothballed these travel arrangements would continue.

There are no specific educational benefits from continuing the mothballing of Kilchrenan Primary school.

On the basis that pupil numbers are not expected to increase and the building's mothballing is not of benefit to the community or the Council, continued mothballing of Kilchrenan Primary School is not viewed as a reasonable option.

8.0 OPTION C: RE-OPEN KILCHRENAN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND EXTEND ITS CATCHMENT AREA

8.1 Community Feedback

As detailed in the map at section 3.8 above, the existing catchment area for Kilchrenan Primary School is very rural and very sparsely populated. It already covers a broad area, characterised by small communities which are mostly situated along a single road over a distance of approximately 13 miles. This linear aspect to the geography of the catchment area, and the absence of any further significant habitation immediately to the south of the existing catchment areas – the only direction in which the catchment area could realistically be extended – means that there is limited scope for increasing the catchment area.

Were the catchment area to be extended to the north, towards Taynuilt, again, this would include very few dwellings, and, depending on the extent of the extension, would impinge on the intake for Taynuilt PS, as would any significant southwards extension on Kilmartin PS. This could have negative consequences for staffing in these schools should their rolls fall to any degree. Loch Awe to the east and inaccessible, unpopulated land to the west make any extension in those directions unviable.

All those attending the Community Engagement Event felt that extending the catchment area was an unrealistic proposal for Kilchrenan Primary School. The community felt that moving the boundary in any of the ways described above would add very few, if any, pupils to the roll, and could increase transport distances and times.

Other than the points about the school's role in attracting potential residents to the area, which could benefit the community's economy and sustainability, those consulted did not note any negative impact on the community of the school's mothballing.

8.4.2 Travel Arrangements

The travel distance from Kilchrenan Primary to Taynuilt Primary is 6.7 miles via the B845. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The B845 is a single track road, access to which can be limited during adverse winter weather.

The travel arrangements for pupils travelling to Taynuilt PS have been in place since February 2022, and travel by car or bus is an accepted aspect of living in the communities of Kilchrenan, Inverinan and Dalavich. If Kilchrenan Primary school were to reopen with a wider catchment area, there could be a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of some pupils who are able to walk or cycle to school. However, the lack of safe walking and cycle routes and the considerable distances involved would limit this. For example, it is 8.3 miles from Dalavich to Kilchrenan, and the extension of the catchment area could extend distances to school for pupils within the catchment to over 10 miles. Staff would either travel to the school by car, or if they live locally could walk or cycle. There may be a positive environmental impact as the use of vehicles to transport pupils may decrease. Conversely, reopening the school with a wider catchment area would mean increased car usage by staff, and greater distances for pupils to travel to school by vehicle, with commensurate negative environmental impact.

9.3 Financial Information

Since the mothballing of Kilchrenan PS, there has been a bus service for pupils travelling to Taynuilt PS, at an annual cost of **£27,295**. The closure of Kilchrenan PS would therefore not incur any additional transport cost. It is possible that the closure of Kilchrenan PS and the establishment of Taynuilt PS as the catchment school could result in a gradual reduction of the numbers of pupils attending St. Columba's PS in Oban. Were this service from the Kilchrenan/Dalavich district no longer required, a saving on transport to St. Columba's PS may be possible. At present, the cost of transporting pupils to St. Columba's PS from the Kilchrenan catchment area is **£26,726** annually.

If Kilchrenan Primary School were to be closed it would generate an annual saving of **£9,888**, the current annual cost of mothballing (2022-23) not including the cost relating to overstaffing in another school as a result of staff transfer from Kilchrenan. The potential cost of reopening the school, totalling **£150,763** on an ongoing annual basis, plus **£29,000** to bring the building up to the required standard for reopening, would also require no further consideration.

9.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

Section 12A(2) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) requires the education authority to identify its reasons for the closure proposal of a rural school, and consider whether there are any reasonable alternatives to the proposal which could respond to those reasons. For the proposal and each and any alternatives identified, the education authority is required to assess the likely educational benefits, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

The reasons why the future of Kilchrenan Primary School is being considered are as stated at Section 2 of this Report.

