
ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES

COUNCIL
25 NOVEMBER 2010

EDUCATION REVIEW – REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL ESTATE

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Report recommends that the Council pass the resolutions required to proceed with consultation on the proposals contained in the attached appendices in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Council notes the contents of the reports and proposals at Annexes 1-6 hereof ; and
- 2.2 That the Council agrees the recommendations numbered 1-4 contained within the report at Annex 2, hereof, *Review of the School Estate – Amalgamation Proposals* . Specifically, under recommendation number 3, that Council agrees to proceed to statutory consultation in respect of:

1. Keills with Port Charlotte
2. Ulva with Dervaig
3. Lochdonhead with Salen
4. North Bute with Rothesay
5. Toward with Innellen
6. Kilmodan with Strachur/ Tighnabruaich
7. Luss with Hermitage Primary
8. Rosneath and Kilcreggan with Garelohead
9. Parklands with Hermitage Academy/ John Logie Baird
10. Southend with Drumlemble
11. Strone with Sandbank
12. St Kieran's with Castlehill
13. Ardchattan, Achaleven and Barcaldine with Lochnell
14. Kilchrenan with Taynuilt
15. Ardchonnell with Dalmally/ Kilmartin
16. Skipness, Rhunahaorine and Glenbarr with Clachan
17. Ashfield with Tayvallich
18. Achahoish with Adrishaig
19. Glassary and Minard with Lochgilphead

- 2.3 That the Council agrees the recommendation by the Executive Director of Community Services to withdraw the proposal to amalgamate Luing Primary School with Easdale Primary School. Please see detail at paragraph 4.9 of Annex 2 to this report.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 The Executive agreed at its meeting on 17 May 2010 that the Executive Director of Community Services should be delegated with the power to undertake an informal consultation to determine stakeholders' views as to how education services should be provided on a more sustainable basis.
- 3.2 This consultation was undertaken by Education, in conjunction with Mr Keir Bloomer, in June 2010 and the conclusions drawn are described in the report at Annex 1 – *Review of the School Estate – Informal Consultation*.
- 3.3 At the same meeting the Executive Director was instructed to identify the relative efficiency of the properties in the school estate, using a set of agreed criteria, and review and identify the feasibility of any option to reduce the school estate with regard to any particular school. This work has been undertaken and the results are contained within the report at Annex 2 – *Review of the School Estate – Amalgamation Proposals*. This report also identifies the list of proposals that are intended to be taken forward for formal consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. An exemplar proposal is included at Annex 3 for information.
- 3.4 The report included at Annex 4 – *Review of the School Estate – Financial Impact* notes the likely improvement to the Education financial position should the proposals listed in the report be agreed by the Executive. The likely net saving to the Council of these proposals would be around £1.925m (assuming agreement to withdraw the Luing/ Easdale proposal).
- 3.5 If the Council agree to take forward to formal consultation the proposals included in Annex 6 of this report, the Council will require to follow the process set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The report at Annex 5 – *Review of the School Estate – Consultation Process* identifies how the Council intends to meet the consultation requirements contained in the Act and arrangements for public meetings to be held to consider the detail of each proposal.
- 3.6 The Council, at its meeting of 2 November 2010, continued consideration of the proposals included at Annex 6 of this report for clarification/ verification of the presented information or for additional information to be added. In particular clarification has been obtained in relation to the following:
- The matter of travel distance and time has been reviewed. The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school. An outline of the methodology, together with the conclusions, is contained at Annex 7 of this report.
 - The Head of Strategic Finance has provided a note in regard to the matter of Rural Schools GAE and this is contained within

Annex 8 of this report

- Further information in clarification of the population projections from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) has been included in the Proposals. In the event that consultations proceed, this information will be referenced on the Council's website. A link to the GROS website from which the information is obtained is <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/publications-and-data/popproj/2008-based-pop-proj-scottish-areas/detailed-tables.html>

This link will take you to a page where you can access the table titled "2008-based principal population projections for council areas by sex and single year of age, by council area, 2008-2033"

- Additional detail has been added to the proposal documents in response to submitted correspondence to the schools consultation e mail and postal addresses and from questions raised by elected members at the seminar of council and subsequent council meetings on the 2nd November 2010.
- Head Teachers of the Schools have been afforded a further opportunity to comment on the proposals. No material or significant alteration of the proposals was required as a result of that.
- Elected members have had an opportunity to make comment on the content of the proposals and to seek further clarification on information

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 No decisions have been taken regarding the amalgamation of any of the schools in the Council's estate. No decision can be taken regarding a proposal to amalgamate schools until a period of formal consultation has been undertaken in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. If members agree to the recommendations contained in this act the proposals listed in Annex 6 will be taken forward for formal consultation. At the end of this process the Council may take a decision to proceed with any or all of the proposals in the light of the results of the consultation.

5. IMPLICATIONS

<i>Policy:</i>	As noted in the accompanying reports.
<i>Finance:</i>	As noted in the accompanying reports.
<i>Personnel:</i>	As noted in the accompanying reports.
<i>Legal:</i>	As noted in the accompanying reports.
<i>Equal Opportunities:</i>	As noted in the accompanying reports.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director of Community Services

For further information please contact:

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01631 564 908

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****COMMUNITY SERVICES -****REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL ESTATE – Informal Consultation****25 November 2010****1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Council, as part of its review of Education, delegated the conduct of an informal review in respect of the Education budget to the Executive Director of Community Services and the Head of Education. This report advises members on the conduct and outcome of that process.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of the report

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.2 Due to the current financial climate, the Council faces the prospect of having to make very substantial savings in all areas of expenditure and all services have been requested to consider how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets. In the case of the Education Service budget, like all other services, there is an ongoing a review of all spending in order to identify savings that will contribute to meeting the overall target while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. If Education were to achieve the 15% savings required this would equate to some £12m.
- 3.3 As part of its review of Education, the Council delegated the conduct of an informal review in respect of the Education budget to the Executive Director of Community Services and the Head of Education. The consultation process was carried out by preparing a consultation document outlining the position in regard to the education budget in general and issuing this, together with an invitation, to the participants. These were; senior pupil representatives from each secondary; Head Teachers of all Schools with deutes from larger schools; parent council representatives; union representatives; HMIE and the press. Four consultation meetings were held, one in each of Oban, Lochgilphead, Dunoon and Helensburgh.
- 3.4 The Council received valuable support in the process through the services of Keir Bloomer, an educational consultant who assisted in the preparation of materials for the process and acted as an objective mediator during the consultation meetings. He is a recognised and respected figure in Scottish local government and his career includes seven years as a local authority chief executive preceded by sixteen in senior positions in education. He was a member of the group which wrote 'A Curriculum for Excellence', Scotland's national curriculum strategy. He has been involved in a very wide range of national educational activities and for six years he was vice-chair of Learning and Teaching Scotland, Scotland's curriculum development agency. His report outlining the consultation process and his

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conclusions is attached at appendix 1 hereof.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The Council has a clear vision for its Education Service which is based on striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The current Education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. The conclusions of the informal consultation will assist the Council, and the education service in particular, to assess and have regard to the views of key stakeholders in education on possible areas for required savings.

5. IMPLICATIONS

<i>Policy:</i>	None at present
<i>Finance:</i>	None at present
<i>Personnel:</i>	None at present
<i>Legal:</i>	None at present
<i>Equal Opportunities:</i>	None at present

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Consultation on the education budget

Summary of responses

Introduction

As part of the planning for the 2011/12 and subsequent budgets, the Council Executive decided on May 17th to conduct an informal consultation exercise in the relation to the education budget, which is the largest area of Council expenditure. Meetings were organised in the four Council areas and took place at Lochgilphead, Helensburgh, Oban and Dunoon on dates between June 8th and 17th. Invitations were issued to parent councils, headteachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, two senior pupils from each secondary and the Press. In order to keep meetings to a size that would allow active participation through group sessions, the number of parent, staff and union representatives was limited. In the event, total attendance at the meetings was around 210.

The four meetings followed a common format. After a brief introduction by Councillor Strong, Depute Provost, I gave a presentation indicating the Council's likely financial position over the coming three years and the resulting pressures on the education budget. Following the presentation an opportunity was provided for comment and questions.

The presentation stated that all services had been asked to plan for a budget reduction of 15%. The education share would be of the order of £12m and it was unlikely that this figure could be significantly reduced. Information was provided on how the budget is currently spent. For this purpose, the budget was divided into six main headings and an indication was given as to which major items of expenditure fall under each heading.

Participants were then divided into groups, generally containing around 10 to 20 people. Each group had a separate room and was supported by two Quality Improvement Officers, one acting as Chair and assisting discussion and the other taking notes. The groups were invited to discuss any issues they felt to be relevant to the budget situation and to offer comment on how the necessary level of savings might best be achieved. Group sessions generally lasted for about an hour and a quarter.

After the group discussions, the Quality Improvement Officers presented groups' findings to a concluding plenary session. Councillor Strong offered those attending (and other invitees who had been unable to attend) the opportunity to offer individual comment by email. In the event few comments were received by this method.

In general participants found it difficult to come to terms with scale of the reductions required. Although all groups attempted to make positive suggestions, they were generally able to offer only ideas for small savings. No group was able to assemble a suggested package that came close to the savings target.

The following sections summarise the comments made in the group sessions. An attempt has been made to include all substantive comments that appeared to command some degree of support. In some cases an idea was clearly endorsed by the group as a whole. In other cases a view evidently commanded only minority support. Often, it was unclear whether an opinion was widely shared or not.

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Resources

There was a widespread feeling that more could be done to increase the resources available to the education service.

The most radical suggestion, supported by several groups, was that Council Tax should be increased with the additional resources being earmarked for education or possibly for a limited number of key services. There was no support for an increase simply to augment Council income as participants tended to feel that the Council's priorities might not reflect their own. The scale of any increase thought likely to be acceptable was modest. Participants acknowledged that, even were the whole increase to be devoted to education, the impact on the extent of the savings still required would be limited.

An alternative to raising Council Tax mentioned in some groups was to seek voluntary contributions from parents, specifically for school purposes.

Several groups considered that income could be realised from using assets in a more businesslike manner. An example mentioned more than once was school hostels which, it was suggested, could be let commercially during school holidays. Participants acknowledged after discussion and with some reluctance that, at any realistic estimate of charges and occupancy rates, net income would be small.

Another example, in some ways similar, was the suggestion that closed school buildings should be quickly sold and the income devoted to educational purposes. The distinction between revenue and capital was not widely understood.

A number of groups discussed the possibility that the Council should seek commercial sponsorship for its schools. Business involvement in any of a number of ways could, it was thought, offer opportunities for increasing income.

A single member of one group envisaged a wide range of commercial opportunities of which the marketing of school places to overseas families was the most clearly articulated.

Teaching staff

Although many groups acknowledged that the scale of the savings might make it inevitable that expenditure on teachers would have to be reduced, there was universal reluctance to see staffing levels significantly cut. The quality of the classroom experience provided by the teacher was widely seen as the most important factor contributing to the quality of education overall. For this reason, some groups felt that any savings in this part of the budget should focus on removing unsatisfactory staff.

Some speakers felt that savings could be made by reducing promoted post structures and/or by sharing a single head teacher between two schools. Some participants believed that surplus staff are currently retained in schools and that this should no longer be permitted. If their removal required the introduction of a redundancy policy for teachers, this would have to be accepted. Several participants felt that too much money is spent on absence cover. A number of groups felt that savings could be achieved at the same time as refreshing the profession if an early retirement scheme were to be introduced to allow older teachers to be replaced by newly

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qualified teachers. There was little opposition to these ideas in the groups where they were discussed. However, ideas of this kind could make only a marginal impact on staffing costs.

Slightly more radical suggestions discussed in a few groups included timetabling schools so that classes are filled close to permitted maxima, removing less popular subjects from the curriculum and discontinuing non-core activities. Some speakers felt that music instruction and/or Gaelic fall into this category but there was no general agreement about what should constitute 'core' or 'non-core'. In much the same way, there was no general agreement about whether there was scope to reduce or abolish the Quality Improvement Team.

Some groups considered that more use might be made of innovative technologies such as GLOW. Distance learning could be used to avoid the cost of providing every kind of teaching expertise in every school. This was thought to be particularly relevant to the provision of minority subjects in secondary schools.

Another suggestion was that savings could be made in the teacher staffing budget by freezing or reducing pay and/or the cost of pensions. Participants understood that these were not measures open to Argyll and Bute Council acting on its own. There was some support for the idea that council representatives should press for action at a national level. In all the groups where this issue was discussed there was also vocal opposition to the idea of teachers (or any other group of staff) bearing to a disproportionate extent the cost of a crisis for which they are not responsible. In addition there were concerns about the impact on staff morale and motivation and the future recruitment of quality teachers.

Property

All groups considered that, in any substantial savings package, a significant contribution should be made by savings in property costs. There were few, if any, participants who wished to rule out entirely the possibility of school closures.

This apparent unanimity of view, however, concealed significant differences in attitude. Some contributors considered that the closure of small schools would be likely to bring worthwhile educational benefits, particularly as a result of broadening the range of teacher expertise available to pupils, facilitating group working and extending children's opportunities for socialising and forming friendships. Introducing Curriculum for Excellence was considered by some to be problematic in small schools. Others considered that the loss of the school would be damaging to communities and were inclined to be sceptical about the educational benefits. Others again took the view that considerations of equity required that the disparity of spending per pupil should be reduced wherever it was practicable to do so.

There was, however, widespread agreement that any closures (or amalgamations as some people preferred to call them) would have to be handled in a sensitive and transparent manner. Consideration would need to be given to factors such as travel time and distance, the impact on the receiving school, population trends in the area, the implications for traffic and roads maintenance and, so far as possible, the effects on communities.

Some groups emphasised that decisions on school closures should only be made on the basis of objective criteria (such as occupancy levels) and sound information. In this connection, some contributors believed that the Council's approach to calculating school capacities needed to be reviewed. Although it was recognised that any closure programme would be likely to focus on small rural schools, some participants felt that the possibility of achieving worthwhile savings through amalgamating larger schools in urban areas should not be neglected.

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Some people saw a closure programme as offering the possibility of reorganising schools in ways that would bring educational advantages. Some support was expressed for extending the joint campus concept. There was also a view that bigger schools could be developed as centres of excellence. Amalgamated schools should be operated efficiently with high levels of occupancy and full use of facilities.

The issue of community use of school facilities provoked a number of comments, some mutually contradictory. Several participants expressed the view that community use should be encouraged in order to increase income while others took the view that community use normally incurred costs that outweighed any income obtained. Some groups discussed the possibility of communities taking a larger role in running of schools. Views ranged from communities undertaking some maintenance of grounds or buildings to communities assuming ownership of school premises and leasing them back to the Council.

Administration and management

Several suggestions were made for making savings in administration and management. These did not include simple reductions in management posts. Some groups, however, felt that there was scope for a reduction in bureaucracy, for example paperwork in connection with inspection and quality assurance.

There was a view that some administrative functions might be outsourced to the private sector. Examples offered ranged from finance services to printing. An alternative view was that back office services might be shared with other organisations.

Some groups considered that savings might be made by seeing the cluster rather than the individual school as the administrative unit. Important resources – both human and material – might be shared among the members of the cluster. Examples included headteachers, janitors, training and administrative functions.

There was also support for the idea of giving headteachers greater control over budgets. Decisions made close to where they would have impact were thought likely to be better considered. There might also be opportunities for making savings through the use of local suppliers and contractors.

Pre-five services

There was some disagreement about the value of pre-school provision. A small minority felt that large savings could be made by discontinuing such services (although this would conflict with the Council's statutory obligations). A much more widespread view was that pre-five services were of great value. Some contributors felt that they should be extended by increasing hours or including younger children.

Participants were uncertain about the relative cost-effectiveness of the Council's own nurseries and the provision made by private sector partners. Some felt that all pre-five services should be outsourced but others took the opposite view. The possibility was raised of locating more provision in school premises.

Miscellaneous

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A number of specific suggestions were made that are difficult to place in any category.

A number of participants felt that energy costs could be reduced, perhaps through the use of alternative sources or with the help of bodies such as the Carbon Trust.

Some speakers considered that the subsidy on school meals should be reduced either by discontinuing the service (contrary to statutory obligations) or by increasing the price.

There was a view that the cost of SQA examinations could be reduced if the parents of pupils who did not attend for the examinations were charged the appropriate fee.

Finally, there was a fairly widespread feeling that the whole Council budget should be reviewed. It was not accepted that all areas of spending are of high priority. Instances offered of low priority expenditure included Oban airport, cycle paths and Gaelic road signs. These examples would not necessarily have been viewed in the same way by all participants.

In conclusion

The consultation attracted participants drawn from across the main groups with an interest in education. Group sessions were generally lively with high levels of engagement.

The opinions expressed do not represent a scientific survey of views across Argyll and Bute. They do, however, offer a genuine sampling of opinion among groups with a keen interest in the subject.

All of the views expressed are clearly worthy of serious attention. However, two issues stand out as having been the focus of the most extensive discussion. Participants attached great importance to the protection – so far as is feasible – of teacher staffing. Equally, there was a very widespread acceptance of the need to make substantial property savings by amalgamating schools.

No other issues featured in the discussions with anything like comparable frequency. This should be borne in mind when considering the following summary.

Summary of main issues

- **Teacher staffing should be protected as far as reasonably possible**
- **Savings should be made in property costs by amalgamating schools**
- The resources of the education service should be raised, possibly by raising Council Tax, possibly by some voluntary scheme
- Consideration should be given to using the assets of the service to generate income
- A redundancy scheme should be introduced to refresh the profession and reduce costs
- Consideration should be given to a pay freeze and reducing pension costs
- Some support functions might be outsourced to the private sector
- Headteachers should have greater control over resources
- Pre-five services are of great value but the relative cost-effectiveness of the council's service and of private providers should be investigated
- Energy costs should be reduced

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- Other areas of the Council's budget should be reviewed and low priority activities should be discontinued.

Keir Bloomer
12.7.10

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES

REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL ESTATE – Amalgamation Proposals**25 NOVEMBER 2010****1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Council, through its Education Service, aims to strive to continuously improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. This can only be achieved if the education budget is sustainable on a long-term basis. A crucial factor in achieving a more sustainable Education Service will be the more efficient operation of the school estate. This report identifies the results of the process initiated by Members in May 2010 for reviewing the sustainability of the school estate. It also recommends Proposals for reducing the scope of the school estate including the educational benefit of proceeding with these Proposals along with efficiencies that could be obtained should the Proposals be taken forward.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members:

1. Note the results of the review of the relative efficiency of the school estate properties as reported in paragraph 4 and Appendix 1 hereof;
2. Note the assessment of feasibility, reported in paragraph 4.7, which was used to generate the Proposals referenced in this document;
3. Agree to instruct the Executive Director of Community Services to take the Proposals provided in Annex 6 of the report entitled *Education Review – Review of the School Estate*, and as listed at Appendix 2 of this report, excluding the proposal to amalgamate Luing and Easdale Primary Schools, to formal statutory consultation in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and in accordance with the methodology set out in the accompanying report, *Review of the School Estate - Consultation Process* and report the findings of the statutory consultation to the Executive; and
4. Agree to delegate power to the Executive Director of Community Services and the Head of Education to procure the services of an independent consultant to support the statutory consultation process in accordance with the accompanying report, *Review of the School Estate - Consultation Process*.

3. BACKGROUND*Argyll and Bute Council's vision for education*

- 3.1 The Council's overall vision for the Education Service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute.
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection.
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity.
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured.

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- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

- 3.2 The council faces the prospect of having to make very substantial savings in all areas of expenditure and all services have been requested to consider how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets. In the case of the Education Service budget, it is intended to undertake a review of all spending in order to identify savings that will contribute to meeting the overall target while minimising the adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. If Education were to achieve the 15% savings required this would equate to some £12m and Education are currently reviewing all aspects of their budget in order to identify this sum.
- 3.3 The Council's School Estate Strategy and Management Plan (SEAS&MP) notes that the condition and suitability of the facilities within which people learn contributes to their success and consequently the Council aims to ensure the buildings and facilities provided effectively contribute to the educational objectives described above and maintain the educational standards across the estate. The SEAS&MP further describes the constraints in which the Council is aiming to achieve its vision for education with requirements to meet the Scottish Government's National Education Priorities in the context of falling budgets and a declining school population.

Justification for the review

- 3.4 Argyll and Bute has 80 primary schools, 10 secondary schools and 1 learning centre, comprised of 74 stand alone primary schools, three 3-18 schools, 5 stand alone secondary schools, 2 joint campuses, 1 stand alone learning centre and 2 stand alone pre-school centres with a total pupil roll of just under 12,000 and over 900 members of staff. Schools range from very small (fewer than 5 pupils) to very large (almost 1,400 pupils). Four islands have their own secondary school; children from other islands travel to the most accessible school, staying in hostels or other arranged accommodation during the school week where necessary. There is one dedicated learning centre catering for pupils with special educational needs, although most are educated in their own community in mainstream schools, reflecting the Council's policy of inclusion.
- 3.5 In terms of ongoing maintenance the 2009/10 expenditure was £882,000 which breaks down into £384,000 for statutory maintenance, £225,000 for emergency repairs and £273,000 for other planned backlog maintenance. As can be seen the funding available for planned revenue maintenance equates to around £3,300 per facility. The current level of spending on on-going maintenance falls significantly below what is required to keep the buildings in their current condition. Unless effective action is taken to reduce the extent of the estate, it will continue to deteriorate.
- 3.6 The Council has some of the poorest and most inefficient school occupancy levels in Scotland. According to the most recent edition of the Scottish Government's schools

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database, 59% of the Council's primary schools have occupancy levels under 50% with a national average of only 20% of primary schools having occupancy levels under 50%. A comparison of Argyll and Bute primary schools with 10 authorities that might also be considered rural shows that the comparator group has only 29% of its primary schools with occupancies below 50%. 70% of the Council's secondary schools have less than 75% occupancy levels compared to a national average of 33% of secondary schools with occupancy levels under 75%.

- 3.7 For Primary and Secondary schools, it is expected that there will be a reduction in the current school age population of around 12% by 2015 and by about 19% by 2020. This decline is likely to affect different parts of Argyll and Bute on a localised basis with some areas suffering a steeper decline than others. This will further decrease the levels of occupancy in schools thereby making the estate more inefficient and less sustainable.
- 3.8 Given the conditions identified above Members tasked the Executive Director of Community Services to review the efficiency of the current school estate and consider how the scope of the estate may require to be reduced to ensure it is operating on a sustainable basis while facilitating the delivery of service to meet the Council's education vision. The Education service have developed the proposals listed in appendix 2 hereof with assistance and information from other Council services.

4 Detailed Proposals*Building Efficiency*

- 4.1 It was reported in May 2010 that the objectives of this Education Review would be to better support the Council's Education vision by:
- delivering a more efficient and sustainable operation of the school estate
 - maximising the proportion of resources that are available for direct delivery of education services.
 - minimising the risk of adverse impacts on education outcomes.

In order to best achieve the objectives, the criteria previously agreed by the Executive to be applied, specified at paragraph 4.2 below, were applied to the schools estate to identify the relative efficiency of the properties.

- 4.2 Council staff took advice from the CIPFA Director of Consultancy regarding the appropriate methodology for applying the criteria to the schools themselves. The criteria to be applied are consistent with CIPFA's *A Guide to Asset Management and Capital Planning in Local Authorities* and are listed below:

1. Cost per pupil – The net cost of the school divided by the school roll;
2. Occupancy levels – The school roll as a percentage of the capacity;
3. Sufficiency – The reported total Gross Internal Floor Area of the school divided by the school roll;
4. Condition – The condition of the school as assessed against the Scottish Governments 'Core Facts' criteria; and
5. Energy use per pupil – The energy use of the school divided by the school roll.

The schools received scores out of 100 for each of the criteria. This was considered

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an objective way of comparing the school buildings and was consistent with the approach recommended by CIPFA. These scores were totalled, reviewed by CIPFA and compared to provide a ranking of the relative efficiency of the schools.

- 4.3 The results are included in the table at Appendix 1. The application of these criteria have enabled to Council to identify which school buildings offer the greater or poorer efficiency in terms of their operation. They also demonstrate a wide range of results between the best performing buildings and those with lower efficiency.

Proposals for altering the school estate

- 4.4 The review of the building efficiency criteria identifies the comparative level of the efficiency / inefficiency in the current scope of the school estate and provides a baseline of information to assess the relevant improvement in overall efficiency of any particular proposal to alter the current scope of the school estate.