9.4.1 Community Impact

If Kilchrenan PS were to close, pupils would continue their education at Taynuilt PS – the catchment area of which would incorporate the present Kilchrenan catchment area – or elsewhere, and there would be no change in terms of the current impact on the community. The Kilchrenan school building has not been used by the community during the period of mothballing. The nearby Kilchrenan Village Hall fulfils a wide range of civic requirements in the area, and is newly-refurbished, well-equipped and community-co-ordinated.

Some members of the community view the buildings and grounds as an opportunity to develop a local small business hub, and as both a base for the campaign to create a Loch Awe Regional/National Park, and a key facility within such a park if established. The closure of the school would permit the local community to take such ventures forward, under the terms of the *Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015*. Such a

members of a social group. They are able to interact and socialise with larger groups of children, take part in team activities and move with an established (t)2 (h)JTJ0..% 17.34 0 ml(d)n2 (ea)10..%acttieeth,(d)-thiho pu0..%pre

After consideration of all that has been discussed above, the closure of Kilchrenan PS and the realignment of the Taynuilt PS catchment area to include the present Kilchrenan catchment area has been identified as a reasonable option for further consideration and consultation.

10.0 OVERVIEW OF OPTIONS

Option	Option Description	Outcome
A	Re-open Kilchrenan Primary School with the existing catchment area.	Not a reasonable option.
B	Continued Mothballing of Kilchrenan Primary School with the pupils zoned to Taynuilt Primary School.	Not a reasonable option.
C	Re-open Kilchrenan Primary School and extend its catchment area.	Not a reasonable option
D	Close Kilchrenan Primary School and realign the catchment area of Taynuilt Primary School to include the current catchment area for Kilchrenan Primary School.	A reasonable option, with consideration given to the present school building becoming a facility the community can develop for its benefit and sustainability.

11.0 ANALYSIS OF REASONABLE OPTION: CLOSE KILCHRENAN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA FOR TAYNUILT PRIMARY SCHOOL TO INCLUDE THE CURRENT KILCHRENAN CATCHMENT AREA

- 11.1 The closure of Kilchrenan PS, and the realignment of the Taynuilt PS catchment area to include the current Kilchrenan catchment area, is assessed to be the only reasonable option to be presented to members at committee, and, if approved, to subsequently progress to formulation of a “relevant proposal” under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, as amended by the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

This section of the report both summarises and provides more information on the key factors considered in such an assessment, and goes into significant detail regarding the educational benefits of closing Kilchrenan PS, particularly as regards the educational provision offered by Taynuilt PS.

11.2 Pupil Projections

As detailed above, the realignment of the Taynuilt PS catchment area to include that of Kilchrenan PS, and the subsequent enrolment of additional pupils, will not substantially affect the school occupancy in relation to the

school's maximum capacity. As detailed in the table below, the predicted occupancy rate for Taynuilt PS varies between 42% and 34% over the next four years. There are no issues associated with the capacity of Taynuilt PS to receive pupils from the present Kilchrenan catchment area, and such a scenario can be seen as beneficial to the Taynuilt school community.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Approved Capacity Taynuilt PS	163	163	163	163
Projected Roll Taynuilt PS	58	60	55	48
Kilchrenan PS Projected Roll	8	8	10	8
Maximum Roll				

now and in the future. Taynuilt PS has been evaluating its community links as part of its Covid Recovery Plans, providing enhanced opportunities for social interaction and skills development.

Environment for Learning

Taynuilt PS is a suitably-equipped and well supported school, situated in village of Taynuilt. The school building is graded highly suitable for effective educational provision (Suitability Rating A) and the grounds and surroundings are extensive and attractive, providing ample space for play and outdoor learning. The building has facilities for pupils and visitors with special access needs.

11.3.2 Community Impact

While there was some variance of community views at the Community Engagement Event, the majority of attendees supported closure of Kilchrenan PS.

It is understood that a school closure may have an effect on the community's sustainability, as a result of families with children being put off moving into the area. However, members of the local community are being proactive in developing proposals for the Kilchrenan school building, which, if fulfilled, could have a positive effect on the economy and sustainability of the area and community. Present proposals are to request the transfer of the Kilchrenan PS building into local community ownership/management under the terms of the *Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015*. It is proposed that the building become a hub office for local small businesses, and a centre for the campaign to establish either a new Regional or National Park in the Loch Awe area, the application processes relating to which are already underway. Should a park be established at regional or national level, it is envisaged that the school building could become a key facility within the park infrastructure. The formal closure of the school would allow such plans to progress.