- 4.5 When determining whether and / or how the school estate should be reduced the Council requires to comply with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 which determines the process by which local authorities in Scotland may consider altering various aspects of education provision at individual schools. This legislation requires that authorities produce formal documents for each proposal and that these Proposals are formally consulted upon in accordance with a specific requirements and timescale contained in the Act.

- 4.6 The Act specifies matters that require to be addressed by the Council in its Proposal documents in order to comply with the Act. These include:

- Provision of an Education Benefits Statement (EBS) which considers:
 - The impact on different types of users of the schools;
 - Specific educational benefits that will accrue from the Proposal;
 - Financial and budgetary considerations; and
 - Other educational impacts.
- Consideration of the effect of the Proposal on the authority's ability to achieve Best Value and comply with equal opportunity legislation.
- Special provisions for rural schools:
 - Viable alternatives to closure Proposals;
 - Likely effect of the closure on the viability of the local community; and
 - Likely effect on travel and transport arrangements and environmental impact.

- 4.7 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions. A detailed review of the feasibility considerations is included in each of the proposal documents which are attached.

- 4.8 Based on the details above it is considered that the Proposals provided and summarised in Appendix 2, meet the requirements required by the Act and will both

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improve the sustainability of the education budget, the school estate over all as well as achieve specific educational benefits for the school users affected. The Proposals are summarised in Appendix 2 with the full documents provided in Appendix 3 of this document.

- 4.9 It will be noted that it is recommended that the proposal to amalgamate Luing Primary School with Easdale Primary School is removed from the list which was previously considered by the Council on 2 November. The journey time for this school took 49 minutes and this included a 9 minute wait on the ferry. It is considered that if the journey was being undertaken regularly a more seamless journey could be arranged to allow school transport a reserved place on the ferry with transport arrival coinciding with the ferry sailing time to bring it within the 45 minute threshold. However, it is also accepted that under current conditions, when the regular vessel, MV Belnahua, is off for annual refit, a double journey may be necessary with the back up vessel if the number of pupils exceeds twelve. In these instances the travel time would be extended beyond 45 minutes. It is considered that it would not be appropriate to recommend that this proposal is taken forward at this time.
- 4.10 The likely financial impact of each of the Proposals is shown in Appendix 2 and, if all of the Proposals were to be adopted, the likely annual recurring saving to the Council would be around £2m. If the Luing and Easdale proposal is removed the expected saving would be around £1.925m. The methodology for arriving at this impact is described in the accompanying paper, *Review of the School Estate – Financial Impact*.

Review Process – Moving Forward

- 4.11 It is considered that the information contained in the Proposals demonstrates a clear educational benefit and that, over and above this, their implementation would contribute to savings required to be generated by the Education Service and so achieving a more sustainable education budget for the benefit of all school users concerned. It is also considered that the Proposal documents contain the information required by the Act in order to demonstrate that the Council has fully complied with the information requirements of the Act with specific regard to those for Rural Schools as outlined at paragraph 4.6 hereof and assessed the likely implications of closure in each instance.
- 4.12 If Members agree to take these Proposals forward a formal process of consultation will be required complying with the form and timescales included in the 2010 Act. The proposed approach to this consultation process is described in detail in the accompanying report, *Review of the School Estate - Consultation Process*.
- 4.13 The Council has received valuable support in the process to date by obtaining the services of Keir Bloomer as an educational consultant. It was considered that the knowledge and expertise of someone of Mr Bloomer's calibre has been of material benefit to the authority thus far. It is intended that the services of an independent consultant of similar experience to Mr Bloomer will be procured in order to support the statutory consultation process in accordance with the accompanying report, *Review of the School Estate - Consultation Process*. It is intended that this procurement will be contained within the current budgetary allocation and it is recommended that the Council delegate power to the Director of Community Services and the Head of Education to specify and procure the services of an appropriately qualified consultant.

Annex 2

5. Conclusion

5.1 The Council has a clear vision for its Education Service which is based on striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The extent and nature of the current estate, combined with real reductions in the available resources, mean that there is a real risk that the Council's vision will not be achieved. The Proposals to reduce the scope of the school estate which are detailed in this report will make a demonstrable contribution to improving the sustainability of the education service in Argyll and Bute.

6. IMPLICATIONS

<i>Policy:</i>	None at present
<i>Finance:</i>	Identification of a more sustainable school estate
<i>Personnel:</i>	None at present
<i>Legal:</i>	Compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010
<i>Equal Opportunities:</i>	None at present

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director of Community Services

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Annex 2

Appendix 1 - Building Criteria Scores

This table shows the criteria applied to rank the schools with the relevant scoring of criteria and ultimate ranking of Schools in terms of their relative efficiency. The schools are ranked in this table from most inefficient to most efficient. These scores do not determine which school amalgamations should be proposed. Other factors, including educational benefits and feasibility, contribute to the decision as to which proposals should be considered for consultation.

School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use	Total	Rank
Ardchonnell Primary School	0	0	0	0	0	0	78
Skipness Primary School	0	0	0	0	0	0	78
St Kieran's Primary School	0	0	0	0	0	0	78
Ardchattan Primary School	7	0	0	50	0	57	77
Ashfield Primary School	17	32	35	75	15	173	76
Achaleven Primary School	11	27	37	75	44	195	75
Kilchattan Primary School	23	17	33	75	61	209	74
Lismore Primary School	13	28	30	75	68	214	73
Iona Primary School	11	30	30	75	70	216	72
Glenbarr Primary School	18	42	41	75	47	223	71
Innellan Primary School	13	57	43	75	45	234	70
Clachan Primary School	17	52	46	75	59	249	69
Ulva Primary School	17	37	53	75	77	260	68
Kilchrenan Primary School	19	51	64	75	61	271	67
Strath Of Appin Primary	28	61	52	75	62	277	66
Rhunahaorine Primary School	34	56	64	75	49	278	65
Garelochhead Primary School	20	77	41	75	65	278	64
Furnace Primary School	24	65	53	75	66	283	63
Tighnabruaich Primary School	31	66	59	75	55	285	62
Minard Primary School	24	55	54	75	78	286	61
Small Isles Primary School	22	56	56	75	80	289	60
Carradale Primary School	21	71	56	75	66	290	59
Tiree Primary School	38	73	60	50	71	293	58
Lochdonhead Primary School	22	57	68	75	78	300	57
Kilmodan Primary School	27	66	64	75	71	302	56
Easdale Primary School	34	75	71	50	75	305	55
Dunoon Primary School	39	80	63	50	78	310	54
Kirn Primary School	41	84	60	50	80	314	53
Rosneath Primary School	38	77	66	50	84	315	52
Strone Primary School	28	70	70	75	73	315	51
Inveraray Primary School	49	73	65	75	54	316	50
Drumlemble Primary School	27	72	68	75	76	317	49
Port Ellen Primary School	34	76	62	75	70	317	48
Kilcreggan Primary School	34	75	68	75	65	318	47
Dalmally Primary School	25	74	71	75	75	319	46
Dervaig Primary School	25	64	74	75	82	319	45
Achahoish Primary School	29	60	53	100	78	320	44

Annex 2

School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use	Total	Rank
Southend Primary School	28	69	69	75	80	321	43
Luing Primary School	40	68	71	75	70	323	42
Toward Primary School	26	66	74	75	85	326	41
Glassary Primary School	29	68	77	75	79	327	40
Tarbert Academy Primar	46	84	51	75	72	327	39
Gigha Primary School	31	63	75	75	85	328	38
Keills Primary School	46	67	69	75	73	330	37
Strachur Primary School	47	78	76	50	80	330	36
North Bute Primary School	36	79	84	50	85	334	35
Luss Primary School	39	63	79	75	86	342	34
Arrochar Primary School	54	76	64	75	74	343	33
Bunessan Primary School	49	76	79	50	89	344	32
Salen Primary School	34	74	79	75	83	345	31
Cardross Primary School	53	86	84	50	80	353	30
Dalintober Primary School	43	81	71	75	84	354	29
Lochgailhead Primary School	44	69	75	75	91	355	28
Castlehill Primary School	40	82	74	75	85	356	27
Port Charlotte Primary School	41	77	76	75	87	357	26
Tobermory Primary School	43	83	71	75	85	357	25
Kilniver Primary School	44	72	84	75	82	357	24
St Joseph's Primary School	36	82	77	75	88	358	23
Arinagour Primary School	58	69	73	75	84	360	22
Sandbank Primary School	46	79	78	75	84	361	21
Kilmartin Primary School	55	76	73	75	84	362	20
St Columba's Primary School	34	78	75	100	81	367	19
John Logie Baird Primary School	49	82	77	75	85	368	18
Rothesay Primary School	39	83	68	100	79	369	17
Lochnell Primary School	42	80	84	75	89	369	16
St Andrew's Primary School	45	83	83	75	83	369	15
Dunbeg Primary School	54	80	80	75	84	373	14
St Mun's Primary School	52	83	80	75	84	374	13
Bowmore Primary School	57	77	79	75	87	376	12
Tayvallich Primary School	47	75	86	75	92	376	11
Craignish Primary School	53	71	85	75	92	376	10
Colgrain Primary School	56	84	78	75	86	378	9
Lochgilphead Primary School	49	85	73	100	76	383	8
Hermitage Primary School	54	86	82	75	87	385	7
Park Primary School	62	84	83	75	82	386	6
Ardrihaig Primary School	56	82	85	75	89	387	5
Rockfield Primary School	43	84	78	100	84	388	4
Taynuilt Primary School	68	81	86	75	91	401	3
Rhu Primary School	68	86	88	75	94	411	2
Barcaldine Primary School	100	78	93	50	94	414	1

Annex 2

Appendix 2 – Summary list of Proposals

Proposal	Receiving School	Amalgamating Schools	Estimated Recurring Annual Saving (£)
1	Port Charlotte	Keills	39,401
2	Dervaig	Ulva	46,553
3	Salen	Lochdonhead	87,311
4	Rothesay	North Bute	-11,312*
5	Easdale	Luing	53,081
6	Innellan	Toward	91,352
7	Strachur / Tighnabruaich	Kilmodan	126,835
8	Hermitage Primary	Luss	61,108
9	Garelochhead	Rosneath, Kilcreggan	290,053
10	Hermitage Academy / John Logie Baird	Parklands	255,486
11	Drumlemble	Southend	94,918
12	Sandbank	Strone	102,982
13	Castlehill	St Kieran's	185,689
14	Lochnell	Ardchattan, Achaleven, Barcaldine	163,213
15	Taynuilt	Kilchrenan	27,603
16	Dalmally / Kilmartin	Ardchonnell	0
17	Clachan	Skipness, Rhunahaorine, Glenbarr	258,187
18	Tayvallich	Ashfield	65,928
19	Ardrishaig	Achahoish	7,994
20	Lochgilphead	Glassary, Minard	31,871
	Total		1,978,232

* The Council's School Estate Strategy and Asset Management Plan has noted that North Bute Primary is in a level C (poor) condition. It would require at least £450,000 of additional capital works to improve the current condition and prevent further deterioration. The Council would require to borrow this sum in order to effect the renovations and the loan repayments would be likely to cost the Council some £35,000 per annum over a period of 20 years. This would result in a likely net recurring annual saving to the Council of around £24,000.

Nb. If the proposal to amalgamate Luing and Easdale is removed from the above as per the recommendation in the report entitled *Education Review – Review of the School Estate*, the expected saving would be reduced by £53,081 to £1,925,151.

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**ANNEX 3
Argyll and Bute Council**

Community Services: Education

Education Provision

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: OCTOBER 2010

Review of Education Provision

**at
Primary Schools**

Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of
Primary Schools**

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site:
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A copy of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Council of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE
- Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- The Executive Director of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council , Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal

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Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

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ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.
- 1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:
- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
 - To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection.
 - To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
 - To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
 - To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all the young people in Argyll and Bute
 - Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate manner as possible
 - Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
 - Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for excellence*.
- 1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

- 2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:
- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population
 - The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
 - Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils

- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand Changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5,816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 Whilst the roll of Primary has slightly increased, the rolls of and schools have seen a decline over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %
2005/06	61	97%	13	23%	20	83%	79	45%
2006-07	52	83%	10	18%	23	96%	80	45%
2007-08	54	86%	12	21%	22	92%	92	52%
2008-09	39	62%	10	18%	21	88%	92	52%
2009-10	27	43%	9	16%	23	96%	87	49%
2010-11	9	14%	5	9%	30	125%	92	52%
2011-12	13	21%	3	5%	21	88%	91	51%

has suffered a decrease of 76% in roll over this period. 's expected occupancy rates for 2011/12 will be below 50%.

The Scope of the School Estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case

of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.

- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over the next three years. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.
- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the

financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the Proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Primary School, Primary School and Primary School would be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Primary School, Primary School and Primary School continue their education Primary School from 16 August 2011.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment area of Primary School, Primary School and Primary School as shown on the attached plan.
- 3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
 - Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
 - Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.
- 3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
	14.3	16,213	31	B	7,580
	8.8	22,202	49	C	13,620
	100.0	4,947	4	C	869
	52.0	8,241	8	B	1,487
Post	76.8%	4,157	5	B	1,006

Amalgamation				
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- 3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

- 3.6 The distance from Primary School to Primary School is 3.5 miles and the journey time would be around 15 minutes. The distance from Primary School to Primary School is 9.5 miles and the journey time would be around 20 minutes. The distance from Primary School to Primary School is 4.5 miles and the journey time would be around 15 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.7 The capacity for Primary School is 117 and the number of children to come from Primary School is 13, from Primary School is 3 and from Primary School is 21 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1	16
P1/2	18 = 6 + 12
P2/3	22 = 7 + 15
P3/4	15 = 6 + 9
P5	24
P6	17
P7	16
Total Roll	128
Total Number of classes	7
Classrooms Available	5 classrooms and 2 teaching bays

- 3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

- 4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer

a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

- 4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

- 4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.
- 4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be made with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.
- 4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.
- 4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:
- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
 - Greater flexibility in grouping learners
 - Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for excellence*
 - Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for excellence*
 - A wider range of staff expertise
 - Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
 - Increased management capacity.

4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:

- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
- Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. These include Co-operative Learning, Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC), and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll, opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and, indeed, effective sharing of standards is problematic
- *Curriculum for excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum
- *Curriculum for excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups.

There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted

- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

- 4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in the above paragraph and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and Future pupils

- 4.9 Any educational effects would be positive. The management arrangements of the school would be strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies. The proposal would increase the roll of Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities.
- 4.10 , and Primary Schools face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that cannot be overcome. These may include limited peer interaction, limited access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction.
- 4.11 Pupils who would otherwise have attended at Primary School, Primary School and Primary School would benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above.

- 4.12 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at Primary School would be the same as or better than at Primary School, Primary School and Primary School .
- 4.13 All of the school considered in this proposal have existing links with at least another school in the proposal. Access to sporting, cultural and residential experiences are currently organised through cooperative working arrangements with other schools in the area. For example, Primary School and Primary School pupils attend an annual residential outdoor week. Pupils from Primary School and Primary School join with other schools in their Cooperative to undertake sporting activities in Oban on a regular basis. There are logistical and financial implications associated with this way of working. As a result of the proposed change a larger, more flexible peer group will be created within which children would prepare for and reflect on experiences.
- 4.14 Staff at Primary School, Primary School and Primary School have worked with colleagues from other small schools to compensate for the lack of professional development opportunities. This proposal would provide opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development. Pupils from Primary School, Primary School and Primary School will benefit from the combined expertise of a larger staff team.

Pre-school Users

- 4.15 Local authorities have a duty to secure a free, part time pre-school education place for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.16 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.17 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and access provision, closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.18 There is currently no pre-school provision in Primary School, Primary School and Primary School. Many of the children who might fall within the catchment areas of these primary Schools access the provision which exists at Primary School. *Curriculum for excellence* places particular emphasis on outcomes and approaches shared across pre five to primary transition. Argyll and Bute Council currently promotes joint working at early years. Under this proposal, children attending pre-school provision at Primary School will benefit from joint working arrangements within the school which will improve continuity and progress in their learning.

Gaelic Learners

- 4.19 Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS) is not currently offered in any of the schools in this proposal so there would be no effect if the proposals were implemented.

Placing Requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.21 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools will benefit substantially from the implementation of this and other proposals that the Council is advancing. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future throughout the County, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other Users of the facility

- 4.23 Primary School has had 8 community lets during the period 2009 – 2010 which were all evening meetings of the Community Council. However, none of the schools included in this proposal had any community use during the 5 years prior to this.
- 4.24 The current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. There are currently village halls available for community use in and. The village hall in is about ten minutes distance from .

Financial Impact

- 4.25 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.26 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	657,835	440,640	217,195
Property Costs	83,365	47,472	35,893
Supplies, Services and Travel	103,646	103,646	0
Income	-26,439	-26,439	0
Additional Transport		22,390	-22,390
Reduction in small schools grant		67,485	-67,485
Total	818,407	655,195	163,213

The anticipated saving shown above represents some 40% of the total annual budget for operating , and Primary Schools at present.

5 Specific Provisions for Rural Schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Primary School and Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to either of these two schools. Such an approach would create added logistical problems such as transport difficulties, and would not achieve worthwhile savings. This would not significantly improve the viability of the school estate. It would not be possible to increase the roll of Primary School by closing another school as it is almost at capacity
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for

increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

- 5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

- 5.4 Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.
- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 37 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 7.4 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to decline. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls
- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The maximum travel time for a child attending Primary School as a result of this proposal would be 20 minutes
- The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.
- The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new pick up and drop of points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.

- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 15 road traffic accidents. Of these only 3 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.
- 5.11 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.12 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below;

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO₂)	(kg of CO₂)	(kg of CO₂)	kg	%
	37,113	0	4,372	32,741	88%
	26,299	0	10,368	15,931	61%
	14,178	0	11,242	2,936	21%
	74,438	74,438	0	0	0%
Total	152,028	74,438	25,982	51,608	34%

6 Equal Opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIA's consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME(black and minority ethnic community)

Disability

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the "reasonable adjustments duty". The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is not considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends XX Primary School

Gender

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is not considered that in terms of gender, this proposal will not have an adverse impact on any child who attends XX Primary School

Sexual orientation

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is not considered that this proposal will not have an adverse impact on any child who attends XX Primary School, relating to their sexuality

Belief

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is not considered that in terms of belief, this proposal will not have an adverse impact on any child who attends XX Primary School

Age

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is not considered that in terms of age, this proposal will not have an adverse impact on any child who attends XX Primary School

Race

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is not considered that this proposal will have no negative impact on any child, whatever their ethnic background or nationality, who attends XX Primary School

Conclusion

We do not believe that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other Impacts

Asset Management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Whether or not these proposals are accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be

transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.

- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 Staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation Arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on *25 November 2010* when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 A copy 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. www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from *13 December 2010* when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on *24 February 2011* which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held on *[insert details of time, date and place]* Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written or oral comments which should be sent to *Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education*

Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.

- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than *21 March 2011* In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the schools, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across

the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.

- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
October 2010

For further information contact: Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director, Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8RT.
Telephone 01546 60 4168

**Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education**

RESPONSE FORM

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

Proposal

Education provision at , and Primary Schools be discontinued with effect from **the beginning of the October holiday period 2011**; and

Further that the pupils of , and Primary Schools continue their education at Primary School **the first school day following the October holiday period 2011** as detailed in Option 5 of the Proposal Document and that the delineated area of Primary School be extended to incorporate the delineated area of , and Primary Schools.

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"/>
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Elected Member / MSP / MP

Member of Community Council

*Other: (please specify)

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

Office Use:

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES****COUNCIL****REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL ESTATE – Financial impact****25 NOVEMBER 2010****1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Council's review of the school estate required to identify ways in which the estate could become more sustainable into the future. The proposals that are described in the accompanying reports, if adopted, should result in savings being made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing its long term sustainability. This report describes the likely savings and the process by which they were identified.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of the report

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 The Education service requires to identify savings in order to contribute to the Council's overall target of generating recurring budget efficiencies of approximately £30m between 2010/11 and 2012/13. The review of the school estate is intended to contribute to this process by identifying ways in which the estate can become more efficient and therefore cost the Council less to operate. The proposals for amalgamating schools which have been provided with the accompanying reports identify opportunities for recurring savings and this report shows how these can be achieved if the proposals are adopted.
- 3.2 Whilst it is important to ensure that the immediate savings target can be met in line with the Council's programme of service reviews, the review also identifies the long term impact that the amalgamation proposals would have in terms of recurring savings to the Council. The process of identifying these efficiencies is described in the attached Appendix 1.
- 3.3 If all of the proposals were to be adopted as currently stated, it is considered that annual recurring savings of around £2m could be achieved (see Appendix 2) from the end of the October holiday period 2011. Whilst it can be seen from this document that the majority of savings identified would derive from reductions in property costs and some small reductions in the number of teaching staff, the Council would continue to meet its statutory and Concordat commitments with regards to maximum class sizes. It should also be noted that the savings identified could amount to some 17% of the sum which Education are required to identify as part of the review and takes into consideration additional transportation costs associated with the proposed school amalgamations.
- 3.4 It should be noted that the savings in years 1-3 would be expected to be lower than in later years as there would be likely to be short term costs associated with maintaining the surplus buildings and restructuring the schools staffing arrangements resulting from the proposals. The assumptions used to arrive at the estimates of these costs are included in Appendix 1.

Annex 4

- 3.5 The Council receives additional Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) from the Scottish Government to contribute to the costs associated with operating schools with rolls under 70 in rural areas. This additional sum currently totals around £2.6m and any reduction in the number of pupils attending these small schools would decrease the grant the Council receives. Based on current estimates and assumptions it is likely that the Council would lose a total of £0.374m of small schools GAE from the Scottish Government if these proposals are adopted.
- 3.6 It should be noted that the GAE grant the Council receives, including that which covers small rural schools, will shortly be set for the next three years (2011/12 to 2013/14). As such, if the proposals were to be introduced for the 2011/12 academic year, the reductions in GAE should not be reflected in the Council's grant allocation until 2014/15 financial year. However, in order to provide the most prudent assessment of potential savings the figures identified in Appendix 2 are stated after consideration has been given to the GAE reduction and all continue to demonstrate a positive likely saving in revenue costs despite the reduction in grant.
- 3.7 In order to compare the savings with the current position over the longer term it is considered good practice to express these savings in terms of a 'Net Present Value' or NPV. This takes the value of cash payments and income over a specified period of time and converts them into a common valuation (ie. the value right now). Based on current estimates and assumptions, the NPV of the total savings to the Council of taking forward these proposals could be some £45.1m over a period of 30 years.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Council has a clear vision for its Education Service which is based on striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The current Education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. The review of the school estate has identified proposals which should be able to secure savings for the Council and a more sustainable estate into the future.

6. IMPLICATIONS

<i>Policy:</i>	None at present
<i>Finance:</i>	Potential savings to the current schools budget
<i>Personnel:</i>	None at present
<i>Legal:</i>	None at present
<i>Equal Opportunities:</i>	None at present

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director of Community Services

For further information please contact:
Carol Walker
Head of Education, 01631 564 908

Annex 4**Appendix 1: Financial Appraisal Process**

Financial models have been drawn up which compare the costs of the schools to the expected available budget over an extended period of time. The models encompass a 'Continue as we are' option, which assumes that the current estate continues to be operated in its current scope, and an alternative which encompasses the amalgamation proposals. This was achieved by comparing the expected costs of operating the Council schools over a 30 year period with the costs likely to be incurred over this same period should an amalgamation process take place.

The models are based on a format used for recent Community Services reviews and have been prepared in consultation with Strategic Finance and the Director of Consultancy at CIPFA.

The models derive, firstly, from the budget information included in the Council's general ledger system for 2010/11. As such, the model has been constructed to ensure that all expenditure headings for the schools, as identified in the 2010/11 budget, are captured by the review:

Account Area	Primary	Secondary	Special Needs	Pre 5	Total
Employee Costs	£20.729m	£24.366m	£0.423m	£1.698m	£47.216m
Premises	£2.804m	£1.696m	£0.083m	£0.643m	£5.226m
Supplies and Services	£3.040m	£2.360m	£0.054m	£0.121m	£5.575m
Transport Related	£0.002m	0	0	£0.001m	£0.003m
Third Party Payments	£0.363m	£2.099m	0	0	£2.462m
Gross Total	£26.938m	£30.521	£0.560m	£2.463m	£60.482m
Income	-£0.898m	-£0.865m	-£0.006m	-£0.045m	-£1.814m
Net Total	£26.040m	£29.656m	£0.554m	£2.418m	£58.668m

Detailed Assumptions

The financial models estimate whether the cash costs to continue the service as presently configured, and any options to alter this configuration, can be accommodated within the Council's expected budget in each year under review. If the costs of the option exceed the expected budget in any year there will be a 'gap' that will require additional funding sources to be identified to meet that gap.

General Assumptions

1. The models for both options cover a project period of 30 years. This accords with analysis of similar projects within the Council and creates a comparable period between options.
2. All costs and revenues are stated in 'nominal' terms. This means that as these models measure cash costs to the Council the figures require to be subjected to annual inflation. The long term annual inflation rate is assumed generally to be 2.5% which is a common measure used in other similar projects. Inflation of

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Council budgets in the short term is based upon the current financial settlement and is likely to be lower than the long term rate of inflation.

3. Anticipated Council 'departmental administration' costs and recharges between schools, are excluded from the models. It is assumed that these costs will be incurred by the Council regardless of which option is selected.
4. The cash impact of capital payments made to refurbish the school estate is reflected in the model. In order to assist comparability between cost inputs the capital costs have been converted into revenue payments which support the borrowing made to finance the capital expenditure (ie. Loan and Lease Charges).
5. Capital Costs (Depreciation and capital charges) are excluded from the review as they are considered accounting entries rather than cash costs to the Council and should not affect the terms of the review.

Assumptions for options to alter the school estate

1. The recurring annual savings to the Council that should accrue from the amalgamation process have been calculated on a 'proposal by proposal' basis. This means that the contribution to the overall savings figure for each proposal can be ascertained.
2. In order to arrive at the savings figure all of the budget lines of each school in each proposal were reviewed in detail to determine what effect the proposal would have on those budgets. Any changes to the budget lines for each school included in the proposal were then taken forward into the amalgamated budget position.
3. The general approach taken to the review of each of the school budget lines was as described in the table below. Any specific calculations which were undertaken are referenced in the table.

Budget Heading	Approach
Basic - Staff	Calculation (Para 4&5)
Basic - Teachers	Calculation (Para 6)
Basic - Daily Rate Teachers	100% of all schools in the Proposal
NIC - Staff	Calculation (Para 4&5)
NIC - Teachers	Calculation (Para 6)
NIC - Daily Rate Teachers	100% of all schools in the Proposal
Superannuation - Staff	Calculation (Para 4&5)
Superannuation - Teachers	Calculation (Para 6)
Superannuation - Daily Rate Teachers	100% of all schools in the Proposal
Other Pay Items - Staff	100% of all schools in the Proposal
Management Development & Training - In Service	100% of all schools in the Proposal
Staff Insurance	100% of all schools in the Proposal
Public Liability Insurance	100% of all schools in the Proposal

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Budget Heading	Approach
Staff Group Life Assurance	100% of all schools in the Proposal
Grounds Maintenance	Receiving school budget only
Electricity for Properties	Receiving school budget only
Heating Oils	Receiving school budget only
Non-Domestic Rates	Receiving school budget only
Water Rates	Receiving school budget only
Water by Meter	Receiving school budget only
Janitor Services	Receiving school budget only
Refuse Collection	Receiving school budget only
Cleaning Trading Account	Receiving school budget only
Property Insurance Premium	Receiving school budget only
Education Equipment	100% of all schools in the Proposal
Milk	100% of all schools in the Proposal
Prepared Meals	100% of all schools in the Proposal
Commercial Refuse	Receiving school budget only
Use of P.E. Facilities	100% of all schools in the Proposal
Telephone Calls - BT One Bill Charged	100% of all schools in the Proposal
Cost Centre Review Savings	100% of all schools in the Proposal
Essential Users Lump Sum	100% of all schools in the Proposal
Catering Sales	100% of all schools in the Proposal
AEF Specific Grants (as per Finance Circular)	100% of all schools in the Proposal

Non Teaching Staffing (Clerical Staff)

4. The number of clerical staff Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff required in the amalgamated facility was calculated using a staffing formula which is currently used by Education:

A fixed number of hours, which increases by 2.5 hours per 25 pupils and starts at 20 hours, plus a variable of 0.085 hours per pupil. For example:

A school with 20 pupils would receive $20 + (0.085 \times 20) = 21.7$ per week,

The totals above are multiplied by the number of teaching weeks in the year.

Where the total number of clerical staff required for the amalgamated facility exceeded the current staff complement, it was assumed that the current arrangements would continue in place.

The required clerical staff FTE was then applied to the posts currently in place. For those existing posts that might not be required after amalgamation the staff costs were excluded from the cost of the amalgamated facilities.

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Non Teaching Staff (Classroom Assistants, Pupil Support Assistants, Gaelic Language Assistants and Auxiliaries)

5. These posts are currently under review by the Education Service. As such, no change to the number of these posts was made as part of the review of the school estate. This is an area of potential additional saving.

Teaching Staff Costs (including Gaelic medium teaching)

6. Teaching staff numbers required for the schools in each proposal were based upon the number of classes required in each amalgamated school. The required FTE was then adjusted for the additional staff required to cover senior management time based on Education Management Circular 2.03 and as per the table below:

Staff Heading	Requirement
Core Teaching Staff	Equals number of classes required
McCrone Time	0.1 FTE per core staff member
PT Provision	1 for every 6 staff members
PT Management Time	0.1 FTE per PT
DHT Provision	1 for every primary with 220+ pupils
DHT Management Time	0.3 FTE for every DHT
HT Management Time	Receiving school HT / Management Circular 2.03
Pre 5 Management	Based on combined mgt time of previous all schools to be amalgamated
Additional Staffing (inc. Mgt of probationers)	Mgt time of previous all schools to be amalgamated removed
Clerical Staff	A fixed number of hours, which increases by 2.5 hours per 25 pupils and starts at 20 hours, plus a variable of 0.085 hours per pupil.
Classroom Assistants (inc. Pupil Support and Gaelic Language)	Assumed to carry on as per pre amalgamation as no formal basis for allocation.

Costs for primary teaching staff have been extracted from the Primary staff template from Strategic Finance which supports the 2010/11 budget.

7. Costs for primary non-teaching staff have been extracted from the appropriate Primary staff template from Strategic Finance which supports the 2010/11 budget.
8. The total teaching staff FTE required was then applied to the posts currently in place. The required number of teachers, Gaelic language teachers, Principal Teachers, Depute Head Teachers and Head Teachers were identified from the current staff complement where possible. If additional specific posts were required under the proposal (eg. Additional Principal Teachers) then the closest alternative from the existing staff complement was included for the purposes of the review. For those existing posts that might not be required after amalgamation the staff costs were excluded from the cost of the amalgamated facilities and a saving identified.

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Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) for small rural schools

9. The Council receives additional GAE for rural schools based on the proportion of its primary pupils who attend schools with a roll under 70. The grant is based on a reallocation of the general schools grant from authorities with few pupils in this category to those with more pupils. The exact rate of reallocation is related to each authority's number of pupils in this category compared to the average across Scotland.
10. As this is a relative measure which will change as the numbers of pupils in other authorities changes it is not possible to precisely identify the impact of the reduction in the GAE. However, by assuming that the current proportions of pupils in each authority who are in rural schools of under 70 pupils remains unchanged the Council have been able to derive an estimate of the likely effect and this has been reflected in the potential savings identified in each proposal.

Additional costs of amalgamation

The additional costs associated with an amalgamation option were also considered:

- a. Travel costs - Travel costs were estimated as the cost of the additional journeys required beyond the existing provision and were based on the additional journey distances from the old school to the receiving school taking into account the likely bus routes which would be required. The additional costs of these arrangements are shown in Appendix 2.
 - b. Redundancy – Standard Circular 2.18 indicates there is a presumption against the compulsory redundancy of any teaching staff. The models make a prudent assumption as to what the costs might theoretically be if statutory redundancy terms were to be applied if schools were to be amalgamated. The costs are estimated to be £585,000 in total should the proposals be adopted although this figure would depend on the staff and terms involved.
 - c. Costs of closure, including ongoing maintenance/security until disposal, are estimated based on similar surplus schools in the Council's possession. These costs are estimated to amount to an average of around £130,000 per year (plus removal costs) for the first three years of the review but would be dependent on the process and timescale for deciding on the future of the buildings.
 - d. GAE allowance for security of Schools – the Council is allocated an amount of GAE in respect of the security arrangements for all schools. These proposals will result in an estimated annual reduction in this GAE allowance of approximately £40,000.00.
11. The total running costs of the new amalgamated cluster, adding in the costs of closure, were compared with the costs of continuing as we are and the potential savings are shown at Appendix 2.

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Appendix 2: Summary of Potential Annual Recurring Savings

Receiving School	Amalgamating Schools	Potential Staff Savings	Potential Property Savings	Extra Travel Costs	GAE Reduction	Net Annual Saving
		£	£	£	£	£
Port Charlotte	Keills	65,030	21,871	-47,500	0	39,401
Dervaig	Ulva	53,265	8,288	-15,000	0	46,553
Salen	Lochdonhead	100,981	12,170	-25,840	0	87,311
Rothesay	North Bute	89,987	26,073	-38,000	-89,372	-11,312*
Easdale	Luing	56,322	9,299	-12,540	0	53,081
Innellan	Toward	85,632	11,220	-5,500	0	91,352
Strachur / Tighnabruaich	Kilmodan	138,234	11,675	-23,074	0	126,835
Hermitage Primary	Luss	85,921	27,365	-15,700	-36,478	61,108
Garelohead	Rosneath, Kilcreggan	213,147	162,906	-86,000	0	290,053
Hermitage Academy / John Logie Baird	Parklands	172,856	82,609	0	0	255,465
Drumlemble	Southend	88,921	14,866	-8,869	0	94,918
Sandbank	Strone	136,046	48,069	-10,000	-71,133	102,982
Castlehill	St Kieran's	161,873	23,816	0	0	185,689
Lochnell	Ardchattan, Achaleven, Barcaldine	217,195	35,893	-22,390	-67,485	163,213
Taynuilt	Kilchrenan	52,652	9,771	-12,933	-21,887	27,603
Dalmally / Kilmartin	Ardchonnell	0	0	0	0	0
Clachan	Skipness, Rhunahaorine, Glenbarr	245,807	39,410	-27,030	0	258,187
Tayvallich	Ashfield	63,701	16,227	-14,000	0	65,928
Ardrishaig	Achahoish	44,278	12,723	-18,000	-31,007	7,994
Lochgilphead	Glassary, Minard	104,705	22,588	-38,880	-56,542	31,871
Total		2,176,553	596,839	-421,256	-373,904	1,978,232

* The Council's School Estate Strategy and Asset Management Plan has noted that North Bute Primary School is in a level C (poor) condition. It would require at least £450,000 of additional capital works to improve the current condition and prevent further deterioration. The Council would require to borrow this sum in order to effect the renovations and the loan repayments would be likely to cost the Council some £35,000 per annum over a period of 20 years. This would result in a likely net recurring annual saving to the Council of around £24,000.

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Nb. If the proposal to amalgamate Luing and Easdale is removed from the above as per the recommendation in the report entitled Education Review – Review of the School Estate, the expected saving would be reduced by £53,081 to £1,925,151.

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****COMMUNITY SERVICES****REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL ESTATE –
CONSULTATION PROCESS****25 November 2010**

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to bring forward for consideration by Members the details of the consultation approach that will be taken by Education in relation to the School Estates Strategy.
- 1.2 Before Councils can consider any school closure they must adhere to statutory guidance and to this end Argyll & Bute Council in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 must carry out the following:-
- 1) Publish a proposal paper ensuring that the educational benefits are at the heart of the proposal.
 - 2) Set a consultation period of at least 6 weeks of term time.
 - 3) Let parents and the parent council know about the consultation and invite responses.
 - 4) Consult with young people by involving them and ensuring that they have an opportunity to have their say.
 - 5) Consult with staff members from all schools involved in the proposal.
 - 6) Hold a public meeting.
 - 7) Invite Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) to prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal.
 - 8) Publish a consultation report.
 - 9) As our schools are all rural then we must demonstrate that we have considered all viable alternatives and assessed the likely community implications of closure before we have even proposed closing any of our schools.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Council is asked to agree the consultation approach as outlined in Section 3 of this report.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 It is proposed that the public consultation period will commence on 13 December 2010 and end on 25 February 2011. We will adopt a robust and transparent framework for the consultation process actively involving all our stakeholders and this will take place via a number of routes:-
- (1) Consultation summary papers will be issued to a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties.

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- (2) Notices will be placed in all local press, libraries and places of interest.
- (3) Public meetings will be held for each proposal and these will be open to all interested parties including pupils, staff, parent councils, community groups and anyone else with an interest in the proposal.
- (4) HMIE will be asked to prepare a report on the educational aspects of each proposal.
- (5) Questionnaires will be distributed to get feedback from staff, pupils and other interested parties.
- (6) Meetings will be arranged with staff from all establishments concerned.
- (7) Meetings will be arranged with all pupil councils from all establishments concerned.
- (8) A dedicated webpage will be established where all proposal papers, correspondence and other documentation relating to the consultation process can be posted and viewed.
- (9) There will be a comment sheet available at all meetings and on the website for people to air their views.
- (10) A consultation report will be issued after the end of the consultation period.

4. LOGISTICS

4.1 Once the proposal papers have been approved by the Council to go ahead with the consultation then the following steps will be implemented:-

- (1) Meetings will be held with all head teachers of the establishments concerned and copies of the consultation papers issued. They will then roll out the information to ALL staff within their establishments including cleaning, janitorial and catering staff. Consultation papers will also be issued to all chair persons of the concerned parent councils along with local members.
- (2) A press release will be prepared for each area concerned giving an overview of what is proposed and giving details of where public meetings will be held. An advert will be taken out in local press, giving at least 10 days notice, to state where and when the public meetings will be held. A list of all local libraries and other community buildings will be established so that the press release can be distributed accordingly.
- (3) A let will be taken out for a given night at each hosting school and a public meeting held. It is envisaged that these meetings will be chaired by an independent person (ie not an Argyll & Bute employee) and should last

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approximately two hours. The meetings will be open to anyone with an interest in the school from parents, staff, parent councils, community groups etc and an accurate Minute taken by two members of staff. The Executive Director of Community Services or Head of Service for Education or her representative, along with other education specialists, will be in attendance at each meeting to take questions and give any information required. A record of each meeting will be published on the consultation page of the website.

- (4) Letters shall be prepared and sent to HMIE asking them to prepare a report on the educational aspects of each of the proposals that is being submitted. A representative from HMIE may well attend the various public meetings also.
- (5) Questionnaires are being made up to get an accurate overview of the opinions of all stakeholders and these will be issued. A letter will be issued to all parents, staff and pupils informing them of the situation pertaining to their school and a questionnaire will accompany this letter. The letters will be sent out on the first day of the consultation process in order to let all stakeholders have the full consultation period and it will be important to have the documentation prepared centrally and issued in plenty of time for the schools to issue on the same day.
- (6) The authority meeting with staff will take place in the same venue and on the same day as the public meetings for each proposal but straight after the school day outwith the public meeting so that staff can put forward their views freely. These meetings will also be minuted and recorded as part of the consultation process.
- (7) Pupil councils at each of the schools involved in the school estates strategy will be met in their school by an educational representative on the same day as the public meeting will be held in their cluster.
- (8) Elected members may want to have representation from Education at Area Meetings to go over the proposals put forward for their Wards. This will be dealt with as and when a request comes in but the dates of the Area Committees will be noted in advance so that diary space is available. Should an elected member wish to discuss a proposal then this will be addressed.
- (9) A section within the education website will be dedicated to the consultation process with links to this from the main council website. There will be a dedicated person responsible for feeding all the information on to this site and ensuring that the information is updated. It is anticipated that there will be a FAQ section for people to get answers quickly. A comment sheet that is easy to complete will be available within this section for anyone should they wish to make comment.
- (10) All minutes, questionnaires, comment sheets, objections etc will be compiled by education and available at the end of the consultation period.

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5. An indicative timescale for the full statutory process required to comply with the terms of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 is:

- 6 December 2010 – Publish proposals and provide notice to all relevant consultees
- 13 December 2010 – Commencement of statutory consultation period in terms of the Act (this proposal provides in excess of the statutory six week period and takes into account in service days where certain schools are closed throughout the authority)
- 24 February 2011 – End of consultation period
- 10 March 2011– Forward to HMIE copies of the Proposals, record of written and oral submissions from consultation process and other relevant documents
- 7 April 2011 – HMIE submit their report to the Council on all Proposals
- 28 April 2011 – Council publishes the Consultation Report. Consultation Report addresses written and oral representations made during the consultation and matters raised in the HMIE report
- 19 May 2011 – Authority can make formal decision to accept or reject proposals. 6 week period commences to allow representations to the Scottish Government (3 weeks) and for the Government to decide whether to call in the Proposals or not (3 weeks).
- 30 June 2011 – Period for representations to the Scottish Government and possibility of call-in by the Scottish Government ends. Council can now implement any decisions taken with regard to the Proposals.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The consultation process would only be necessary should agreement be given to go ahead with the various proposal documents.

7. IMPLICATIONS

<i>Policy:</i>	None at present
<i>Finance:</i>	None at present
<i>Personnel:</i>	None at present
<i>Legal:</i>	None at present
<i>Equal Opportunities:</i>	None at present

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
September 2010

For further information contact:
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ANNEX 6**List of Proposals**

Proposal	Receiving School	Amalgamating Schools	Council Pack Page Number
1	Port Charlotte	Keills	91
2	Dervaig	Ulva	117
3	Salen	Lochdonhead	141
4	Rothesay	North Bute	167
5	Easdale	Luing	193
6	Innellan	Toward	219
7	Strachur / Tighnabruaich	Kilmodan	245
8	Hermitage Primary	Luss	275
9	Garelochhead	Rosneath, Kilcreggan	299
10	Hermitage Academy / John Logie Baird	Parklands	327
11	Drumlemble	Southend	347
12	Sandbank	Strone	373
13	Castlehill	St Kieran's	399
14	Lochnell	Ardchattan, Achaleven, Barcaldine	425
15	Taynuilt	Kilchrenan	451
16	Dalmally / Kilmartin	Ardchonnell	477
17	Clachan	Skipness, Rhunahaorine, Glenbarr	501
18	Tayvallich	Ashfield	527
19	Ardrishaig	Achahoish	553
20	Lochgilphead	Glassary, Minard	579

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School routes driven by staff over the period 3/11/10 – 16/11/10

Current school pupil lists, including Pre 5 pupils who will attend Primary School next year, were supplied by the Education Service for all merger proposals.

Ordnance Survey maps were printed for each route.

Pupil home addresses were marked on each map.

Routes were driven from the furthest entitled pupil address to the receiving school by two members of staff on dates between 3/11/10 and 16/11/10.

Instructions were given to stop for 30 seconds at each home address, simulating a pick up on the school run.

Each vehicle was fitted with a telematics system in order to record the exercise.

Notes

- **In all cases drivers were unfamiliar with the routes. It has been noted from the telematics system that some vehicles were driven at speeds very much slower than would normally be expected whilst staff identified addresses marked on the maps. A driver undertaking the routes regularly would not experience these difficulties, so it is expected that times would be reduced.**
- **30 seconds is an accepted pick up time used in timetabling for pupils boarding and belting up on a school run. This may vary if there is a large group of children at a particular stop.**
- **Although the vehicles in this exercise stopped at every home address, it may be that a safe pick up point, of no more than two miles from a home address, and incorporating a safe walking route, would be designated for use on a school run. Designated pick up points would reduce the travel time in some cases.**
- **Some of the routes were travelled in areas where there was no signal for the telematics system. Drivers stopped at all pick up points but this was not recorded in the few cases where the signal was lost. This did not affect the distance and time taken being recorded, from which the average journey speed could be calculated.**
- **Drivers on some routes travelled along farm roads and forestry roads to home addresses which would not form part of the main school transport route. In these instances additional link transport would be provided, and an explanation has been added to the route detail of this document if this is the case. The journey times of affected routes have been amended to disregard the off road time and distance.**

Achahoish – Ardrishaig

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 10.2 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Ardrishaig PS, including diversion via Ormsary and Lothead Farm, is 16.1 miles calculated using Autoroute software

Total journey time from furthest address to Ardrishaig PS using existing public bus service times is **39 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session.
- The route was driven on 3/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 23.4mph

The journey took **38 minutes 31 seconds**

Achaleven - Lochnell

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools 3.6 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Lochnell PS 6.9 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Journey time from furthest address to Achnacloich Road end (0.6miles) driven at 25mph estimated to be 2 minutes
- Journey time from Achnacloich Road end to Lochnell School using existing public bus service times is 14 minutes.

Estimated total journey time **16 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 5/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 28.9mph

The journey took **20 minutes**

Ardchattan - Lochnell

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 8.3 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Lochnell PS 15.4 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Journey time from furthest entitled pupil address to Lochnell School using existing public bus service times is 32 minutes

Estimated total journey time **32 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session.
- The route was driven on 5/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 28.9mph

The journey took **22 minutes**

Ashfield – Tayvallich

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 9 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Tayvallich PS 15.7 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Estimated time of journey from furthest pupil address to Achnamara (6.8 miles) driven at 30mph is 14 minutes
- Journey time from Achnamara to Tayvallich using existing public bus service times is 28 minutes

Total journey time from furthest address to Tayvallich PS estimated as **42 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session.
- The route was driven on 3/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 27.1mph

The journey took **35 minutes**

NB – Separate transport from an off road address above Letterdaill, Cairnbaan directly to Tayvallich would be a necessary provision. The journey time for this route, taken from the telematics tracking system is 28 minutes 30 seconds. This journey is currently carried out in a separate car to Ashfield School, so would not incur extra cost travelling to Tayvallich.

Barcaldine – Lochnell

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools 4.5 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Lochnell PS is 4.5 miles calculated using Autoroute software

Total journey time from furthest address to Lochnell PS estimated as **9 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 5/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 24.4mph

The journey took **15 minutes**

Glassary – Lochgilphead

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 5.2 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Lochgilphead Joint Campus is 8.1 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Estimated time from furthest address to Glassary (2.9 miles) at 25mph is 7 minutes
- Journey time from Glassary to Lochgilphead Joint Campus using existing public service times is 17 minutes

Total estimated journey time from furthest address to Lochgilphead Joint Campus is **24 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 3/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 26.9mph

The journey took **29 minutes**.

Glenbarr and Rhunahaorine – Clachan

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between furthest schools is 13.7 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil address to Clachan PS is 18.6 miles calculated using Autoroute software

Total journey time from furthest address to Clachan PS by existing public bus service times **39 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 3/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 28.15mph

The journey took **36 minutes**.

NB. It should be noted that in addition to this route there is an off road address which is 2.8 miles from the main route. This route was driven and took 7 minutes each way. Alternative transportation would be deployed for this child to ensure he/she was at the pick up point at Glenbarr for the rest of the journey. This child's journey time in total would be 36 minutes. The cost of this transport would be approximately £37.00 per day x 190 days = £7030 per annum

Keills – Port Charlotte

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools 14.5 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Port Charlotte PS 15.6 miles calculated using Autoroute software

Total journey time from furthest address to Port Charlotte PS by existing public bus service times is **36 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session.
- The route was driven on 12/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 29.3mph

The journey took **37 minutes**

Kilchrenan– Taynuilt

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools 6.7 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Taynuilt PS is 15 miles calculated using Autoroute software

Total journey time from furthest address to Taynuilt PS by existing public bus service times is **42 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 5/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 26.2mph

The journey took **39 minutes**

Kilcreggan and Rosneath – Garelochhead

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools via Rosneath 9.3 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Garelochhead PS is 13.6 miles calculated using Autoroute software

Total journey time from furthest address to Garelochhead PS via Rosneath by existing public bus service times is **28 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 9/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 16.53mph

The journey took **45 minutes**

Kilmodan – Strachur

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 15.1 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Strachur PS is 17.4 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Journey time from furthest entitled pupil address to Dunans using existing public service times 14 minutes
- Estimated journey time from Dunans to Strachur PS (9.5 miles) driven at 35 mph is 16 minutes

Total journey time from furthest address to Strachur PS is **30 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 5/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 36 mph

The journey took **21 minutes**

Kilmodan - Tighnabruaich

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 8.9 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Tighnabruaich PS is 17.1 miles calculated using Autoroute software

Total journey time from furthest address to Tighnabruaich PS using existing public bus service times is **41 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session.
- The route was driven on 5/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 13.3mph

The journey took **41 minutes**

Lochdonhead – Salen

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 13.6 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil address to Salen PS, is 24.6 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Estimated journey time for Lochbuie to Lochbuie crossroads(7.4 miles) at 30 mph is 15 minutes
- Journey from Lochbuie crossroads to Salen PS using existing public bus service times is 24 minutes

Total journey time from furthest address to Salen PS using existing public bus service times **39 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session.
- The route was driven on 4/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 36 mph

The journey took **42 minutes**

NB In addition it should be noted that a pupil address is off road by 2.2 miles. Additional transport for this route would be arranged in order that the pupil could meet the transport from Lochbuie to Salen. The journey time for this pupil according to the telematic system would be 39 minutes and as he is currently being transported on this off road route there would be no extra cost

Luing – Easdale

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 5.7 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Easdale PS is 9.2 miles calculated using Autoroute software.
- Estimated time for journey from furthest entitled pupil address to South Cuan via Cullipool, on existing Post Bus Service is 23 minutes
- Ferry Crossing is 10 minutes
- North Cuan to Easdale PS using existing public service time is 8 minutes

Total journey time from furthest address to Easdale PS by existing public bus service times and including ferry time is **41 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session.
- The route was driven on 8/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 15.2mph

The journey took **49 minutes – which included 9 minute wait on the ferry.**

NB If the journey was being undertaken regularly it has been confirmed that a more seamless journey could be arranged to allow school transport a reserved place on the ferry with transport arrival coinciding with the ferry sailing time. However, it is also accepted that under current conditions, when the Belnahua is off for annual refit, a double journey may be necessary with the back up vessel if the number of pupils exceeds twelve. In these instances the travel time would be extended beyond 45 minutes.