Any civic role which the school building may have previously played in the Kilchrenan community, or which it could continue to play were it to remain open, can be adopted by the Kilchrenan Village Hall, which is run and co-ordinated by local community members. Having been recently refurbished, the hall is well equipped to play a key role in staging key local events and activities, and is doing so effectively.

The closure of Kilchrenan PS could have positive consequences for the future of Taynuilt PS, and by extension, the community of Taynuilt. Against the backdrop of a school roll at Taynuilt which is projected to fall in coming years, even a small increase in the number of pupils coming to the school as a result of the closure of Kilchrenan could have benefits in terms of the school's staffing complement, the number of composite classes, the mix and diversity of the pupil cohort and the number of parents potentially able to contribute to the life and work of the school.

11.3.3 Travel Arrangements

Travel by vehicle is an accepted aspect of living in the Kilchrenan community, and there were already considerable transport considerations for those travelling from Inverinan or Dalavich to Kilchrenan before Kilchrenan PS was mothballed.

The travel distance from Kilchrenan PS to Taynuilt PS is 6.7 miles via the B845. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements for pupils in the Kilchrenan catchment area travelling to Taynuilt have been in place for 18 months. Occasional issues relating to adverse winter weather are acknowledged. The option to close the school would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils, the associated costs to the Council or families or the environmental impact of travel.

11.5 **Financial Impact**

The main elements included within a school budget are teacher employment costs (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 (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 pupils in each school. When a school ceases to be operational, the teacher staffing budget is adjusted (at the appropriate time), as per entitlement information from Education HR, with the staffing budget resulting in a nil value. As a result of the authority's policy for no teacher redundancies, it is presumed that the staff will be deployed elsewhere within the authority and therefore their salary costs still exist, and there is an increase to the receiving school's budget. This is also in line with the national priority of maintaining teacher numbers. This methodology also applies to the school's discretionary budget which again is formula-based. The budget of the receiving school, in terms of any pupils being transferred, will increase. The figures outlined below take account of the fact that the staffing and discretionary budgets for Kilchrenan PS have been adjusted to nil.

The annual running costs during mothballing of Kilchrenan Primary School are **£9,888**. Therefore, annual savings generated through closing Kilchrenan Primary School would be **£9,888**.

The costs/savings outlined above assumes all revenue expenditure would cease. This includes non-domestic rates, utility costs, insurances, etc. If the school were to be formally closed, this would allow the council to take steps towards selling the school premises to a third party or progressing its

handover to local community groups under the terms of the *Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015*.

11.6 Environmental Impact

Pupils currently travel to Taynult PS. The option to close Kilchrenan PS would have no further environmental impact, and would have no impact on the current travel arrangements for staff and pupils. Travel to access services and amenities is an accepted aspect of rural life.

12.0 CONCLUSION

Four alternative options have been reviewed in considering the future of Kilchrenan Primary School. For each option, information was collated and consideration was given to:

Community feedback;

Pupil numbers;

Financial Information;

Assessment of rural factors, including community impact, travel arrangements, and educational benefits.

An authority that is contemplating a rural school closure proposal must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act before formulating a proposal.

After consideration of the preliminary requirements, as set out in the Act, and the options, and having regard to the specific reasons identified at Section 2 of this report, closing Kilchrenan Primary School and realigning the catchment area of Taynult Primary School to include the current catchment area for Kilchrenan Primary School has been identified as the most reasonable option to address the underlying reasons for the proposal.

Members are asked to:

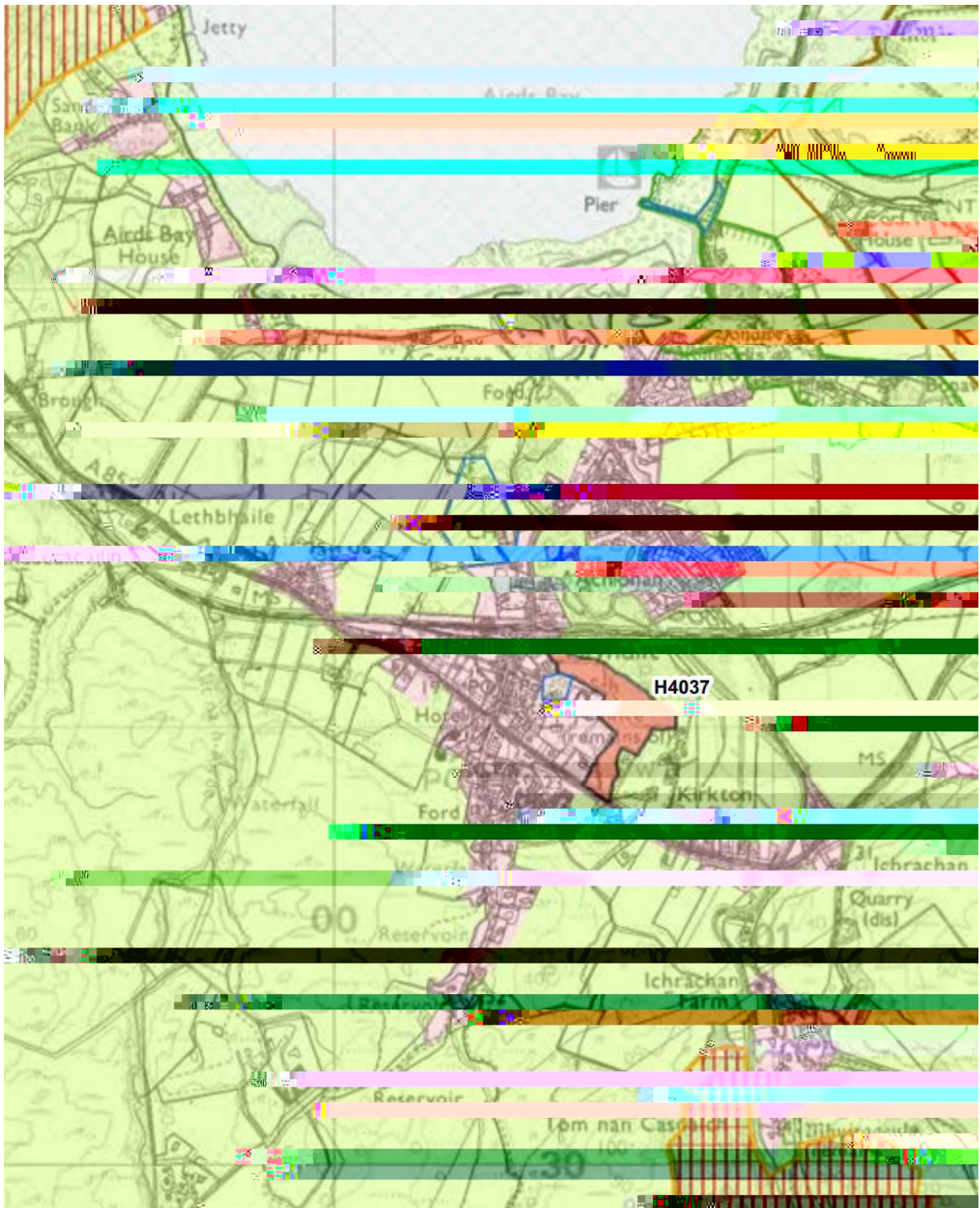
Note the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements;
Agree that Officers now formulate a draft closure proposal that will come back to the December 2023 meeting of the Committee for consideration by Members. If approved it would subsequently trigger a statutory consultation process under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

Appendices

Appendix

Appendix 6 – Record of views expressed at Community Engagement Event, Kilchrenan Village Hall, 31st May 2023

Appendix 1 – LDP2 for Kilchrenan



Appendix 3 – key for Local Development Plans



Appendix 6 – Record of views expressed at Community Engagement Event, Kilchrenan Village Hall, 31st May 2023

What has been the effect of the mothballing of Kilchrenan PS on the local community?

- “None – some may say having a local primary school attracts young families to the area, but as there is no affordable or social housing available, this is not relevant.”
- “It is less likely that families will move to the area.”
- “Quieter without children in the playground.”
- “The Community Village Hall has lost revenue as the council no longer hires it for PE lessons”
- “Children and parents are necessarily spending more time as part of a different community.”
- “Very little change for a lot of us to be honest.”

Option 1 – Continue with Mothballing of Kilchrenan PS

Wider range of professionals moving to area due to improvement in connectivity. There may be more children in the community in the future.
Continue with mothballing until viability improves

Having a school in the area may support the creation of more social/affordable housing in the area, as families are more like.
Can it be continued with the school? The school is a good asset to the community and it would be a shame to lose it. The school is a good asset to the community and it would be a shame to lose it.

economically unlikely

e)Td(nt3 Option 3 – Reopen KiwiNet ban PS with a widened category ()Tj0 f1.56 TD()

children to a reopened Kilchrenan PS

If Kilchrenan reopens, pressure may be brought to bear on those families who

choose an alternative school. (S) TJEMC /Lbl <</MCI3 1 BDC /C2_0 1 Tf0 Tc 0 Tw 2.68.5 -1.31

APPENDIX 2 - EqSEIA

Argyll and

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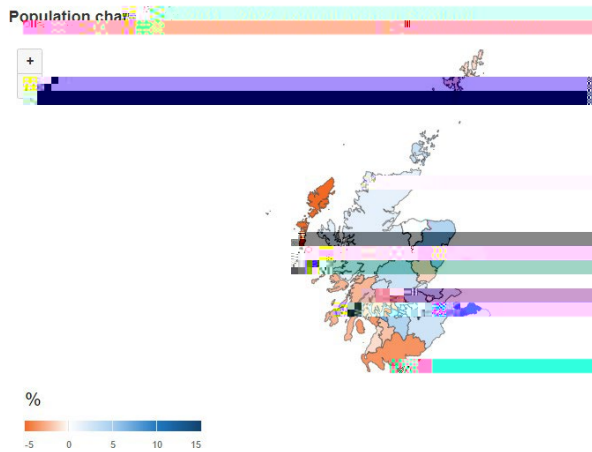
Lead officer details:	
Name of lead officer	Simon Easton
Job title	Education Manager
Department	Education
Appropriate officer details:	
Name of appropriate officer	Wendy Brownlie
Job title	Head of Education – Performance and ID 10 0c 0 Tr 11.04 0 06(M)-6303.72 670.08 T

Data

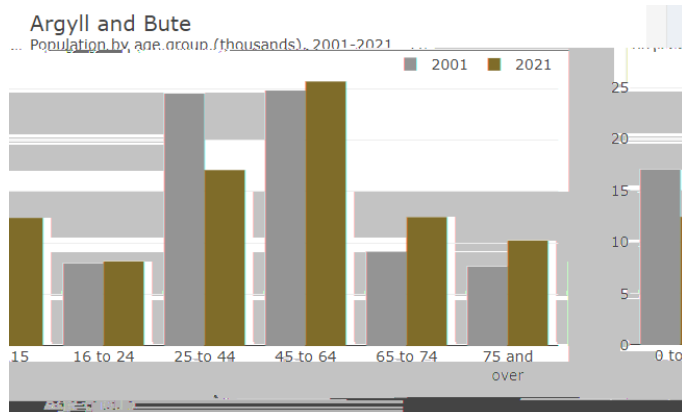
The catchment area for Kilchrenan Primary School is classed as remote rural. The definition for remote rural are settlements with a population of less than 3,000 with a greater than 30 minute drive time to the nearest settlement with a population of 10,000 or more. National statistics detail a reducing and aging population for Argyll and Bute.

The National Records of Scotland details a reducing population in Argyll and Bute as per the diagram below. Data gathered shows a 2.4 percentage point reduction in population in Argyll and Bute.

Figure 7: Population decreases were concentrated in the west and south west



Population records held by National Records of Scotland show an ageing population in Argyll and Bute with an increase to population groups above 45 years with a reduction to population in age groups below 45.



Source information:

[Scotland's Population 2022 - The Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends | National Records of Scotland \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/scotland-s-population-2022)
[Population Estimates of Scotland - National Records of Scotland \(shinyapps.io\)](https://shinyapps.io/population-estimates-of-scotland/)

How has 'due regard' been given to any negative impacts that have been identified?

In looking at the educational benefits statement of this Proposal these have been considered. All information is contained in the Proposal paper [Proposal for the closure of school \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](http://argyll-bute.gov.uk)

Section 4: Interdependencies

Is this proposal likely to have any knock-on effects for any other activities carried out by or on behalf of the council?

Potentially on transport, as more children may require transport who may move into the catchment area.

Details of knock-on effects identified

Increased number of children requesting free school transport may add pressure to the transport system.

Section 5: Monitoring and review

How will you monitor and evaluate the equality impacts of your proposal?

The Education Central Team including locality Education Managers will monitor the impact this catchment area change would have, if implemented.

Kilchrenan Primary School Public Consultation Meeting
Held in Kilchrenan Village Hall on 25 January 2024 at 6pm

Panel

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director

Jen Crocket, Chief Education Officer/Head of Education-Wellbeing, Inclusion and Achievement

Simon Easton – Education Manager

In attendance

Graeme McMillan - Transformation Programme Manager

Simon Ross

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Panel Response

The feedback was similar to that provided in May 2023. The pupils are very happy at the school they currently attend and are stimulated young learners. There were no negative voices.

Audience

Is the school in Connel being incorporated into the proposed new catchment area?

Panel Response

No – Achaleven Primary School is being considered as part of a separate exercise that is ongoing.

Audience

Is there a statutory maximum travel distance that a child can be expected to travel?

Panel Response

There is no limit set out within the legislation. Travel distances are considered on a case by case basis, having regard to a number of factors relevant to that particular community.

Audience

What is the staffing situation at Taynult?

Panel Response

The staffing levels at Taynult are stable. The school has a total of 10 teachers and 20 support staff. The school is currently operating at a level of 100% capacity. The school is currently operating at a level of 100% capacity.

Panel Response

If the community of Kilchrenan are interested in acquiring the school building, there is no reason why they cannot engage with the Council at this stage, without of course pre-empting any decision that may be taken by elected members in relation to closure or otherwise of the school. The Council are happy to take contact details and pass these on to the appropriate Officer.

Audience

When will a decision be taken by elected members?

Panel Response

Following the completion of the final consultation report, this will be submitted to the Community Services Committee on 22nd August 2024 for consideration. If the proposals are agreed, there is then an 8 week period for any representations to be made to Scottish Ministers either against or in support of the closure, and for Ministers to consider whether they will call-in a decision based on the representations made. If a decision is taken not to call in the proposal, the school would be formally closed as of 29th November 2024.

Mr Hendry closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance and input to the consultation.

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Argyll and Bute Council to close Kilchrenan Primary School and realign its catchment area to Taynuilt Primary School.

March 2024

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of a proposal from Argyll and Bute Council to close Kilchrenan Primary School and realign its catchment area to Taynuilt Primary School. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there are educational benefits for children arising from the council's proposal to close Kilchrenan Primary School. For example, a larger and more modern learning environment offering access to a broader range of experiences, and opportunities to learn, develop and socialise with a wider group of peers. The council should continue to work with the local community, including children and young people, to consider any future use for the school building should the proposal to close be agreed.

HM Inspectors
March 2024

J – Yes. I have loads of friends. Better learning, better teachers. The food is very good.

A – Yes. I have lots of friends here and I can do a variety of activities and sports in PE. At Kilchrenan we couldn't do as many things.

Ar – Yes. I like the space and the playground. I have lots of friends here. There are lots of activities, and nice teachers.

Question – What are the main differences between Taynuilt and Kilchrenan?

J – You have more choice of friends here. And there being loads more pupils in the class means learning is more fun and you can do more kinds of activities.

O – The building here is in better condition and it has better facilities. The playground doesn't have areas where you're not allowed to go.

H – I like Kilchrenan and I like Taynuilt.

Question – Tell me about your learning here at Taynuilt compared to what learning was like at Kilchrenan.

Z – I feel I'm getting better every day. I am doing well in Numeracy and the numeracy links to high school are helping me.

J – The teachers are good and the equipment we use is good. Support for pupils with additional needs is amazing. Sometimes at Kilchrenan the work was easy and you would wait for the teacher for a long time sometimes.

H – I like learning about the human body in science topic.

Ar – Learning is 4/5.

Question – What do you miss about Kilchrenan?

J – It was a bit nearer but that isn't really a problem.

A – Sometimes it was fun all being in the one classroom.

Question – What do you feel about more pupils from the Kilchrenan area coming to Taynuilt PS?

Ar – Bigger is better. I think we should try to have as many pupils as possible at Taynuilt.

Z – I have no problem with pupils coming to Taynuilt from anywhere.

A – It is more people to make friends with.