Luss – Hermitage PS

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 9.2 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Hermitage PS is 15 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Estimated journey time from furthest pupil address to Luss (5.8 miles) at 25 mph is 14 minutes
- Journey time from Luss to Hermitage PS using existing public service times is 20 minutes

Total journey time from furthest address to Hermitage PS is **34 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 8/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 25.57mph

The journey took **41 minutes**

Minard – Lochgilphead

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 12.2 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Lochgilphead Joint Campus is 13.4 miles calculated using Autoroute software

Total journey time from furthest address to Lochgilphead Joint Campus using existing public bus service times is **26 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 4/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 33.9mph

The journey took **25 minutes**

North Bute – Rothesay Joint Campus

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools 3.3 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Rothesay Joint Campus is 7.4 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Estimated journey time from furthest entitled pupil address to Ettrick Bay (1.8 miles) at 25mph is 4 minutes
- Journey time from Ettrick Bay to Rothesay Joint Campus using existing public service bus times is 25 minutes

Total journey time from furthest address to Rothesay Joint Campus **29 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 5/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 20mph

The journey took **37 minutes**

Parklands – John Logie Baird

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 0.9 miles calculated using Autoroute software

This is estimated to add 3 minutes to the existing school transport times.

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map
- The route was driven on 5/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 16.39mph

The journey took **22 minutes**

Parklands – Hermitage Academy

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 1.5 miles calculated using Autoroute software

This is estimated to add 5 minutes to the existing school transport times

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map
- The route was driven on 5/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 21.42mph

The journey took **34 minutes**

Skipness – Clachan

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 12.4 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Clachan PS is 11.8 miles calculated using Autoroute software.
- Estimated journey time from furthest entitled pupil address to Claonaig (1.7 miles) at 27 mph is 4 minutes
- Journey time from Claonaig to Clachan using existing public service times is 23 minutes

Total journey time from furthest address to Clachan PS using existing public bus service times is **27 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 3/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 33.2mph

The journey took **18 minutes**.

Southend - Drumlemble

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 8.8 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Drumlemble PS is 12 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Estimated journey time from furthest entitled pupil address to Southend (3.5 miles) at 27 mph is 8 minutes
- Journey time from Southend to Drumlemble using existing public service times is 20 minutes

Total journey time from furthest address to Drumlemble PS is **28 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 3/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 26.9mph

The journey took **38 minutes**

Strone– Sandbank

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 6 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Sandbank PS is 11.1 miles calculated using Autoroute software

Total journey time from furthest address to Sandbank PS using existing public bus service times is **31 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 16/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 24.4mph
- The vehicle travelled via Dunselma Court.

The journey took **34 minutes**

Toward – Innellan

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 2.9 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Innellan PS, is 9.4 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Estimated time for journey from furthest entitled pupil address to Castle Toward (5.2 miles) at 27 mph is 12 minutes
- Journey time for Castle Toward to Innellan via Toward Lighthouse, using existing public service bus times 11 minutes

Total journey time from furthest address to Innellan PS is **23 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 5/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 23.4mph

The journey took **35 minutes**

Ulva – Dervaig

Desktop exercise

- Mileage between schools is 16.9 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Mileage from furthest entitled pupil's address to Dervaig PS is 17.9 miles calculated using Autoroute software
- Estimated

Total estimated journey time from furthest address to Dervaig PS at an average speed of 27mph is **40 minutes**

Confirmation exercise

- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre 5 children due to commence school next session..
- The route was driven on 4/11/10 by two members of staff.
- A stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The journey was recorded on the telematics tracking system fitted in the vehicle, demonstrating that the average journey speed was 24mph

The journey took **43 minutes**

NB It should be noted that this is the long route, avoiding the inland road which can become snowbound in winter.

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Annex 8

Calculation of GAE for Argyll and Bute Council - Briefing

1. Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) is not a cash grant to the Council nor is it a direct grant to schools. It is not a target or budget for Councils to spend against or use in allocating resources. GAE is a method for calculating each Council's proportion of the local government finance settlement. GAE allocations are based on each Council's proportion of the GAE indicators compared to all other councils. These proportions are used to allocate a previously agreed fixed amount of GAE. The changes in any one council indicators affect all of the other councils as it changes the proportion of the total. As an example a Council's GAE indicators may increase but if they increase at a lower rate than other Councils then it will still suffer a reduction in GAE. GAE is not a tariff or price list where there is a fixed amount of GAE per indicator.
2. There is an adjustment to the GAE for primary school teaching staff. This adjustment reallocates GAE based on the proportion of pupils in schools with a pupil population of less than 70 in rural areas.
3. For 2010-11 the net additional GAE that was allocated to the Council through the secondary indicator for primary school teaching staff was £2.644m.
4. The secondary indicator element of GAE effectively comprises two parts. The first is a contribution into a pot for redistribution which amounts to a reduction in GAE calculated by the primary indicator of 5.25%. In the case of Argyll and Bute Council this amounts to £0.755m.
5. The second element is a share of that redistribution pot based on the percentage of pupils in small rural schools. In the case of Argyll and Bute Council for 2010-11 the percentage of pupils in small rural schools was 21.8% and this led to an allocation from the redistribution pot of £3.399m. The net effect of both elements is the secondary indicator GAE effect of £2.644m (that being a contribution to the redistribution pot of £0.755m and an allocation from the redistribution pot of £3.399m).
6. The financial impact paper simply states the net effect on GAE for the Council. The Council is aware of both elements and has modelled the GAE reductions in the financial impact paper at Annex 4, Appendix 2 to take account of both elements.

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision

**Port Charlotte and
Keills Primary Schools**

Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of
Port Charlotte and Keills Primary Schools**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Keills Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Keills Primary School continue their education at Port Charlotte Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Port Charlotte Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Keills Primary School

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE

- Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- The Executive Director of Community Services , Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal

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 of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT

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Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection.
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population

- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5,816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The roll of Keills Primary School has seen a decline whilst the roll of Port Charlotte Primary School has remained largely static as the following table demonstrates:

	Keills		Port Charlotte	
	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%
2005-06	36	86	49	49
2006-07	36	86	40	40
2007-08	32	76	41	41
2008-09	27	64	47	48
2009-10	27	64	53	54
2010-11	24	57	51	52
2011-12	23	55	49	49

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over the next three years. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.

- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Keills Primary School will be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that pupils from Keills Primary School continue their education at Port Charlotte Primary School from 16 August 2011.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Port Charlotte Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment area of Keills Primary School as shown on the attached plan.
- 3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
 - Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance

- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m ² /pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Keills	57.1	7,291	15	B	3,701
Port Charlotte	51.5	5,097	12	B	1,719
Post Amalgamation	75.8%	4,641	8	B	1,169

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

3.6 The distance from Keills Primary School to Port Charlotte Primary School is 14 miles and the journey time would be around 35 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the two various locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.

3.7 The capacity for Port Charlotte Primary School is 99 and the number of children to come from Keills Primary School is 23 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).

3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition – Port Charlotte Primary School
P1/2	15
P3/4	24
P5/7	33 (with two teachers)
Total Roll	72
Total Number of classes	3 classes

3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.

4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be estimated with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.

4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.

- 4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:
- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children.
 - Greater flexibility in grouping learners
 - Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - A wider range of staff expertise
 - Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
 - Increased management capacity.
- 4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:
- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
 - Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include Co-operative Learning, Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC), and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic
 - *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their

learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum

- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

- 4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in paragraph 4.6 and 4.7 and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.9 As the school buildings can accommodate the increased roll there will be no loss of facilities.

- 4.10 Any educational effects are likely to be positive. The management arrangements of the school will be strengthened and there will be further opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies, for example active learning and co-operative learning. The opportunities for leadership for learning by all staff will be enhanced due to the larger and more varied pool of staff available. Opportunities for professional dialogue in order to develop and improve the curriculum will be increased. The larger school created by the combined rolls may be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities.
- 4.11 Keills Primary School faces a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that cannot be overcome. These may include limited peer interaction, limited access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction. This proposal would have a positive and beneficial effect in addressing these difficulties. On occasions expensive equipment and resources can be purchased by an area for use throughout all the schools in that area. The benefits of this to pupils will be increased due to the reduced number of schools.
- 4.12 Pupils at both Port Charlotte Primary School and Keills Primary School will benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above. The opportunity to further develop the transition arrangements to Islay High School, including visits to primaries and visits into the High School will be easier to facilitate as there will be one establishment instead of two.
- 4.13 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at the receiving school will be the same as or better than those at Keills Primary School. Port Charlotte Primary School is equipped with a personal care facilities suite for pupils with additional needs.
- 4.14 Access to sporting, cultural and residential experiences are currently organised through cooperative working arrangements with other schools on the island. These arrangements would continue with the added benefit of larger peer groups within which pupils can prepare for and reflect on experiences. Logistics for shared events would be simplified and expenses for transportation to events / locations be reduced. The fundraising potential of the combined school will be increased due to the larger parental and community catchment area.
- 4.15 Pupils from both schools would benefit from the combined expertise of a larger staff team. This includes expertise in pre-five education and in Gaelic language. With a greater pupil roll, the available time for

leadership and management would be increased, thus enabling curricular change and innovation to progress fully and effectively for all pupils.

Pre-school users

- 4.16 Local authorities have a duty to secure a free, part time pre-school education place for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.17 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The breakdown of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 Commissioned.
- 4.18 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead they access provision, closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.19 The current pre-school provision offered in Keills Primary School would continue to be offered in Port Charlotte Primary School.

Gaelic

- 4.20 Gaelic Learner Education is available in both schools and will continue to be available in Port Charlotte Primary School as from January 2011.

Placing requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.22 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools would benefit substantially from the implementation of this proposal and others included in the Council's current programme of school estate rationalisation. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal will benefit all pupils, present and future throughout the county, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.23 There were no community lets in Keills Primary between 2005/06 and 2009/10. The current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. There is a village hall in Ballygrant, 2 miles from Keills which is available for community use.
- 4.24 Port Charlotte Primary School experiences some community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.25 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires Education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings being which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.26 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	324,052	259,022	65,030
Property Costs	59,380	37,509	21,871
Supplies, Services and Travel	63,946	63,946	0
Income	-12,436	-12,436	0
Additional Transport		47,500	-47,500
Reduction in small schools grant		0	0
Total	434,942	395,541	39,401

- 4.27 The Education Service project that, within 3 years, the roll of the amalgamated school would be expected to fall below 70. As such, it is anticipated that there will be no reduction in small schools grant resulting from this proposal.

5 Specific provision for rural schools

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil rolls of Keills Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing other schools and transferring the pupils to either of these two schools. Such an approach would create added logistic problems such as transport difficulties, and would not achieve worthwhile savings. This would not significantly improve the viability of the school estate
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

5.4 There were no community lets in Keills Primary in Session 2009/2010. Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.

- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 50 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years, with 46 of these occurring in the Port Charlotte area. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have not altered materially. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls.
- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. There is a village hall in Ballygrant, 2 miles from Keills and this is available for community use.
- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross.
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point
 - The maximum travel time for a child attending Port Charlotte Primary School as a result of this proposal would be around 37 minutes
 - The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes
 - The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop

Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.

- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 31 road traffic accidents. Of these only 11 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.
- 5.11 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.12 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below;

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
Keills	30,877	0	9,327	21,550	70%
Port Charlotte	47,683	47,683	0	0	0%
Total	78,559	47,683	9,327	21,550	27%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.

- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Port Charlotte Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the "reasonable adjustments duty". The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Keills Primary School.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Should these proposals be accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 The staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be

informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.

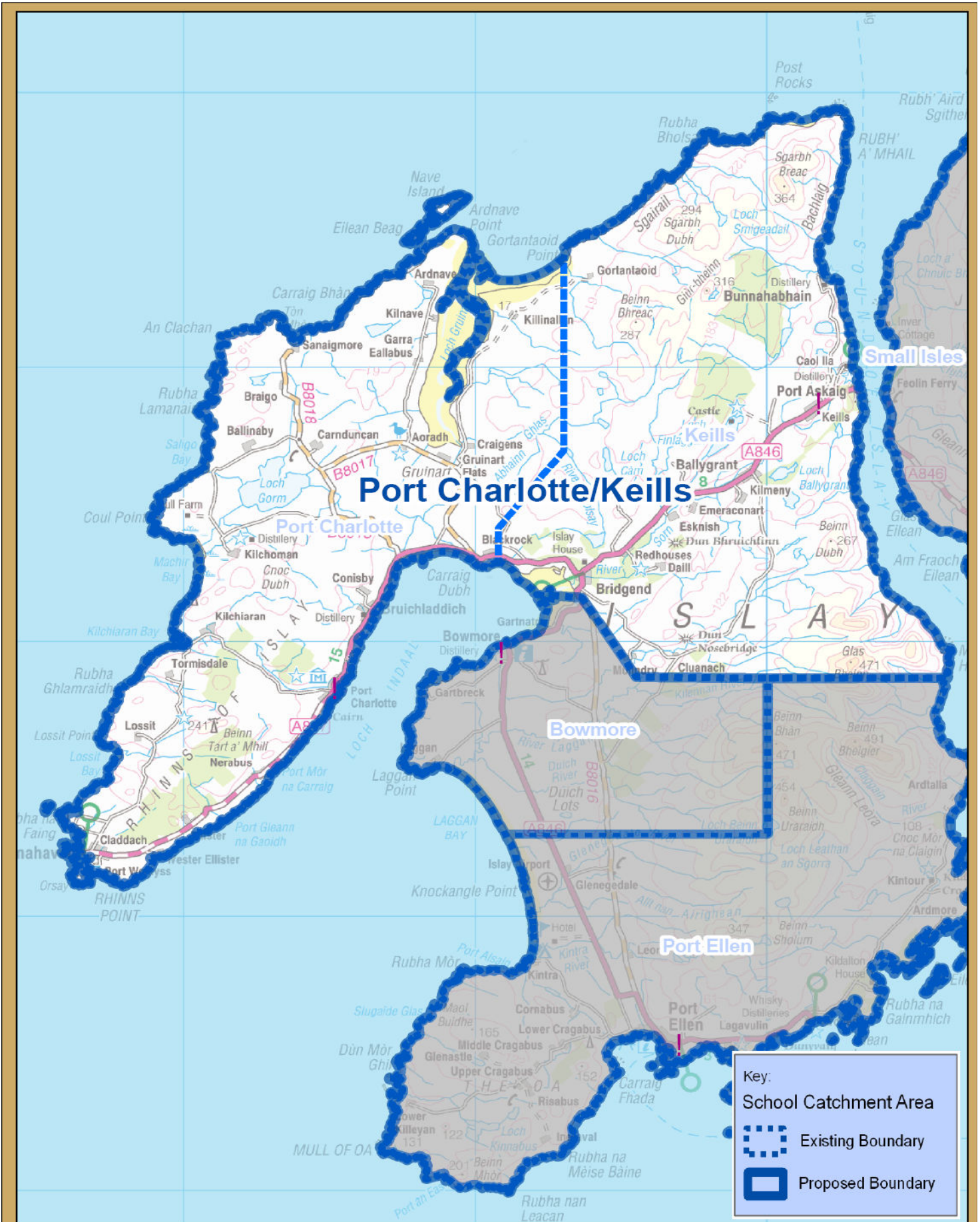
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the schools, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

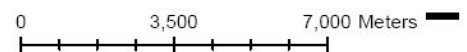
Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010

For further information contact: Carol Walker, Head of Education, Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council, Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone 01369 708508



School Catchment Proposals 2010

Port Charlotte/Keills



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APPENDIX

**Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education**

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 Keills Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Keills Primary School continue their education at Port Charlotte Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Port Charlotte Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Keills 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)			

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision
Dervaig and Ulva Primary Schools

Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of Dervaig Primary School
and Ulva Primary School**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Ulva Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Ulva Primary School continue their education at Dervaig Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Dervaig Primary Department shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ulva Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

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A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE
- The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)

- Argyll and Bute Councillors

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- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal.

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यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

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یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the Education Service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection.
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all the young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population
- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils

- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 – 2033:

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have remained steady over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Ulva		Dervaig	
	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %
2005/06	8	24%	9	17%
2006-07	8	24%	12	23%
2007-08	8	24%	12	23%
2008-09	7	21%	16	31%
2009-10	4	12%	16	31%
2010-11	7	21%	16	31%
2011-12	7	21%	18	35%

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.

- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.
- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others

reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Ulva Primary School will be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Ulva Primary School continue their education at Dervaig Primary School from 16 August 2011.

3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Dervaig Primary School will be extended to include the current catchment of Ulva Primary School as shown on the attached plan.

3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:

- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
- Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11, are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m ² /pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Dervaig	30.8	8,098	13	B	2,423
Ulva	21.2	13,924	23	B	3,120
Post Amalgamation	44.2	7,180	9	B	1,686

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there was any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations:

- 3.6 The distance from Ulva Primary School to Dervaig Primary School is approximately 9 miles and the journey time would be around 30 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.7 The capacity for Dervaig Primary School is 52 and the number of children to come from Ulva Primary is 7 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Dervaig Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1 - 3	13
P4- 7	12
Total Roll	25
Total Number of classes	2

- 3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

- 4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.
- 4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

- 4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality

can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.

4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be estimated with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.

4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.

4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:

- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
- Greater flexibility in grouping learners
- Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
- Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
- A wider range of staff expertise
- Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
- Increased management capacity.

4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:

- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged.
- Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include Co-operative Learning, Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC), and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a

vital role. In schools with a small roll, opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and, indeed, effective sharing of standards is problematic.

- *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which would be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum.
- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available.
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are very limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in larger schools and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in the above paragraph and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.9 There would be positive educational benefits associated with this proposal. The management arrangements of the school would be strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies. The proposal would increase the roll of Dervaig Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities. At present school meals are not available for pupils attending Ulva Primary School. Under this proposal, pupils from Ulva would be able to access school meals.
- 4.10 Ulva Primary School faces a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that cannot be overcome. These include limited peer interaction and limited access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction. This proposal would have a positive and beneficial effect in addressing these difficulties.
- 4.11 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Ulva Primary School would benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above.
- 4.12 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at Dervaig Primary School would be the same as Ulva Primary School.
- 4.13 There are links already in existence between Ulva Primary School and Dervaig Primary School. Ulva Primary School pupils work with pupils from Dervaig Primary School on a regular basis on a range of activities, including the Forest Schools programme, PE and expressive arts. As a result of the proposed change, a larger, more flexible peer group would be created with whom children currently attending Ulva Primary Schools would have daily contact. This would lead to more opportunities for cooperative and collaborative working as described in 4.7 above. There would be more flexibility in how classes are arranged, with the opportunity of two classes to be formed on a regular basis. This would mean pupils working with others closer to their age and stage. A wider range of community and outdoor learning environments will be available on a daily basis to pupils from Ulva attending school in Dervaig. This would include access to the village hall, West Ardhru Forest and the built environment in the local village.
- 4.14 Strong links exist between Ulva Primary School and other schools on the island of Mull, with regular participation in a range of joint activities. This is evidenced, for example, by the annual Mull schools sports day, an annual residential visit for senior pupils and various joint themed learning events. These arrangements would continue with the added benefit of larger peer groups within which pupils

can prepare for and reflect on experiences. Logistics for shared events would be simplified. Where a larger P7 peer group exists, transition to secondary will be easier for some pupils.

- 4.15 Staff from Ulva Primary School staff have worked with staff from other schools in the area on professional development activities. Staff from Ulva Primary School have recently joined with staff from other schools to form a Teacher Learning Community (TLC). This compensates for the lack of professional development opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development but brings logistic problems in particular with regard to travel and timetabling of meetings. Pupils from Ulva Primary School would benefit from the combined expertise of a team of staff, who are more regularly able to reflect on learning and teaching.

Pre-school users

- 4.16 Local authorities have a duty to secure free, part time pre-school education places for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.17 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break-down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.18 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and they instead access provision, closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.19 There is no pre-school provision currently available in either school and provision would continue through the current arrangements.

Gaelic

- 4.20 Gaelic provision will continue to be provided at Dervaig Primary School.

Placing requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.22 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools would benefit substantially from the implementation of this proposal and other proposals. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well

as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future throughout the county, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.23 During the period from 2005/06 to 2009/10 the schools included in this proposal were used on the following number of occasions for community use. This is in addition to school based activities such as parents' evenings and school events.

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Activities
Ulva	9	8	7	9	7	Lunch Clubs / Community Council / Woodland Club
Dervaig	0	0	0	0		

- 4.24 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. This includes community facilities in Dervaig which is some 9 miles away and Salen which is approximately 10 miles away.
- 4.25 Dervaig Primary School experiences no community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.26 The Council has a clear vision for its Education Service which is based on striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current Education review requires Education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings being which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the Education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.27 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	184,518	131,253	53,265
Property Costs	17,249	8,962	8,288
Supplies, Services and Travel	27,703	27,703	0

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
Income	-2,780	-2,780	0
Additional Transport		15,000	-15,000
Reduction in small schools grant		0	0
Total	226,691	180,138	46,553

4.28 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 36% of the total annual budget for operating Ulva Primary School at present.

5 Specific provisions for rural schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with small rolls.
- Create a more sustainable estate.
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint head teacherships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Ulva Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to Ulva Primary School. This would not be feasible due to insufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any of the other schools in the area and would not significantly improve the viability of the school estate
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support

and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

- 5.4 There has been some community use of Ulva Primary School in recent years and the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal if that was considered appropriate.
- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 20 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 4 per year. During this period the number of children at the schools affected by this proposal has not altered significantly. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. The amalgamated school is likely to have an occupancy level under 50% and should the proposal be adopted it is expected that any increases in school rolls could be accommodated from existing capacity.
- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. These would include the village hall in Dervaig which is available for community use.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point
 - The maximum travel time for a child attending Dervaig Primary School as a result of this proposal would be around 43 minutes
 - The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.

- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 6 road traffic accidents and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.
- 5.11 The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.
- 5.12 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.13 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below:

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
Dervaig	21,090	21,090	0	0	0%
Ulva	11,880	0	4,997	6,884	58%
Total	32,971	21,090	4,997	6,884	21%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are

avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.

- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Dervaig Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the "reasonable adjustments duty". The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Ulva Primary School.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council

to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Whether or not these proposals are accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating the following action would be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate would be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales would be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents would also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 Staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the school, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they

may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6-week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010

For further information contact: Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number 01369 708508.



School Catchment Proposals 2010
Dervaig/Ulva

0 2,100 4,200 Meters

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APPENDIX

**Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education**

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 Ulva Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Ulva Primary School continue their education at Dervaig Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Dervaig Primary Department shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ulva 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)			

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

**Review of Education Provision Salen and
Lochdonhead Primary School**

Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of Salen and Lochdonhead
Primary Schools**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Lochdonhead Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Lochdonhead Primary School continue their education at Salen Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Salen Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Lochdonhead Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue

- HMIE
- The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.
- 1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:
- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
 - To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection
 - To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
 - To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
 - To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all young people in Argyll and Bute
 - Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate a manner as possible
 - Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
 - Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- 1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

- 2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:
- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population.
 - The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high.
 - Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the

resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils.

- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate.
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.

- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the Council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 Whilst the roll of Lochdonhead Primary has increased slightly, Salen Primary has seen a decline over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Lochdonhead		Salen	
	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %
2005/06	11	21%	62	46%
2006-07	11	21%	62	46%
2007-08	12	23%	58	43%
2008-09	12	23%	52	39%
2009-10	13	25%	55	41%
2010-11	14	27%	58	43%
2011-12	17	33%	59	44%

In both of these schools the expected occupancy rates for 2011/12 is anticipated to be below 50%.

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.

- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.
- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education.

These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of schools with small rolls would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Lochdonhead Primary School will be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Lochdonhead Primary School continue their education at Salen Primary School from 16 August 2011.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Salen Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment area of Lochdonhead Primary as shown on attached plan.
- 3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
 - Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance.
 - Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.
- 3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m ² /pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Lochdonhead	26.9	9,446	16	B	3,025
Salen	43.0	5,818	10	B	2,354

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Post Amalgamation	53.3%	4,951	8	B	1,896

- 3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

- 3.6 The distance from Lochdonhead Primary School to Salen Primary School is approximately 14 miles and the journey time would be around 25 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.7 The capacity of Salen Primary School is 135. The number of children to come from Lochdonhead Primary School is 17 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Salen Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1/2	13
P3/4/5	17
P6/7	16
Total Roll	46 + 30 GMU
Total Number of classes	3

- 3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

- 4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability.

- 4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

- 4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.
- 4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be made with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.
- 4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.
- 4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:
- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
 - Greater flexibility in grouping learners
 - Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - A wider range of staff expertise
 - Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
 - Increased management capacity.
- 4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties as detailed above in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:

- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
- Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include *Co-operative Learning*, *Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC)*, and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital roll. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of Assessment is for Learning and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in Building the Curriculum 5. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and, indeed, effective sharing of standards is problematic
- *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum
- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted

- The management resources of schools with a small roll are very limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
 - Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.
- 4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in the above paragraph and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.9 There would be positive educational benefits associated with this proposal. The management arrangements of the school will be strengthened and there will be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies. The proposal will increase the roll of Salen Primary School and will thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school may be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities.
- 4.10 Lochdonhead Primary School faces some difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that are difficult to overcome. These include limited peer interaction, limited access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7. Whilst the introduction of modern technology can help to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction.
- 4.11 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Lochdonhead Primary School will benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above.
- 4.12 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at Salen Primary School will be the same as or better than at Lochdonhead Primary School.

- 4.13 Salen Primary has the more extensive kitchen facility, with 2 cooks. Pupils in the combined school will access these facilities.
- 4.14 There is a flexible hall space in Salen Primary which is used regularly for sports, drama and school assemblies.
- 4.15 There are links already in existence between Lochdonhead Primary School and Salen Primary School, with the two schools participating in a range of activities with other schools on the island of Mull. As a result of the proposed change, a larger, more flexible peer group would be created with whom children currently attending Lochdonhead Primary School would have daily contact. Access to sporting, cultural and residential experiences are currently organised through cooperative working arrangements with other schools on the island. These arrangements would continue with the added benefit of larger peer groups within which pupils can prepare for and reflect on experiences. Logistics for shared events would be simplified.
- 4.16 Staff at Lochdonhead Primary School have worked with colleagues from other small schools to compensate for the lack of professional development opportunities. This proposal would provide opportunities within one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development. Pupils from Lochdonhead Primary School will benefit from the combined expertise of a larger staff team. This includes expertise in pre-five education and in Gaelic language.

Pre-school users

- 4.17 Local authorities have a duty to secure a free, part time pre-school education place for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.18 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The breakdown of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 Commissioned.
- 4.19 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and they instead access provision where additional care can be provided.
- 4.20 There is currently no pre-school provision in Lochdonhead Primary School, and children can currently access the provision that exists at Salen Primary School. *Curriculum for Excellence* places particular emphasis on outcomes and approaches shared across pre five to primary transition. Argyll and Bute Council currently promotes joint working at early years. Under this proposal, children from the Lochdonhead catchment area attending pre-five provision at Salen Primary School will benefit from joint working arrangements within the school which they will attend. This will improve continuity and progress in their learning.

Gaelic

- 4.21 Gaelic medium learners on the island of Mull attend the Gaelic Unit in Salen Primary School. Provision for Gaelic learners will be through the GLPS programme which will run in Salen Primary School and will be unaffected by the proposal.

Placing Requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.23 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools would benefit substantially from the implementation of this proposal and other proposals. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future throughout the County, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.24 During the period from 2005/06 to 2008/09 the schools included in this proposal were used on the following number of occasions for community use. This is in addition to school based activities such as parents' evenings and school events.

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Activities
Lochdonhead	0	0	0	0	
Salen	14	58	73	38	Badminton / Scottish Dancing / Circuit Training

- 4.25 The current levels of community use at Lochdonhead Primary School do not indicate that the school fulfil a particular need within the community. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. This includes a village hall in the nearby village of Craignure, some 3 miles from Lochdonhead Primary School, and this is available for community use.
- 4.26 Salen Primary School experiences some community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.27 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.28 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	375,208	274,227	100,981
Property Costs	60,445	48,276	12,170
Supplies, Services and Travel	60,719	60,719	0
Income	-26,716	-26,716	0
Additional Transport		19,344	-19,344
Reduction in small schools grant		0	0
Total	469,657	375,850	93,807

- 4.29 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 71% of the total annual budget for operating Lochdonhead Primary School at present. The Education Service project that, within 3 years, the roll of the amalgamated school would be expected to fall below 70. As such, it is anticipated that there will be no reduction in small schools grant resulting from this proposal.

5 **Specific provisions for rural schools**

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

- 5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:
- Address the educational issues that face schools with small roll
 - Create a more sustainable estate
 - Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

- 5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:
- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
 - The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Lochdonhead Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to either of these two schools. Such an approach would create added logistical problems such as transport difficulties, and would not achieve worthwhile savings. This would not significantly improve the viability of the school estate
 - There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

- 5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

- 5.4 Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.
- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 37 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 6.4 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to remain stable or increase only slightly. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls
- 5.7 There is a village hall in Caignure, three miles from Lochdonhead Primary, with facilities for sport, catering, and large and small community meetings and events. There are village halls in Dervaig and Salen with facilities for

community meetings, events and leisure activities. These facilities would be available for community use.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point
 - The maximum travel time for a child attending Salen Primary School as a result of this proposal would be 42 minutes.
 - The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.
- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been only 7 road traffic accidents and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.
- 5.11 The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.
- 5.12 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed

amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.

- 5.13 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below:

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
Lochdonhead	23,037	0	4,530	18,507	80%
Salen	74,269	74,269	0	0	0%
Total	97,305	74,269	4,530	18,507	19%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Salen Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age

- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the “reasonable adjustments duty”. The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Lochdonhead Primary School.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. It is expected that this would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Whether or not these proposals are accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.

- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 Staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of at school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing

their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.

- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the school, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6-week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010

For further information contact: Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council
Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number
01369 708508.

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APPENDIX

 Argyll and Bute Council
 Community Services: 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 Lochdonhead Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Lochdonhead Primary School continue their education at Salen Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Salen Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Lochdonhead 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)			

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT : NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision
Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department
and North Bute Primary School

Argyll and Bute Council

Proposal for the amalgamation of Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department and North Bute Primary School

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at North Bute Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of North Bute Primary School continue their education at Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department shall be extended to include the current catchment area of North Bute Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE

- Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- The Executive Director of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council , Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal.

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population
- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the

resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils

- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5,816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have seen a decline in each school over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department		North Bute Primary	
	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%
2005/06	337	71	56	49
2006-07	307	65	60	53
2007-08	285	60	56	49
2008-09	279	59	51	45
2009-10	243	65	55	48
2010-11	233	49	51	45
2011-12	236	50	49	43

Rothesay and North Bute have suffered a decrease of 30% and 12.5%, respectively, in their rolls over this period. In both of these schools the expected occupancy rates for 2011/12 will be 50% or below.

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.

- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at North Bute Primary School will be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of North Bute Primary School continue their education at Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department from 16 August 2011.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department would be extended to include the current catchment area of North Bute Primary School and the associated pre-school unit as shown on the attached plan.
- 3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
 - Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance

- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m ² /pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
North Bute	44.7	4,553	8	C	2,087
Rothesay	49.2	3,708	16	A	2,927
Post Amalgamation	59.9%	3,451	13	A	2,401

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

3.6 The distance from North Bute Primary School to Rothesay Joint Campus is 3.2 miles and the journey time would be around 10 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the two locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.

3.7 The capacity for Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department is 474 and the number of children to come from North Bute Primary School is 49 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).

3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1a	17
P1b	17
P1/2	21 = 6 + 15
P2	30
P3	24
P3/4	21 = 14 + 7
P4	29

P4/5	25 = 6 + 19
P5 /6	22 = 16+ 6
P6	30
P6/7	22 = 12 + 10
P7	27
Total Roll	285
Total Number of classes	12

3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.

4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be estimated with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.

4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a

year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.

4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:

- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
- Greater flexibility in grouping learners
- Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
- Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
- A wider range of staff expertise
- Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
- Increased management capacity.

4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:

- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
- Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include Co-operative Learning, Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC), and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic

- *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum
- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in paragraph 4.6 and 4.7 and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.9 Pupils who would otherwise have attended North Bute Primary School may benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above.
- 4.10 North Bute Primary School may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues. This proposal may provide enhanced opportunities for increased peer interaction and access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7. This proposal would have a positive and beneficial effect in addressing these difficulties.
- 4.11 Larger pupil numbers will result in improved opportunities for a range of pedagogies, e.g. active learning, cooperative learning, etc. This may also lead to a greater range of extra curricular activities.
- 4.12 There will be a group of staff to share expertise, engage in professional dialogue, develop curriculum for excellence and take on leadership responsibilities. This may also result in an enhanced leadership team.
- 4.13 There will be an opportunity to pool expensive resources, e.g. ICT resources, sporting equipment.
- 4.14 The combined school will have access to more support staff.
- 4.15 Pupils who would otherwise have attended North Bute Primary School would benefit from new build facilities that have been designed for education in the 21st century in Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department.
- There is no gym hall at North Bute Primary School and a small tarmac sloped playground area.
 - North Bute has limited provision on site for physical education, and for the provision of after school physical activities, particularly in inclement weather. Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department has extensive school grounds and better facilities. Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department also has access to a fully equipped gym, sports hall, dance studio and other facilities shared with Rothesay Academy.
 - The fully equipped kitchen means pupils will have access to meals, which are freshly prepared in the school.
- 4.16 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department would be better than at North Bute Primary School.
- 4.17 Rothesay Joint Campus has an on-site nursery, which will result in enhanced transition into P1.

- 4.18 Being part of a larger school population within a 3-18 school will enhance and make the transition to S1 easier for pupils.
- 4.19 Larger pupil numbers may make the provision of specialist services and some trips more viable, e.g. sporting and cultural activities, residential trips.
- 4.20 North Bute Primary School may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence*. They have already made steps to counter balance this by:
- Ensuring that pupils work in larger peer groups, North Bute Primary School work with pupils from Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department on a range of activities. More readily available larger peer groups will be created as a result of this proposal
 - Ensuring that strong links exist between North Bute Primary School and Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department. Both schools participate in a range of activities with other schools on Bute. This is evidenced by the triathlon competition, the swimming gala and the Scottish Opera event
 - North Bute Primary School staff work with staff from other schools in the area on professional development activities. They have recently joined with staff from other schools to form a Teacher Learning Community (TLC). This compensates for the limited professional development opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development. Pupils from North Bute Primary School will benefit from the combined expertise of a larger team. Leadership and management provision within Rothesay Joint Campus would provide greater capacity for the development of teaching and learning.

Pre-school users

- 4.21 Local authorities have a duty to secure free, part time pre-school education places for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.22 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break-down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.23 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead they access provision, closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.24 There is currently no pre-school provision in North Bute Primary School but this proposal would offer available pre-school provision at Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department.

Gaelic learners

- 4.25 Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS) is not currently offered in any of the schools in this proposal so there would be no effect if the proposals were implemented.

Placing requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.27 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools will benefit substantially from the implementation of this and other proposals that the Council is advancing. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal will benefit all pupils, present and future, throughout Argyll and Bute, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other Users of the facility

- 4.28 During the period from 2005/06 to 2009/10 there was a total of 5 community lets at North Bute Primary School.
- 4.29 The current levels of community use do not indicate that the school fulfils a particular need within the community. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. Within the village of Port Bannatyne, where North Bute Primary School is located, there is a hall which is available for community use. Also the communities which access North Bute would be able to use the facilities at Rothesay Joint Campus which is some 4 miles away.
- 4.30 Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department experiences some community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial Impact

- 4.31 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching.
- 4.32 It is expected that the specific proposal would affect the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	892,861	802,874	89,987
Property Costs	29,801	3,728	26,073
Supplies, Services and Travel	111,124	111,124	0
NPDO Recharges	133,027	133,027	0
Income	-70,731	-70,731	0
Additional Transport		38,000	-38,000
	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
Reduction in Small School Grant		89,372	-89,372
Total	1,096,082	1,107,394	-11,312

- 4.33 This proposal indicates a small loss to the Council on an annual basis. However, regard has been taken of the following factors:
- The Council's School Estate Strategy and Asset Management Plan has noted that the building is in a level C (poor) condition. It would require at least £450,000 of additional capital works to improve the current condition and prevent further deterioration. The Council would require to borrow this sum in order to effect the renovations and the loan repayments would be likely to cost the Council some £35,000 per annum
 - The school is not able to operate efficiently in terms of the objective criteria described in section 3 above
 - The positive educational impacts of the proposal included in the Educational Benefits Statement above.

5 Specific provisions for rural schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

- 5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint head teacherships, would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of North Bute Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to North Bute Primary School. This would be impractical given the lack of suitable facilities available at North Bute Primary School. Such an approach would not achieve worthwhile savings and would do little to improve the viability of the school estate
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

5.4 There have been 8 community lets in the last five years for North Bute Primary School. Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school building in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the school fulfils a particular need within the community.

5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.

5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 43 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 8.6 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to decline. The Council is

not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls

- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. Within the village of Port Bannatyne, where North Bute Primary School is located, there is a hall which is available for community use. Also the communities which access North Bute would be able to use the facilities at Rothesay Joint Campus which is less than 4 miles away.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point
 - The maximum travel time for a child attending Rothesay Joint Campus as a result of this proposal would be around 37 minutes
 - The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.
 - The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.
- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all

of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 24 road traffic accidents. Of these only 3 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.

- 5.11 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.12 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below:

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
North Bute	26,112	0	4,122	21,990	84%
Rothesay	213,263	213,263	0	0	0%
Total	239,376	213,263	4,122	21,990	9%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.

- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the "reasonable adjustments duty". The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends North Bute Primary School.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Should these proposals be accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy

and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.

- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 The staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.

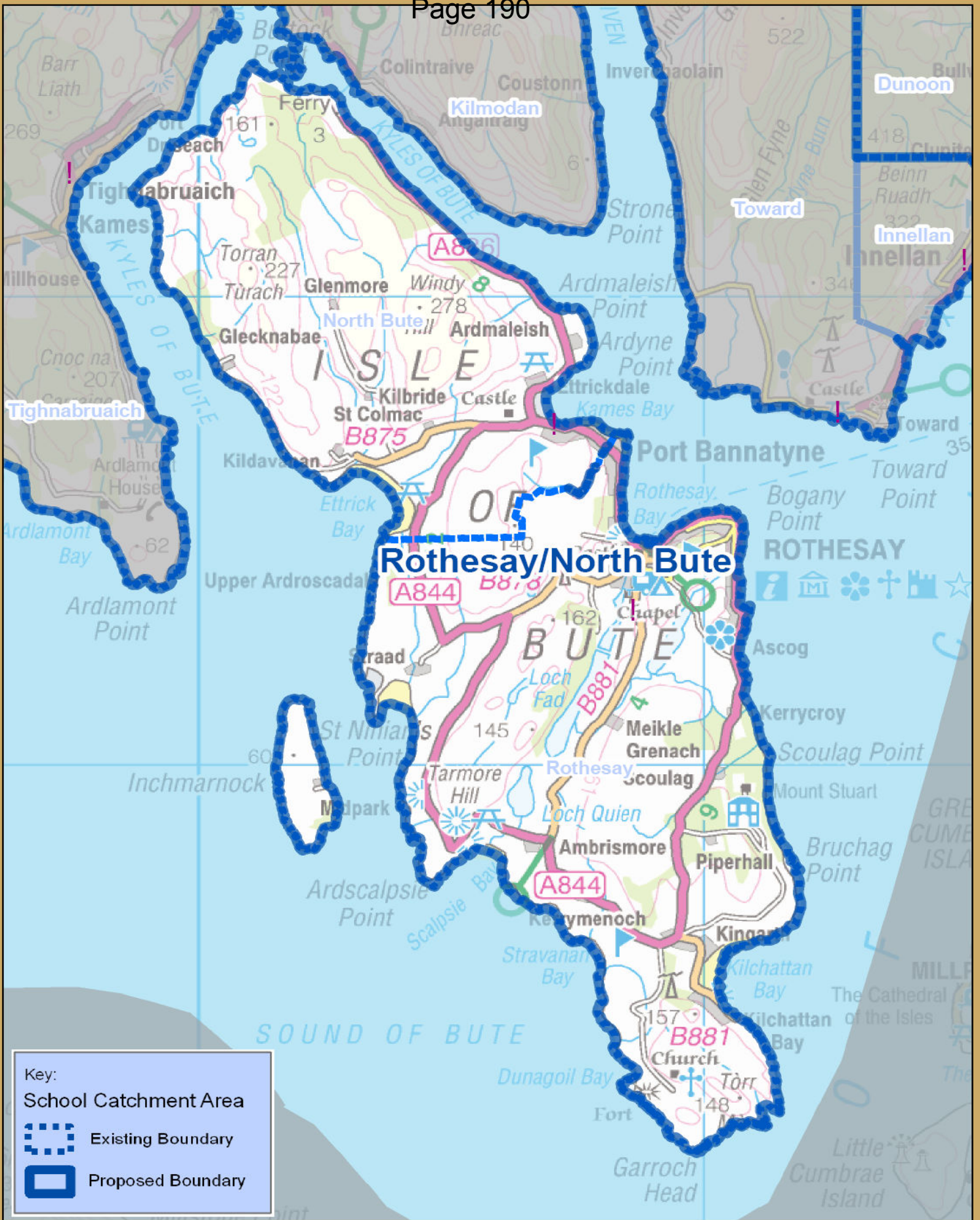
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the schools, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

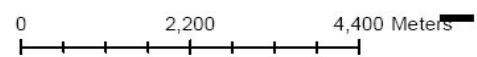
Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010

For further information contact: Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council
Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number
01369 708508.



School Catchment Proposals 2010

Rothesay/North Bute



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APPENDIX

 Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

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 North Bute Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of North Bute Primary School continue their education at Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Rothesay Joint Campus Primary Department shall be extended to include the current catchment area of North Bute 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)

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision
Easdale and Luing Primary Schools

Argyll and Bute Council

Proposal for the amalgamation of Easdale and Luing Primary Schools

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Luing Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Luing Primary School continue their education at Easdale Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

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

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue

- HMIE
- The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal.

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the Education Service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all the young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate a manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population

- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have been broadly static in each school over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Luig		Easdale	
	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %
2005/06	25	66%	31	38%
2006-07	21	55%	36	44%
2007-08	21	55%	37	46%
2008-09	19	50%	34	42%
2009-10	16	42%	37	46%
2010-11	19	50%	34	42%
2011-12	21	55%	32	40%

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.

- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Luing Primary School will be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Luing Primary School continue their education Easdale Primary School from 16 August 2011.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Easdale Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment area of Luing Primary School as shown on the attached plan.
- 3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
 - Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll

- Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Easdale	42.0	5,481	14	C	3,407
Luing	50.0	7,190	14	B	4,109
Post Amalgamation	65.4%	4,855	9	C	2,185

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

- 3.6 The distance from Luing Primary School to Easdale Primary School is approximately 6 miles and the journey time would be around 30 minutes, including travel via Cuan ferry. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road or ferry link between the two locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.7 The capacity for Easdale Primary School is 81 and the number of children to come from Luing Primary School is 21 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Easdale Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1 / 2	18 = 8 + 10
P3/4	13 = 7 + 6
P 5-7	22 = 9 + 5 + 8

Year Group	Class composition
Total Roll	53
Total Number of classes	3

3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.

4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be made with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.

4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is

not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.

4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:

- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
- Greater flexibility in grouping learners
- Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
- Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
- A wider range of staff expertise
- Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
- Increased management capacity.

4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties as detailed above in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:

- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
- Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include *Co-operative Learning*, *Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC)*, and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll, opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of Assessment is for Learning and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in Building the Curriculum 5. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic
- *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep

forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum

- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. The capacity for strategic leadership is reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited.
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in the above paragraph and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.9 There would be positive educational benefits associated with this proposal. The management arrangements of the school would be strengthened and there may be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active teaching methodologies.
- 4.10 Easdale and Luing Primary Schools face some difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence*. These include limited peer interaction and limited access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction.
- 4.11 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Luing Primary School would benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements for cooperative and collaborative working as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above. There would be more flexibility in how classes are arranged, with more regular opportunities for pupils to work with others closer to their age and stage. The amalgamated school may provide a greater variety of opportunities for out of school hours learning and wider achievement. There would be easier access to PE facilities which are on location at Easdale Primary School
- 4.12 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at Easdale Primary School will be similar to Luing Primary School.
- 4.13 Luing Primary School has existing links with Easdale Primary School. Transition to secondary school has traditionally been organised in partnership with local area schools. Cultural activities such as participation in Scottish Opera performances have been organised through partnership working, the latest of which took place in March 2010. There are logistical and financial implications associated with this way of working, which will be less of a factor in the amalgamated school. Also, as a result of the proposed change, a more flexible and larger peer group would be created to allow children to prepare for and reflect on experiences. Where a larger P7 peer group exists, transition to secondary will be easier for some pupils.
- 4.14 Luing Primary School staff work with staff from other schools in the area on professional development activities. They have recently joined with staff from other schools to form a Teacher Learning Community (TLC). This compensates for the lack of professional development opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development but brings logistic problems in particular with regard to travel and timetabling of meetings. Pupils

would benefit from the combined expertise of a larger team of staff, who are more regularly able to meet and reflect on learning and teaching together.

Pre-school users

- 4.15 Local authorities have a duty to secure a free, part time pre-school education place for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.16 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.17 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and they instead access provision closer to their place of work where this is provided.
- 4.18 Currently pre-school provision is offered in Luing Primary School and would continue to be offered in Easdale Primary School.

Gaelic

- 4.19 Gaelic learner provision will continue to be available at Easdale Primary.

Placing requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.21 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools would benefit substantially from the implementation of this proposal and other proposals. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future throughout Argyll and Bute, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.22 During the period from 2005/06 to 2009/10 Luig Primary School has been used regularly by the community for various meetings and events. The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. In particular, there are currently halls available for community use in the villages of Toberonochy and Cullipool on the island of Luig and both of these are located within 2 miles of the school.
- 4.23 Easdale Primary School experiences regular community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.24 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which is includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings being which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.25 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	250,971	194,649	56,322
Property Costs	26,152	16,853	9,299
Supplies, Services and Travel	56,915	56,915	0
Income	-11,087	-11,087	0
Additional Transport		12,540	-12,540
Reduction in small schools grant	0	0	0
Total	322,951	269,870	53,081

- 4.26 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 39% of the total annual budget for operating Luig Primary School at present.

5 Specific provision for rural schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with small rolls
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Luing Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to Luing Primary School. Such an approach would create added logistical problems such as transport difficulties, and would not achieve worthwhile savings. This would not significantly improve the viability of the school estate
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

5.4 Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.

- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 10 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 2 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have remained static. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls.
- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. There are currently village halls available for community use in the villages of Toberonochy and Cullipool on the island of Luing.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point. The travel time measured for this journey was 49 minutes which included a 9 minute wait for the ferry. Bus and ferry arrangements are within the control of the Council. If the journey were being undertaken regularly, school transport would be granted a reserved place on the ferry with the bus arrival time coinciding with the ferry sailing time. It is therefore expected that the maximum travel time for a child attending Easdale Primary School as a result of this proposal would be less than 45 minutes.
 - The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant

and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.

- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 7 road traffic accidents. Of these only 1 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.
- 5.11 The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.
- 5.12 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.13 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below;

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
Easdale	38,689	38,689	0	0	0%
Luining	42,469	0	3,797	38,672	91%
Total	81,158	38,689	3,797	38,672	48%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the

requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.

- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Easdale Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the "reasonable adjustments duty". The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Luing Primary School.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Whether or not these proposals are accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate Strategy will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative

timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).

- 7.7 Staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.

- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the school, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6-week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

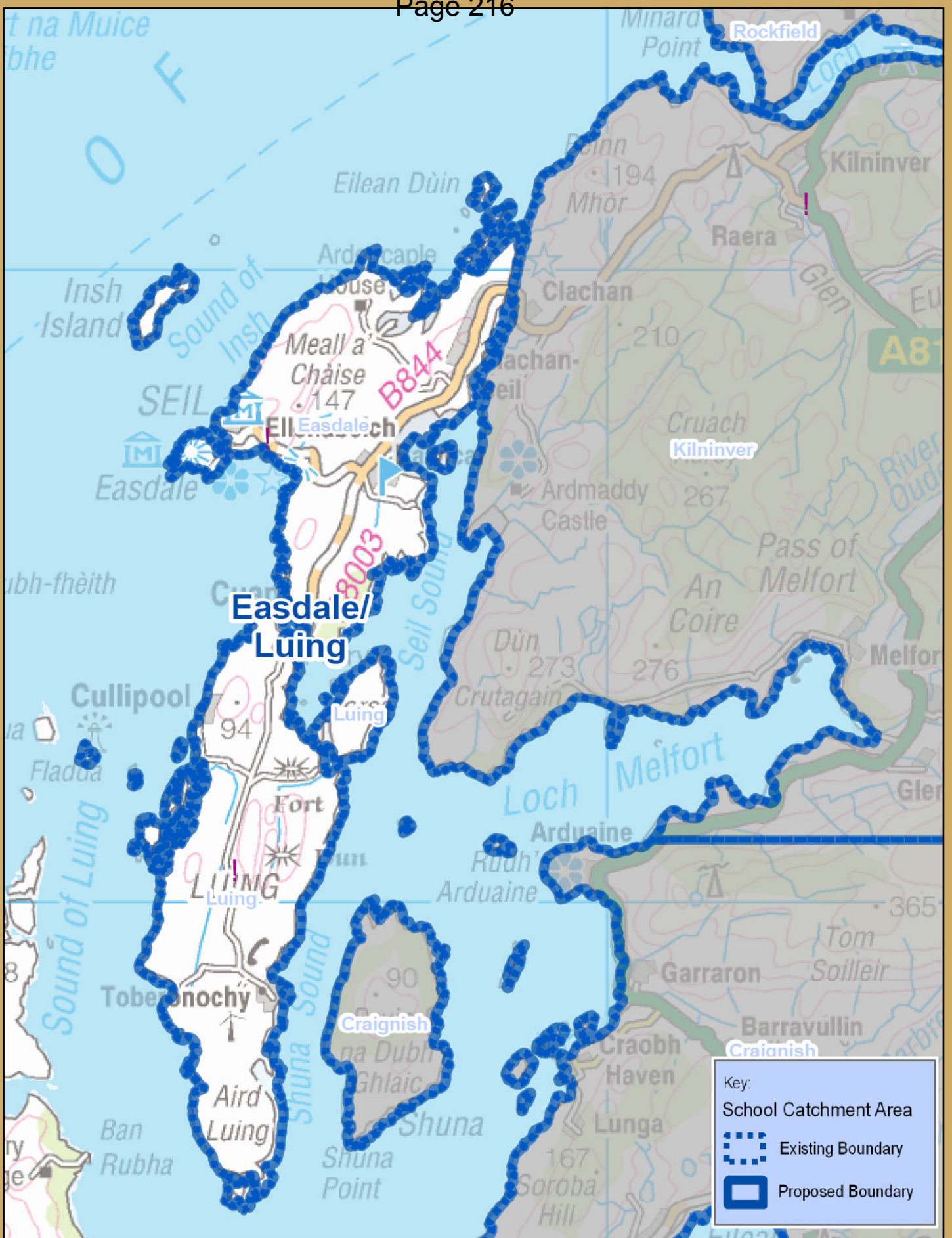
9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

**Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010**

For further information contact: Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council
Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone
number 01369 708508.

Draft



School Catchment Proposals 2010
Easdale/Luing

0 1,500 3,000 Meters

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APPENDIX

 Argyll and Bute Council
 Community Services: Education

RESPONSE FORM

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

Proposal	
It is proposed that: Education provision at Luing Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Luing Primary School continue their education at Easdale Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Easdale Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Luing 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)

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision
Innellan and Toward Primary Schools
Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of
Innellan and Toward Primary Schools**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Toward Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Toward Primary School continue their education at Innellan Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Innellan Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Toward Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue

- HMIE
- Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- The Executive Director of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council , Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal.

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population

- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand Changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5,816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have seen a decline in each school over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Toward		Innellan	
	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%
2005/06	35	56	44	29
2006-07	35	56	35	23
2007-08	29	47	43	28
2008-09	25	40	42	27
2009-10	23	37	35	23
2010-11	20	32	25	16
2011-12	22	36	27	17

- 2.13 Toward Primary School has suffered a decrease of 36% in its roll over this period and in both of these schools the expected occupancy rates for 2011/12 will be below 50%.

The scope of the school estate

- 2.14 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.15 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.16 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.17 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.18 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.19 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of at least £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK

Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.

- 2.20 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.21 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Toward Primary School will be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Toward Primary School continue their education at Innellan Primary School from 16 August 2011.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Innellan Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment area of Toward Primary School as shown on the attached plan.
- 3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
 - Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll

- Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11, are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Innellan	16.2	9,520	28	B	7,471
Toward	32.3	7,630	13	B	2,079
Post Amalgamation	29.2%	6,528	15	B	4,150

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

- 3.6 The distance from Toward Primary School to Innellan Primary School is 3.3 miles and the journey time would be around 10 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the two locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.7 The capacity for Innellan Primary School is 154 and the number of children to come from Toward Primary School is 22 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Innellan Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1/2	12 = 8+4
P3/4	20 = 13+7
P5-7	17 = 4+5+8
Total Roll	49
Total Number of classes	3

3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

4.3 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be made with reasonable certainty. Allowing a growing proportion of the education budget to be absorbed by property costs will, without question, reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Reducing the number of schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other uses.

4.4 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.

- 4.5 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:
- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
 - Greater flexibility in grouping learners
 - Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - A wider range of staff expertise
 - Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
 - Increased management capacity.
- 4.6 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:
- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
 - Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include Co-operative Learning, Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC), and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic
 - *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their

learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum

- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

- 4.7 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in paragraph 4.6 and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.8 Any educational effects would be positive. The management arrangements of the school would be strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing

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

- 4.9 Toward Primary School faces a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that cannot be overcome. These may include limited peer interaction, limited access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction. This proposal would have a positive and beneficial effect in addressing these difficulties.
- 4.10 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Toward Primary School would benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above.
- 4.11 Larger pupil numbers will result in more viable groups for range of pedagogies, e.g. active learning, cooperative learning, etc. This may also lead to a greater range of extra curricular activities.
- 4.12 There will be a wider group of staff to share expertise, engage in professional dialogue, develop curriculum for excellence and take on leadership responsibilities. This may also result in an enhanced leadership team.
- 4.13 There will be an opportunity to pool expensive resources, e.g. ICT resources, sporting equipment.
- 4.14 The combined school will have similar access to support staff.
- 4.15 Larger pupil numbers make the provision of specialist services and some trips more viable, e.g. sporting and cultural activities, residential trips.
- 4.16 At present meals are cooked at Innellan primary School and transported to Toward Primary School. Following the amalgamation of the two schools, this would result in an approved service in this area to the former pupils of Toward Primary School. This impacts on the health and well being of pupils.
- 4.17 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at Innellan Primary School would be the same as or better than at Toward Primary School.

- 4.18 Toward Primary School may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence*. They have already made steps to counter balance this by:
- Ensuring that pupils work in larger peer groups, Toward Primary School work with pupils from Innellan Primary School on a range of activities. More readily available larger peer groups would be created as a result of this proposal
 - Ensuring that strong links exist between Toward Primary School and Innellan Primary School and both schools participate in a range of activities with other schools in Cowal. This is evidenced by the annual badminton competition, the orienteering event, the football festival, On the Move induction project
 - Transporting pupils from Toward Primary School to Innellan Primary School on a weekly basis to use the gym hall for PE activities. Innellan Primary School has extensive school grounds and better facilities. Innellan Primary School also has a fully equipped gym
 - Ensuring Toward Primary School staff work with staff from other schools in the area on professional development activities. They have recently joined with staff from other schools to form a Teacher Learning Community (TLC). This compensates for the lack of professional development opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development but brings logistic problems in particular with regard to travel. Pupils from Toward Primary School would benefit from the combined expertise of a larger team.

Pre-school users

- 4.19 Local authorities have a duty to secure free, part time pre-school education places for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.20 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break-down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.21 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead they access provision, closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.22 There is no pre-school provision currently available in either school and provision would continue through the current arrangements.

Gaelic learners

- 4.23 Gaelic medium learners in the Cowal area attend the Gaelic Unit in Sandbank Primary School. Gaelic language in the primary school will continue to be provided in Innellan Primary School.

Placing requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.25 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools will benefit substantially from the implementation of this and other proposals that the Council is advancing. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future throughout Argyll and Bute, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.26 There has only been 1 let of Toward Primary School since 2005. The current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community. Regardless of this, the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place.
- 4.27 Within the village of Toward there is a hall which is available for community use. Also the communities which access Toward Primary School would be able to use the existing local facilities provided in Innellan which is some 3 miles away and/or Dunoon which is some 7 miles away. These facilities include 5 other schools as well as publically accessible sports facilities and halls.
- 4.28 Innellan Primary School experiences no community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.29 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current Education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.30 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	280,091	194,459	85,632
Property Costs	58,886	47,665	11,220
Supplies, Services and Travel	59,432	59,432	0
Income	-7,789	-7,789	0
Additional Transport		5,500	-5,500
Reduction in small school grant		0	0
Total	390,620	299,267	91,352

- 4.31 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 60% of the total annual budget for operating Toward Primary School at present.

5 Specific provisions for rural schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

- 5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

- 5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Toward Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to Toward Primary School. This would be impractical given the lack of suitable PE facilities available at Toward. Such an approach would not achieve worthwhile savings and would do little to improve the viability of the school estate
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

- 5.4 There has only been 1 community let of Toward Primary School since 2005. Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.
- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 39 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 7.8 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to decline. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls.

- 5.7 Within the village of Toward there is a hall which is available for community use. Also the communities which access Toward Primary School would be able to use the existing local facilities provided in Dunoon which is some 7 miles away. These facilities include 5 other schools as well as publically accessible sports facilities and halls.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point
 - The maximum travel time for a child attending Innellan Primary School as a result of this proposal would be around 35 minutes
 - The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.
 - The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.
- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 5 road traffic accidents. None of these occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would

render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.

- 5.11 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.12 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below:

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
Innellan	62,435	62,435	0	0	0%
Toward	22,624	0	3,373	19,252	85%
Total	85,060	62,435	3,373	19,252	23%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Innellan Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people,

trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME(black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the “reasonable adjustments duty”. The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Toward Primary School.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA’s in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA’s then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council’s current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Should these proposals be accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.

- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 The staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.

- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the schools, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from

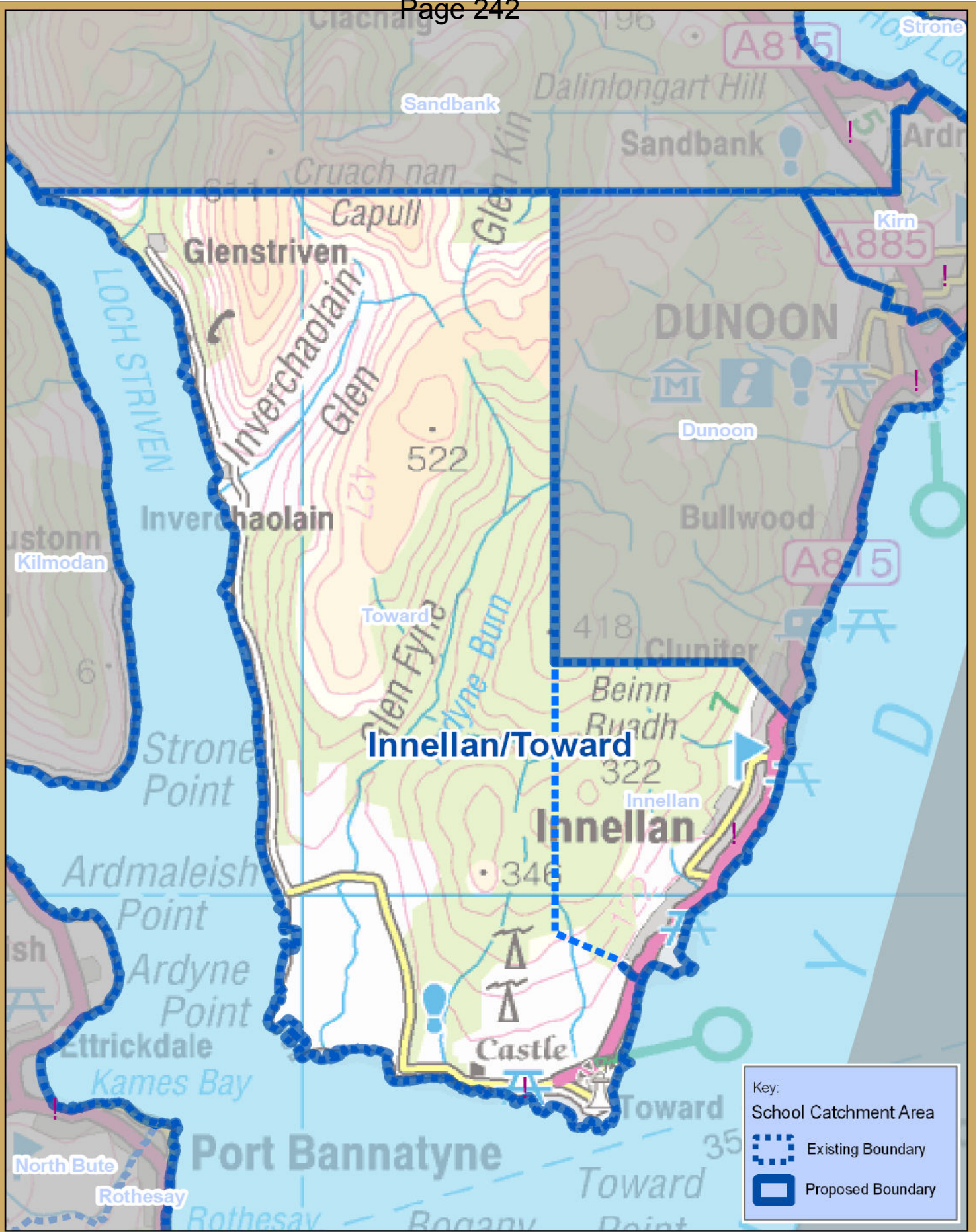
the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010

For further information contact: Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number 01369 708508.



School Catchment Proposals 2010
Innellan/Toward

0 1,250 2,500 Meters

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APPENDIX

**Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education**

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 Toward Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Toward Primary School continue their education at Innellan Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Innellan Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Toward 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)

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision

**Strachur, Tighnabruaich and
Kilmodan Primary Schools**

Argyll and Bute Council

Proposal for the amalgamation of Strachur and Kilmodan Primary School or Tighnabruaich and Kilmodan Primary School

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Kilmodan Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils living north of Kilmodan Primary School shall continue their education at Strachur Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils living south of Kilmodan Primary School shall continue their education at Tighnabruaich Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

Children residing north of Kilmodan Primary School and attending the pre-school unit contained within Kilmodan Primary School will transfer to the commissioned sector within Strachur village hall from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

Children residing south of Kilmodan Primary School and attending the pre-school unit contained within Kilmodan Primary will transfer to the pre-school unit within Tighnabruaich Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Strachur Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area north of Kilmodan Primary School as shown on the attached plan.

The catchment area of Tighnabruaich Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area south of Kilmodan Primary School as shown on the attached plan.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE
- Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- The Executive Director of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council , Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoan, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal.

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

Draft

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate a manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population

- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5,816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.

2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.

2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.

2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.

2.12 Whilst the roll of Strachur Primary has remained broadly static over recent years, the rolls of Kilmodan and Tighnabruaich schools have declined as the following table demonstrates:

	Kilmodan		Strachur		Tighnabruaich	
	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%
2005/06	27	41	56	58	41	53
2006-07	23	35	60	63	37	47
2007-08	26	39	53	55	34	44
2008-09	27	41	59	62	35	45
2009-10	21	32	66	69	34	44
2010-11	22	33	56	58	30	39
2011-12	18	27	57	59	24	31

Kilmodan and Tighnabruaich have suffered a decrease of 34% and 42% in their rolls over this period whilst Strachur has remained broadly static.

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of at least £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found

within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.

- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Kilmodan Primary School will be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Kilmodan Primary School residing north of the school continue their education at Strachur Primary School and that pupils at appropriate stages of Kilmodan Primary School residing south of the school continue their education at Tighnabruaich Primary School from 16 August 2011. Children residing north of Kilmodan Primary School and attending the pre-school unit contained within Kilmodan Primary School will transfer to the commissioned sector within Strachur village hall and children residing south of Kilmodan Primary School and attending the pre-school unit contained within Kilmodan Primary will transfer to the pre-school unit within Tighnabruaich Primary School at the same time.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Strachur Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment area north of Kilmodan Primary School as shown on the attached plan. As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Tighnabruaich Primary School will be extended to include the current catchment south area of Kilmodan Primary School and all associated pre-school units as shown on the attached plan.

3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:

- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
- Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Kilmodan	33.3	7,541	18	B	3,969
Strachur	58.3	4,816	12	C	2,769
Tighnabruaich	38.5	7,591	20	B	6,185
Post Amalgamation	62.1%	4,754	12	C/B	3,154

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

3.6 The distance from Kilmodan Primary School to Strachur Primary School is 12.3 miles and the journey time would be around 25 minutes. The distance from Kilmodan Primary School to Tighnabruaich Primary School is 11.6 miles and the journey time would be around 30 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety

concerns with regard to the road amongst the various locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.

- 3.7 The capacity for Strachur Primary School is 96 and the number of children to come from Kilmodan Primary School is 6 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls). The expected occupancy levels of the combined facility would be 65.6%. The capacity for Tighnabruaich Primary School is 78 and the number of children to come from Kilmodan Primary School is 12 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Strachur Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1/2	19 = 11 + 8
P3/4	22 = 8 + 14
P5 - 7	22 = 8 + 11 + 3
Total Roll	63
Total Number of classes	3

The basis for grouping classes within Tighnabruaich Primary School would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1-3	13 = 1 + 5 + 7
P4-7	23 = 7 + 7 + 5 + 4
Total Roll	36
Total Number of classes	2

- 3.9 These class structures comply with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

- 4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

- 4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

- 4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.
- 4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be estimated with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.
- 4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.
- 4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:
- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
 - Greater flexibility in grouping learners
 - Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - A wider range of staff expertise
 - Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
 - Increased management capacity.

- 4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:
- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
 - Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include *Co-operative Learning*, *Thinking Actively in a Social Context* (TASC), and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital roll. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic
 - *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum
 - *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
 - Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional

problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted

- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in paragraph 4.6 and 4.7 and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.9 Any educational effects would be positive. The management arrangements of the schools would be strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies. The proposal would increase the rolls of Strachur Primary School and Tighnabruaich Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger schools should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities. Combining the schools will enable pooling of expensive resources and equipment such as gymnastic equipment and interactive whiteboards.
- 4.10 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Kilmodan Primary School would benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above. Pupils coming in from Kilmodan Primary School will have more shared experiences and opportunity for friendships. This will enhance their

confidence and make the transition to secondary easier. At a time when the curriculum is being extended this is a significant advantage. Larger year groups make the provision of specialist services more viable and provide enhanced opportunities for school trips.

- 4.11 Over a number of years staff in Kilmodan Primary School and Tighnabruaich Primary School have worked hard to establish shared working practices that have impacted positively on the learning experiences for pupils.
- 4.12 Pupils in Kilmodan Primary School have benefitted from opportunities to engage with pupils from other schools in the local area through participation in sporting events, cultural and educational enhancement activities. In addition, pupils at Kilmodan primary receive tuition from French, Music and PE specialists.
- 4.13 Kilmodan Primary School staff work with staff from other schools in the area on professional development activities. They have recently joined with staff from other schools to form a Teacher Learning Community (TLC). This compensates for the lack of professional development opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development. Pupils from Kilmodan Primary School would benefit from the combined expertise of a larger team. Leadership and management provision in Tighnabruaich/Strachur Primaries would provide greater capacity for the development of teaching and learning.
- 4.14 There is no gym hall at Kilmodan Primary School and the building and playground area offer very limited opportunity to provide appropriate physical education. Both Strachur Primary School and Tighnabruaich Primary School have gym hall provision.
- 4.15 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at Strachur Primary School and Tighnabruaich Primary School would be the same as or better than at Kilmodan Primary School.
- 4.16 Kilmodan Primary School may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that may not be overcome. These may include limited peer interaction, limited access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction. This proposal would have a positive and beneficial effect in addressing these difficulties.

Pre-school users

- 4.17 Local authorities have a duty to secure free, part time pre-school education places for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.18 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break-down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.19 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead they access provision, closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.20 Children residing north of Kilmodan Primary School and attending the pre-school unit contained within Kilmodan Primary School would transfer to the commissioned sector within Strachur village hall and children residing south of Kilmodan Primary School and attending the pre-school unit contained within Kilmodan Primary would transfer to the pre-school unit within Tighnabruaich Primary School at the same time.

Gaelic Learners

- 4.21 Gaelic medium learners in the Cowal area attend the Gaelic unit in Sandbank Primary School and this would not be affected by the proposal. Gaelic language in the primary school will only be provided in Strachur Primary School.

Placing requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.23 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools will benefit substantially from the implementation of this and other proposals that the Council is advancing. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal will benefit all pupils, present and future, throughout Argyll and Bute, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.24 During the period from 2005/06 to 2008/09 the schools included in this proposal were used on the following number of occasions for community use. This is in addition to school based activities such as parents' evenings and school events.

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Strachur	7	6	2	38	34
Kilmodan	1	4	1	1	0
Tighnabruaich	5	0	0	0	0

- 4.25 The current levels of activity do not indicate that Kilmodan Primary School fulfils a particular need with regard to community use. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. Within the village of Glendaruel, where Kilmodan Primary School is situated, there is a hall which is available for community use.
- 4.26 Strachur and Tighnabruaich Primary Schools experience some community use and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the schools to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.27 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.28 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Strachur - Post Amalgamation	Tighnabruaich - Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	482,458	186,409	157,815	138,234
Property Costs	97,636	37,704	48,257	11,675
Supplies, Services and Travel	108,066	56,880	51,186	0
Income	-24,851	-15,260	-9,591	0

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Strachur - Post Amalgamation	Tighnabruaich - Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£	£
Additional Transport		11,913	11,161	-23,074
Reduction in Small School Grant		0	0	0
Total	663,309	277,647	258,828	126,835

- 4.29 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 76% of the total annual budget for operating Kilmodan Primary School at present.

5 Specific provisions for rural schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

- 5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

- 5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements, such as the establishment of one or more joint headships, would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Kilmodan Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to Kilmodan Primary School. This is impracticable given the enhanced facilities available at Strachur Primary School and Tighnabruaich Primary School. Such an approach would not achieve worthwhile savings and would do little to improve the viability of the school estate
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

- 5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

- 5.4 Between 2005 and 2009 there have been 7 lets by community groups of Kilmodan Primary School. The last let was in March 2009. Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.
- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 63 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 12.6 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to decline or remain static at best. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls.
- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. Within the village of Glendaruel, where Kilmodan Primary School is situated, there is a hall which is available for community use.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross

- The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school.
- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
- The maximum travel time for a child attending Strachur Primary School as a result of this proposal would be expected to be less than 21 minutes. The maximum travel time for a child attending Tighnabruich Primary School as a result of this proposal would be expected to be less than 41 minutes.
- The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.
- The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.

- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 2 road traffic accidents. Neither of these occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and neither of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.
- 5.11 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.12 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂)

emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below:

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO2 Reduction	
	(kg of CO2)	(kg of CO2)	(kg of CO2)	kg	%
Kilmodan	28,702	0	7,994	20,708	72%
Strachur	52,277	52,277	0	0	0%
Tighnabruaich	59,206	59,206	0	0	0%
Total	140,185	111,483	7,994	20,708	15%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Strachur or Tighnabruaich Primary Schools, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age

- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the “reasonable adjustments duty”. The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Kilmodan Primary School.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Should these proposals be accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government

Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.

- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 The staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.

- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the schools, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

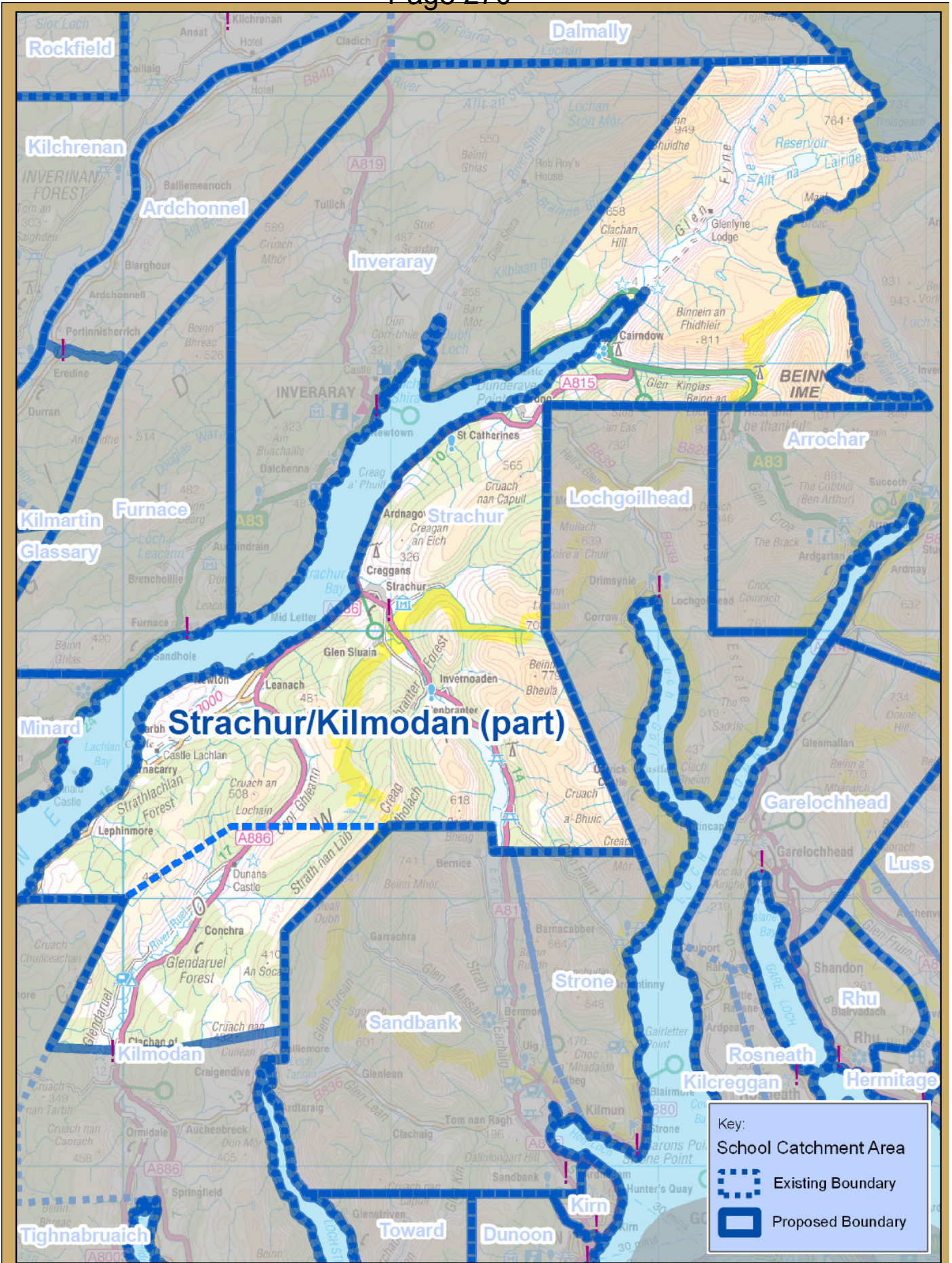
- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by

this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.

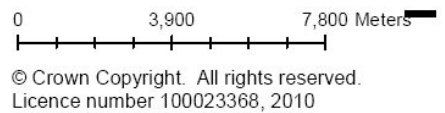
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

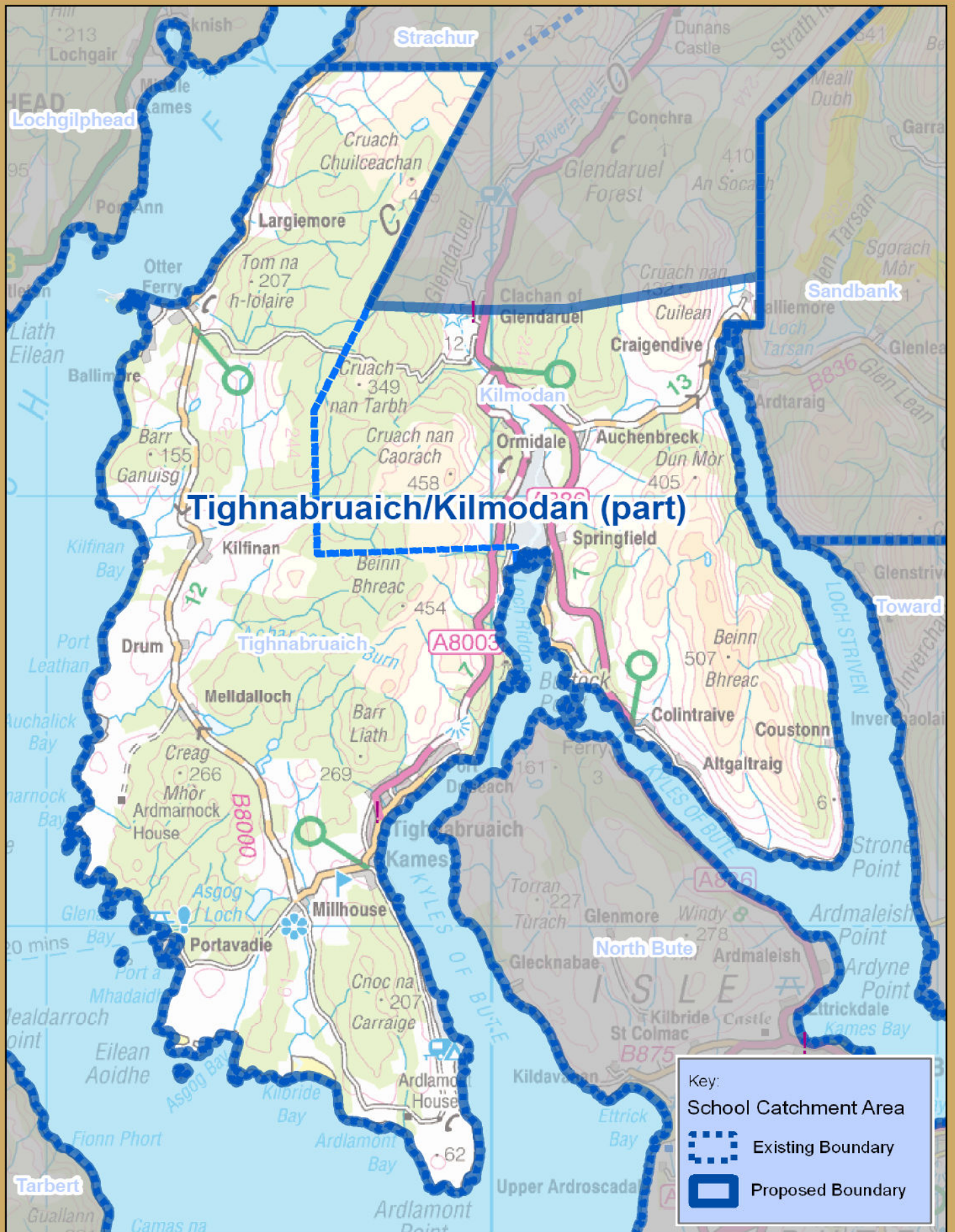
Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010

For further information contact: Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number 01369 708508

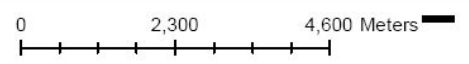


School Catchment Proposals 2010
Strachur/Kilmodan (part)





**School Catchment Proposals 2010
Tighnabruaich/Kilmodan (part)**



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APPENDIX

 Argyll and Bute Council
 Community Services: Education

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

Proposal

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Kilmodan Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils living north of Kilmodan Primary School shall continue their education at Strachur Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. Pupils living south of Kilmodan Primary School shall continue their education at Tighnabruaich Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

Children residing north of Kilmodan Primary School and attending the pre-school unit contained within Kilmodan Primary School will transfer to the commissioned sector within Strachur village hall from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. Children residing south of Kilmodan Primary School and attending the pre-school unit contained within Kilmodan Primary will transfer to the pre-school unit within Tighnabruaich Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Strachur Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area north of Kilmodan Primary School as shown on the attached plan. The catchment area of Tighnabruaich Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area south of Kilmodan Primary School as shown on the attached plan.

This part of the form must be completed for a valid response:

Name: (please print)

Address:

Post Code:

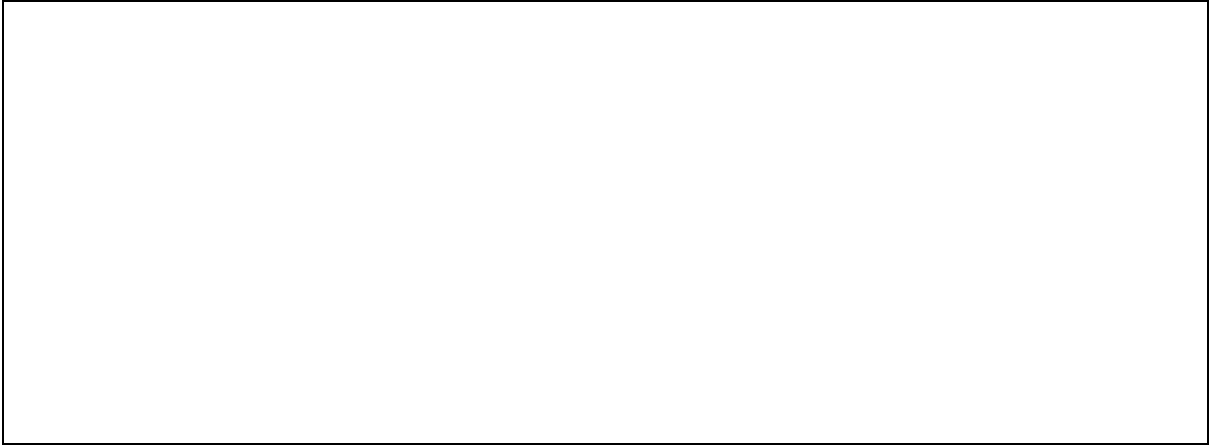
I agree/do not agree (delete which does not apply) that my response can be made publicly available

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)			



Draft



Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision
Hermitage and Luss Primary Schools
Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of Hermitage Primary School and
Luss Primary Schools**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Luss Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Luss Primary School continue their education at Hermitage Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Hermitage Primary Schools shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Luss Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site:
<https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Council of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE
- Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- The Executive Director of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council , Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal.

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

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यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

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یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection.
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all the young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population
- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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

position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate

- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have been broadly static in each school over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Hermitage		Luss	
	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%
2005-06	376	67	22	51
2006-07	362	65	24	56
2007-08	350	62	24	56
2008-09	356	63	22	51
2009-10	356	63	21	49
2010-11	379	68	21	49
2011-12	383	68	20	47

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools

which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.

- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.
- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of schools with small rolls would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Luss Primary School will be discontinued with effect from June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Luss Primary School continue their education at Hermitage Primary School from 16 August 2011. Pre-school provision for pupils whose home is within the catchment area of Luss Primary School would continue in Arrochar Primary School as at present.

3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Hermitage Primary Schools would be extended to include the current catchment area of Luss Primary School as shown on the attached plan.

3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:

- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
- Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m ² /pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Hermitage	67.6	3,130	9	B	1,728
Luss	48.8	8,241	10	B	1,914
Post Amalgamation	71.3%	3,115	8	B	1,638

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodate needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

- 3.6 The distance from Luss Primary School to Hermitage Primary School is 9 miles and the journey time would be around 20 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the two locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.7 The capacity for Hermitage Primary School is 561 and the number of children to come from Luss Primary School is 20.
- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Hermitage Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1a	18
P1b	19
P1c	19
P2a	28
P2b	27
P3a	21
P3b	21
P4a	28
P4b	28
P5a	28
P5b	28
P6a	25
P6b	25
P6c	23
P7a	32
P7b	33
Total Roll	403
Total Number of classes	16

- 3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

- 4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

- 4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

- 4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.
- 4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be estimated with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.
- 4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.
- 4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:
- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
 - Greater flexibility in grouping learners
 - Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - A wider range of staff expertise
 - Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
 - Increased management capacity.
- 4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties as detailed above in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:

- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
- Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include *Co-operative Learning*, *Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC)*, and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic
- *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum
- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective

management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited

- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

- 4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in the above paragraph and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future Pupils

- 4.9 As the school buildings can accommodate the increased roll there would be no loss of facilities. Any educational effects would be positive. The management arrangements of the school would be strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies. The proposal would increase the roll of Hermitage Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities. Combining the schools will enable pooling of expensive resources and equipment such as gymnastic equipment and interactive whiteboards.

Pupils from Luss Primary School attending the new combined school will be able to access freshly cooked meals on the premises.

- 4.10 Luss Primary School faces some difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that cannot be overcome. These may include limited daily peer interaction, limited access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction. Access to a wider range of learning professional and specialists required to deliver curriculum for P5 to P7 pupils can be delivered more time-efficiently in the combined facility. Pupils from Luss Primary School attending the new combined school will benefit from access to a variety of more spacious classrooms throughout their primary education.
- 4.11 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Luss Primary School would benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above. Pupils in the combined school will have more shared experiences and opportunity for friendships. This will enhance their confidence and make the transition to secondary easier. At a time when the curriculum is being extended this is a significant advantage. Larger

year groups make the provision of specialist services more viable and provide enhanced opportunities for school trips.

- 4.12 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at Hermitage Primary School will be the same as or better than at Luss Primary School.
- 4.13 Luss Primary School may face specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence*. They have already made steps to counter balance this by:
- ensuring that pupils work in larger peer groups, pupils in Luss Primary School work with pupils in other schools. More readily available larger peer groups will be created as a result of this proposal.
- 4.14 Luss Primary School staff work with staff from other schools in the area on professional development activities. They have recently joined with staff from other schools to form a Teacher Learning Community (TLC). This compensates for the lack of professional development opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development but brings logistic problems and possibly increased costs in particular with regard to travel. This Proposal will ensure that pupils from Luss Primary School will benefit from the combined expertise of a larger team.
- 4.15 Hermitage Primary School has extensive school grounds and better facilities. Hermitage Primary School also has a fully equipped gym and built-in stage.
- 4.16 Although Luss Primary School has after school clubs, Hermitage Primary School provides extensive extra-curricular opportunities facilitating peer group working.
- 4.17 Luss Primary School currently has two multi-composite classes and Hermitage Primary School has 16 single year group classes. This proposal would result in pupils from Luss Primary School being in a class with a smaller age range.
- 4.18 The Head Teacher of Luss Primary School has a management time allocation of 0.3 FTE thus making it more difficult to manage and lead the school. Leadership time for the combined new school would provide greater capacity for the development of teaching and learning.

Pre-school users

- 4.19 Local authorities have a duty to secure a free, part time pre-school education place for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.20 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.

- 4.21 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead, they access provision, closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.22 There is currently no pre-school provision in Luss Primary School and this proposal will not alter the current arrangements.

Gaelic learners

- 4.23 Gaelic language in the Primary School (GLPS) is not currently offered in either of the schools in this proposal so there would be no effect if the proposals were implemented.

Placing requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.25 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools would benefit substantially from the implementation of this and other proposals that the Council is advancing. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational, as well as, financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future throughout Argyll and Bute by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other Users of the facility

- 4.26 There have been no community lets within Luss Primary School in the last five years which would indicate that the schools do not fulfil a particular need within the community with regard to community use. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. Within the village of Luss there is a hall which is available for community use. Hermitage Primary School experiences some community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.27 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current Education review requires Education to examine how they may

achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.

- 4.28 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	1,048,996	963,075	85,921
Property Costs	237,194	209,829	27,365
Supplies, Services and Travel	115,513	115,513	0
Income	-42,275	-42,275	0
Additional Transport		15,700	-15,700
Reduction in small schools grant		36,478	-36,478
Total	1,359,428	1,298,320	61,108

- 4.29 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 35% of the total annual budget for operating Luss Primary School at present.

5 Specific provisions for rural schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

- 5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

- 5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet either of the two criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Luss Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to Luss Primary School. This new school would not provide significantly better peer group opportunities for pupils or collegiate opportunities for staff as discussed above. Such an approach would not

achieve worthwhile savings and would do little to improve the viability of the school estate.

There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

- 5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

- 5.4 There have been no community lets within Luss Primary School within the last five years. Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.
- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 53 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years, an average of 10 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have remained broadly static. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls
- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. Within the village of Luss there is a hall which is available for community use.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach

taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross

- The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point. The maximum travel time for a child attending Hermitage Primary School as a result of this proposal would be 41 minutes
- The distances that pupils have to travel to and from school are clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. In addition, distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.
- The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.

5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.

5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on the roads in the Helensburgh area covered by this proposal there have been 99 road traffic accidents. Of these only 9 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and of the 99 reported incidents over five years only 6 of these involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for school transport.

5.11 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.

5.12 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below:

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO₂)	(kg of CO₂)	(kg of CO₂)	kg	%
Hermitage	210,418	210,418	0	0	0%

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO2 Reduction	
Luss	21,870	0	11,367	10,503	48%
Total	232,288	210,418	11,367	10,503	5%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Hermitage Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the "reasonable adjustments duty". The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will have no negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Luss Primary School.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. It is expected that this would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Whether or not these proposals are accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 The staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written or oral comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a

statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.

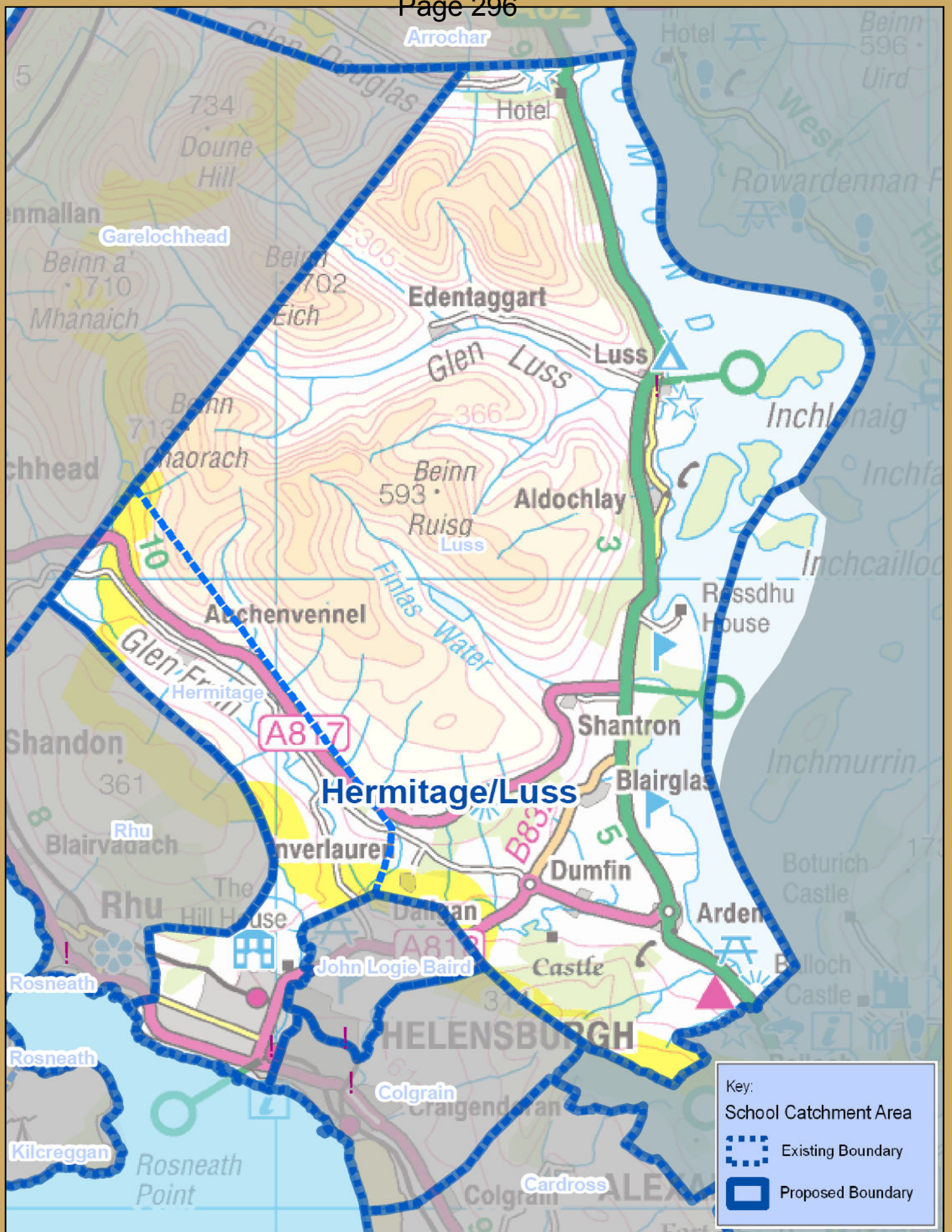
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the school, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

**Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010**

For further information contact: Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number 01369 708508.



School Catchment Proposals 2010 Hermitage/Luss

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APPENDIX

 Argyll and Bute Council
 Community Services: Education

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 Luss Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Luss Primary School continue their education at Hermitage Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Hermitage Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Luss 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)

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision
Garelochhead, Rosneath
and Kilcreggan Primary Schools
Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of Garelochhead,
Rosneath and Kilcreggan Primary Schools**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Rosneath Primary School and Kilcreggan Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Rosneath Primary School and Kilcreggan Primary School continue their education at Garelochhead Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Garelochhead Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Rosneath Primary School and Kilcreggan Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue

- HMIE
- Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- The Executive Director of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.
- 1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:
- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
 - To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection.
 - To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
 - To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
 - To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all the young people in Argyll and Bute
 - Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate a manner as possible
 - Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
 - Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- 1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

- 2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:
- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population
 - The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high

- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would

expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.

- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have seen a decline in each school over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Garelochhead		Kilcreggan		Rosneath	
	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%
2005-06	108	30	104	63	100	56
2006-07	102	28	99	60	102	57
2007-08	95	26	99	60	91	51
2008-09	109	30	85	52	89	49
2009-10	101	28	83	50	89	49
2010-11	90	25	70	42	85	47
2011-12	90	25	73	44	84	47

- 2.13 Garelochhead, Kilcreggan and Rosneath have suffered decreases of 17%, 30% and 16%, respectively, in their rolls over this period and in all three of these schools the expected occupancy rates for 2011/12 will be below 50%.

The scope of the school estate

- 2.14 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.15 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.16 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where small schools have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.17 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.18 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.19 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of at least £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.

- 2.20 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.21 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Kilcreggan Primary School and Rosneath Primary School would be discontinued with effect from June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Kilcreggan Primary School and Rosneath Primary School continue their education at Garelochhead Primary School from 16 August 2011. Pre-school provision for pupils whose home is within the catchment area of Kilcreggan Primary School or Rosneath Primary School would be available in Garelochhead Primary School.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Garelochhead Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment area of Kilcreggan Primary School and Rosneath Primary School as shown on the attached plan.
- 3.3 When deciding how the overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
 - Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll

- Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Garelochhead	24.8	5,100	29	B	4,733
Kilcreggan	42.4	5,540	15	B	4,734
Rosneath	47.2	5,146	17	C	2,114
Post Amalgamation	67.5%	3,707	11	B	1,739

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

- 3.6 The distances from Kilcreggan Primary School and Rosneath Primary School to Garelochhead Primary School are 8 miles and 6 miles, respectively, and the journey times would be around 30 minutes and 20 minutes respectively. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.8 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the two locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.7 The capacity for Garelochhead Primary School is 363 and the number of children to come from Rosneath Primary School is 84. The number of children to come from Kilcreggan Primary School is 73 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).

- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Garelohead Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1	17 +18 (with 2 teachers in room of capacity 66)
P2	24
P2/3	6 + 14
P3	22
P4	30
P4/5	9+11
P5	25
P6	30
P7	20 + 21 (with 2 teachers in room of capacity 66)
Total Roll	247
Total Number of classes	9

- 3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

- 4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.
- 4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

- 4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.

- 4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be made with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.
- 4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.
- 4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:
- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
 - Greater flexibility in grouping learners
 - Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - A wider range of staff expertise
 - Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
 - Increased management capacity.
- 4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:
- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
 - Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include Co-operative Learning, Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC), and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen

as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic

- *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum
- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be

highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

- 4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in the above paragraphs and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.9 Rosneath and Kilcreggan Primary Schools face some specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that cannot be overcome. These may include limited daily peer interaction. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction. Access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7 can be more effectively provided in a combined facility.
- 4.10 Any educational effects would be positive. The management arrangements of the school would be strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies. The proposal would increase the roll of Garelochhead Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities. Combining the schools will enable pooling of expensive resources and equipment such as gymnastic equipment and interactive whiteboards.
- 4.11 Kilcreggan and Rosneath Primary School staff work with staff from other schools in the area on professional development activities. They have recently joined with staff from other schools to form a Teacher Learning Community (TLC). This compensates for the lack of professional development opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development but brings logistic problems in particular with regard to travel. Pupils from Kilcreggan and Rosneath Primary Schools would benefit from the combined expertise of a larger team.
- 4.12 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Kilcreggan Primary School or Rosneath Primary School would benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above. Pupils in the combined school will have more shared experiences and opportunity for friendships. This will enhance their confidence and make the transition to secondary easier. At a time when the curriculum is being extended this is a significant advantage. Larger year groups make the provision of specialist

services more viable and provide enhanced opportunities for school trips.

- 4.13 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at Garelochhead Primary School would be provided to ensure that they are as good as those at Kilcreggan and Rosneath Primary School.
- 4.14 Garelochhead Primary School has easy access to school grounds which would facilitate the development of outdoor learning.
- 4.15 Pupils in Kilcreggan Primary School currently work in multi-composite classes. The combined facility would have single stage and composite classes. This proposal would result in pupils from Rosneath Primary School and Kilcreggan Primary School being in a class with a smaller age range.

Pre-school users

- 4.16 Local authorities have a duty to secure a free, part time pre-school education place for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.17 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.18 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead, they access provision closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.19 Pre-school provision in this proposal is available through a commissioned provider based in Garelochhead Primary School. Pre-school provision is offered in Kilcreggan Primary School by the local authority but there is no pre-school provision available in Rosneath Primary School. In this proposal pre-school provision would be available through the commissioned provider based in Garelochhead Primary School or through other commissioned providers in the Helensburgh and Lomond Area.

Gaelic learners

- 4.20 Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS) will continue to be provided in Garelochhead Primary School.

Placing requests

- 4.21 This proposal would 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.

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.22 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools would benefit substantially from the implementation of this and other proposals that the Council is advancing. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future throughout Argyll and Bute, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.23 There were no community lets in Kilcreggan or Garelohead Primary Schools in the last five years. There have been 114 community lets in Rosneath Primary School in the last two years with regular country dancing and youth club bookings accounting for 110 of these sessions.
- 4.24 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. Cove Burgh Hall is the 'village hall' for the communities of Cove and Kilcreggan and is some 2 miles from Kilcreggan and 4 miles from Rosneath. The Hall is already the venue of choice for many events such as dances, theatre, concerts, films, plus a host of regular weekly or monthly activities run by community groups, catering for a huge range of interest.
- 4.25 Garelohead Primary School does not experiences community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.26 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current Education review requires Education to

examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.

- 4.27 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	925,293	712,146	213,147
Property Costs	259,468	96,561	162,906
Supplies, Services and Travel	138,359	138,359	0
Income	-38,882	-38,882	0
Additional Transport		86,000	-86,000
Reduction in small schools grant		0	0
Total	1,284,238	994,185	290,053

- 4.28 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 35% of the total annual budget for operating Kilcreggan and Rosneath Primary Schools at present.

5 Rural specific issues

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

- 5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with small rolls
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

- 5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint head teacherships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above

- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Kilcreggan Primary School or Rosneath Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to these schools. Such an approach would not achieve worthwhile savings and would do little to improve the viability of the school estate
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria

5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

5.4 There were no community lets in Kilcreggan and Garelochhead Primary Schools in the five years to 2008/09. There was significant use of Rosneath Primary School by two specific bodies as described in 4.24 above. The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. In particular, Cove Burgh Hall is the 'village hall' for the communities of Cove and Kilcreggan. The Hall acts as a vibrant, focal hub for the two villages and also the wider Rosneath Peninsula community. The Hall adds social, cultural and recreational opportunities for local people.

5.5 The Council would also consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal should that be appropriate.

5.6 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.

5.7 As further evidence of this, there have been 60 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 12 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to decline.

- 5.8 The Council is aware that there are proposals to increase the staffing of the nearby Faslane Naval Base with a potential increase in the number of children requiring to be educated in the Helensburgh area. At present no planning applications have been made in relation to this potential development.

The MOD are looking at a total increase in personnel over a period in excess of 10 years to a figure of approximately 9,500. The Council is actively engaging with the MOD to ascertain and discuss how this might affect the provision of services in the area, to include education. As part of this the Council has specifically sought to ascertain from the MOD how many personnel they expect to permanently move to the area so that account of this may be taken by planning in respect of development areas and the impact this may have on infrastructure. The MOD have advised that they would expect to have to build up to 150 additional houses and 500 additional bed spaces on the base to accommodate single personnel.

The MOD have advised that at Faslane approximately 13% of current service personnel live on their own off base estates located in a number of locations in Helensburgh and Lomond. Approximately 2,500 MOD staff (no families are housed on the base) currently live on the base in hostel type accommodation with the remainder living outwith the Council Area.

This amalgamation proposal is based on the current projections of school rolls. The specific number of additional households and school aged children that might arise as a result of increased staffing cannot, at this stage, be accurately predicted. If this proposal were to be adopted the Council would operate 6 primary schools in the Helensburgh/Rhu/Cardross area which would be expected to have sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional pupils who would be generated through a future development of this size.

Garelohead, Kilcreggan and Rosneath have suffered decreases of 17%, 30% and 16%, respectively, in their rolls over this period and in all three of these schools the expected occupancy rates for 2011/12 will be below 50%.

The current available capacity of all Primary Schools in the Helensburgh and Lomond area would, if all the amalgamation proposals were to proceed, reduce from 1232 to 887 (this includes the available capacity of Garelohead Primary if that proposal were to proceed), based on rolls currently projected for 2011/12. If the MOD were to construct 150 new homes for family accommodation and all children expected to arise from the calculation were to do so then there would clearly be sufficient capacity to accommodate them in the schools in the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

What is certain is that whilst the MoD may increase the workforce at the base, this is unlikely to result in a directly proportionate effect on local services and particularly education.

The Council would also seek to use other available means, such as planning gain, to increase education capacity within the Helensburgh area should this be necessary.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.9 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point
 - The maximum travel time for a child attending Garelochhead Primary School as a result of this proposal would be 45 minutes
 - The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.
 - The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.
- 5.10 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.11 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 29 road traffic accidents. Of these only 4 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and 1 of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners

currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.

- 5.12 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.13 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below;

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
Garelochhead	110,300	110,300	0	0	0%
Kilcreggan	103,610	0	10,992	92,617	89%
Rosneath	97,736	0	14,490	83,246	85%
Total	311,645	110,300	25,482	175,864	56%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Garelochhead Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.

- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
 - Gender
 - Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
 - Belief
 - Age
 - BME (black and minority ethnic community)
- 6.5 Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the “reasonable adjustments duty”. The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.
- 6.6 Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends either Rosneath or Kilcreggan Primary School.

Conclusion

- 6.7 It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other Impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Whether or not these proposals are accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.

- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 Staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of

business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.

- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written or oral comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the school, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and

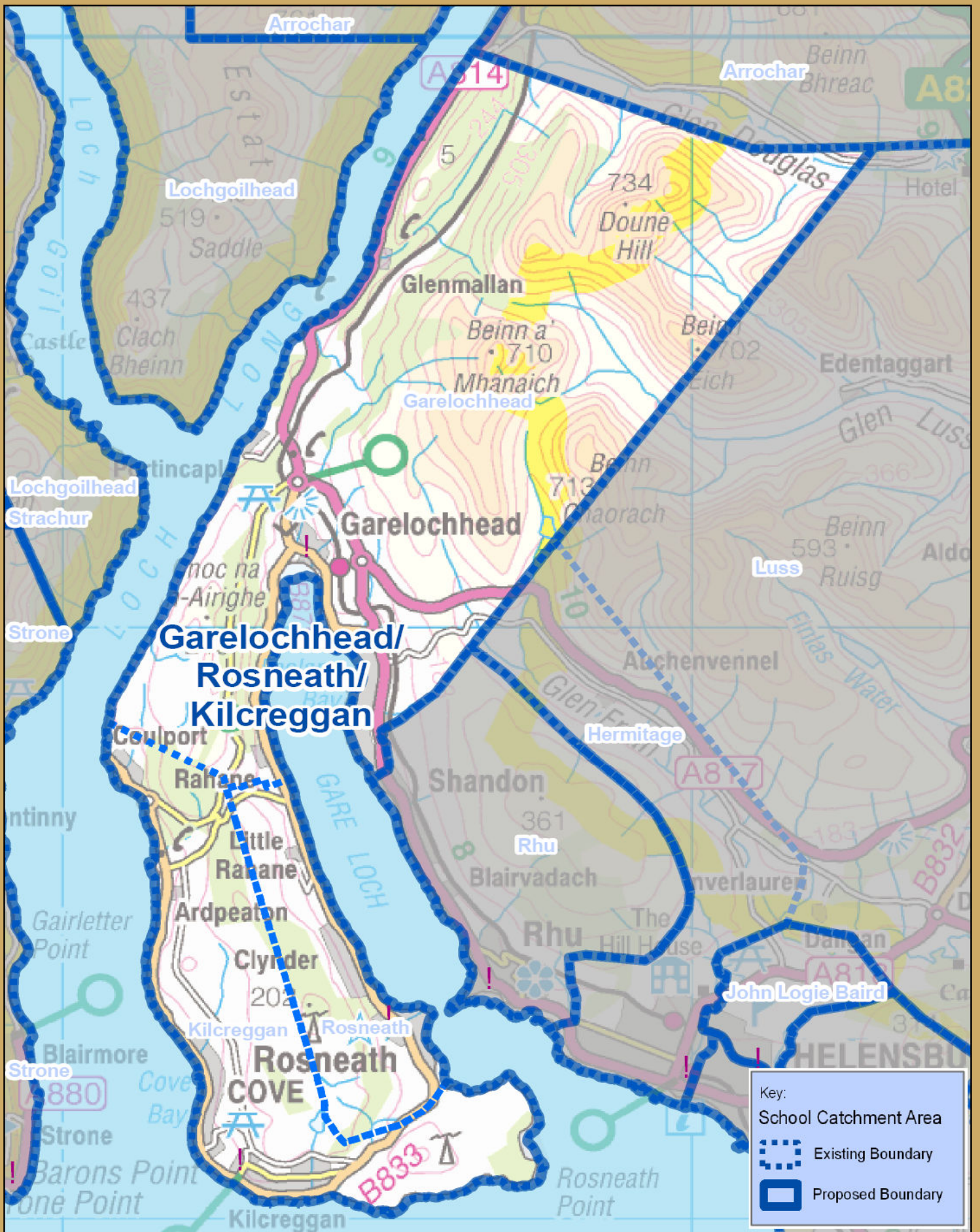
Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

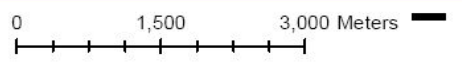
- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

**Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010**

For further information contact: Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number 01369 708508.



School Catchment Proposals 2010 Garelochhead/Rosneath/Kilcreggan



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DRAFT

**Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education**

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 Rosneath Primary School and Kilcreggan Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Rosneath Primary School and Kilcreggan Primary School continue their education at Garelochhead Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Garelochhead Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Rosneath Primary School and Kilcreggan 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)			

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision
Hermitage Academy, John Logie Baird Primary School and
Parklands School
Argyll and Bute Council

Proposal for the amalgamation of Parklands School and Hermitage Academy or John Logie Baird Primary

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Parklands School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

The function of Hermitage Academy be extended to make educational provision for secondary age pupils with profound/complex additional support needs from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The function of John Logie Baird Primary School be extended to make educational provision for preschool and primary age pupils with profound/complex additional support needs from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland

- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE
- Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- The Executive Director of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal.

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 of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT

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Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

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ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools including those with additional support needs.
- 1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:
- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all, including those with additional support needs, in Argyll and Bute
 - To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection
 - To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
 - To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
 - To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all young people, including those with additional support needs, in Argyll and Bute
 - Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate a manner as possible and wherever possible and in line with the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act, 2000: Section 15, in a mainstream school or in mainstream classes.
 - Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
 - Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- 1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

- 2.1 The principal aim of the proposal is to improve educational provision for the children and young people who currently attend Parklands School by giving them access to the wider opportunities available in a

mainstream setting. The proposal will assist the Council to manage its school estate. This is necessary because:

- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population
- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools, including one special school, are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate

2.2 In recent years the Council has successfully pursued a policy of including pupils with additional support needs in mainstream schools., therefore the roll of Parklands School has seen a decline over recent years from a roll of 21 in 2005/06 to a current roll of 10. By June 2011 the roll is expected to be 7.

The scope of the school estate

2.3 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produces the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.

2.4 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.

2.5 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.

2.6 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.

- 2.7 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.8 In the current economic situation the Council needs to find ways of delivering services as cost effectively as possible. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.
- 2.9 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.10 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Parklands School will be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011. Pupils at secondary stages in Parklands School continue their education at Hermitage

Academy from 16th August 2011. Pupils at primary stages in Parklands School continue their education at John Logie Baird Primary School from 16 August 2011

3.2 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained and in respect of this proposal that the support for children and young people with significant additional support needs would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria include changes to occupancy, cost per pupil, condition and energy use.

3.3 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Hermitage Academy	80.0	4,436	11	A	2,015
John Logie Baird	61.4	3,989	11	B	2,005
Parklands	N/A	55,437	116	B	49,261
Post Amalgamation	77.2%	4,534	11	A/B	2,000

3.4 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposal consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). The ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions. Consideration was given to the capacity of the proposed receiving schools to meet the needs of children and young people with additional support needs.

Feasibility considerations

3.5 The distance from Parklands School to John Logie Baird School is approximately 1 mile and the journey time would be around 5 minutes. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the two locations and the travel time is not considered excessive.

3.6 The distance from Parklands School to Hermitage Academy is approximately 1.2 miles and the journey time would be around 5 minutes. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to

the road between the two locations and the travel time is not considered excessive.

- 3.7 Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.4 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils and to the longest journey likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.8 The overall occupancy of the receiving schools involved in this proposal would remain materially unchanged as a result of the proposal.
- 3.9 Hermitage Academy has facilities to make provision for young people with significant additional support needs. John Logie Baird has a learning centre and with adaptations to the disabled toilet area will have the capacity to meet the needs of children with significant additional support needs.

4 Educational benefit statement

- 4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear cut.
- 4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

- 4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. Teachers working with children and young people with significant additional support needs require additional skills to ensure that all children and young people have appropriate ways of communicating e.g. Picture Communication Systems.
- 4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be estimated with reasonable certainty. Children and young people with additional support needs often require resources, ASN assistants and specialist equipment, additional to that of their peers to ensure that their needs are met appropriately. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service for all children and

young people. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes, including those related to additional support needs, within the education budget.

4.5 At present costs per pupil with significant additional support needs vary enormously e.g. in Lochgilphead Learning Centre costs are approximately £29,779 for a single child whereas in Parklands costs are £55,437 for a single child. Where there is no alternative to retaining a special school with a small roll for geographical or educational reasons, this is accepted. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils with additional support needs.

4.6 The Council assesses that extending inclusive education in the Helensburgh area could bring educational benefits including:

- Further opportunities for pupils with additional support needs to work and play amongst their respective peer groups in mainstream classes albeit for a length of time which is appropriate to each individual pupil's needs. This proposal would reduce travel to a primary school making it easier to timetable each pupil into a class for short or long periods of time.
- Increased opportunities for pupils with additional support needs to have interactions with a wider peer group in classes and at lunch and play times. Again the extent to which each individual pupil with additional support needs accesses the dinner hall and playground will be based on their individual needs.
- Increased opportunities for staff, both teaching and non-teaching, to share expertise and to take forward developments in Curriculum for Excellence as well as reducing professional isolation.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

4.7 In respect of this proposal Argyll and Bute Council will ensure that the needs of children and young people currently attending Parklands School will continue to be met in Hermitage Academy or John Logie Baird Primary School. Meetings will be held with the parents of individual pupils and Parklands' staff to discuss and plan transition from Parklands School to either Hermitage Academy or John Logie Baird. Visits to each of these schools will be arranged for parents, staff and pupils to support the transition process. The views of parents, pupils and staff will be taken into account at each step of the transition process. Where requested by parents or staff, the Council will arrange visits to mainstream schools making provision for pupils with profound/complex needs within a mainstream class or learning centre. In recent years Drummore Learning Centre, Oban and Whitegates Learning centre, Lochgilphead have very successfully amalgamated with their local mainstream schools. Feedback from parents, pupils and staff has been very positive. Argyll and Bute Council continue to strive to

fully implement its policy on inclusive education while taking account of the individual needs of pupils within inclusive practice.

- 4.8 It is envisaged that staff currently working in Parklands School will transfer with the children or young people they are working with to either Hermitage Academy or John Logie Baird Primary School. This will ensure continuity in support and will assist the transition process. Learning outcomes for pupils will continue to be detailed in a Coordinated Support Plan and an Individual Support Plan. Specialist resources and equipment will also transfer to the relevant school to ensure that all aspects of each child or young person's needs are met. Professionals from health and psychological services and other agencies will continue to provide support for individual pupils within Hermitage Academy and John Logie Baird Primary School.
- 4.9 At present each primary age pupil at Parklands School attend their local primary school for short periods each week and benefit from learning and interacting within a wider group of peers. Secondary age pupils from Parklands School attend Hermitage Academy for a short period each week and they are also benefitting from interacting with a wider group of peers. As a result of this proposal both primary and secondary age pupils will have greater opportunities to learn, play and socialise with their peers on a more regular basis while continuing to access low stimulus provision at a level appropriate to their individual needs.
- 4.10 Pupils will continue to be transported to and from school and to other activities outwith the school e.g. horse riding.
- 4.11 Positive educational benefits associated with this proposal include:
- An increase in the range of curricular, extra curricular and social activities for children and young people with additional support needs meeting, where appropriate, the extended objectives of Curriculum for Excellence
 - Increased opportunities for sharing learning experiences with their peers in a variety of subject areas delivered by specialist teachers and where appropriate in mainstream classes.
 - More options to participate at lunch time and after school activities e.g. music, craft and sport clubs as well as educational excursions.
 - Increased opportunities for peer interaction formally and informally while engaging in activities outlined above and further activities such as those associated with fund raising, school concerts and shows, festivals and celebrations of achievement in a more stimulating setting.
 - A wider range of training opportunities to develop staff skills and knowledge in a range of areas

- Opportunities for mainstream and support staff to share expertise in planning, teaching and pedagogies to support children's learning
- A reduction in professional isolation

School Facilities

- 4.12 Three pupils will continue their primary education in John Logie Baird Primary School and four pupils will continue their education in Hermitage Academy. Both of these schools can accommodate the increased roll and both are fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.

John Logie Baird Primary School has a designated learning centre and a separate Snoezelen room which, if necessary, will be further developed to meet the needs of pupils joining from Parklands School. The Snoezelen room is a therapeutic and recreational room which can be of benefit to children and young people with sensory, cognitive and physical impairment. A personal care room will be developed to ensure that pupils' personal care needs are met.

Hermitage Academy is a very new school with excellent purpose built facilities to meet the needs of all pupils including those with significant additional support needs. These facilities include a learning centre and a personal care room. A Snoezelen room will be developed in Hermitage Academy.

Where hydrotherapy sessions are detailed in a child or young person's Coordinated Support Plan, the Council will take steps to ensure that these sessions continue in the most appropriate location. Likewise where other therapies are detailed in planning to support cognitive, physical or social development the Council will take steps to ensure they continue.

Staffing

- 4.13 Staffing levels within John Logie Baird Primary School and Hermitage Academy will be enhanced to ensure that the needs of pupils currently attending Parklands School continue to be met. Teaching and non – teaching staff presently in Parklands School will be offered posts in either John Logie Baird Primary School or Hermitage Academy. A designated member of the senior leadership team in John Logie Baird Primary School and Hermitage Academy will have responsibility for ensuring that the needs of pupils with additional support needs are being met appropriately and that parents have opportunities to be involved in their child's education.

Transitions

- 4.14 John Logie Baird Primary School will continue to make provision for young children with additional support needs within its pre-school provision and will provide enhanced transition arrangements to primary education. Pupils with additional support needs will transfer from primary education to secondary education with their peers and will have extended transition arrangements in place to ensure continuity in support and progression. Parents will be fully involved in the transition process.

Placing Requests

- 4.15 This proposal will not affect the rights of parents to request that their child attends 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.

Financial impact

- 4.16 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires Education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.17 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Hermitage Academy – Post Amalgamation	John Logie Baird – Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	6,058,598	5,081,653	804,088	172,856
Property Costs	290,117	43,922	163,587	82,609
Supplies, Services and Travel	525,730	434,467	91,262	0
Income	715,726	715,726	0	0
Additional Transport	-166,790	-147,120	-19,670	0
Reduction in small schools grant		0	0	0
Total	7,423,381	6,128,649	1,039,268	255,465

- 4.18 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 46% of the total annual budget for operating Parklands School at present.

5 Specific Provisions for Rural Schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

5.1 The Council's proposal for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll.
- Create a more sustainable estate.
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

5.2 Whilst there is community use at Parklands, it is clear that there is alternative provision to meet this requirement in the immediate area.

5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

5.4 A key criterion is the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of rationalisation:

- The travel times for current Parklands pupils who would attend John Logie Baird Primary or Hermitage Academy would not alter materially from the existing arrangements

5.5 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account. Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below:

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO2 Reduction	
	(kg of CO2)	(kg of CO2)	(kg of CO2)	kg	%
Hermitage Academy	888,759	888,759	0	0	0%
John Logie Baird	152,735	152,735	0	0	0%
Parklands	124,542	0	0	124,542	100%
Total	1,166,036	1,041,495	0	124,542	11%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to John Logie Baird Primary and Hermitage Academy, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the “reasonable adjustments duty”. The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Parklands School.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA’s in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA’s then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council’s current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Should these proposals be accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council’s Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council’s Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council’s School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.

- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 The staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.
- 7.8 Staff will be allocated to the appropriate school depending on the specific requirements of the young person.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.

- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the schools, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 This proposal takes further the Council's successful policy of inclusion and will be to the educational and social benefit of the children and young people who currently attend Parklands School.
- 9.2 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010

For further information contact: Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number 01369 708508.

DRAFT

APPENDIX

**Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education**

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 Parklands School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Secondary pupils of Parklands School shall continue their education at Hermitage Academy from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The primary pupils of Parklands School shall continue their education at John Logie Baird Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011	
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)

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision
Drumlemble and Southend Primary Schools
Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of
Drumlemble and Southend Primary Schools**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Southend Primary School continue their education at Drumlemble Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011

The catchment area of Drumlemble Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)

- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE
- The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal.

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 of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT

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本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection.
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all the young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate a manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the visions and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population

- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5,816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have seen a decline in each school over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Drumlembie		Southend	
	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %
2005/06	46	46	46	62
2006-07	42	42	41	55
2007-08	38	38	38	51
2008-09	42	42	33	45
2009-10	37	37	32	43
2010-11	33	33	26	35
2011-12	27	27	22	30

Drumlemble and Southend have suffered a decrease of 41% and 52% in their rolls over this period. In both of these schools the expected occupancy rates for 2011/12 will be below 50%.

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government

to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.

- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of schools with small rolls would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Southend Primary School would be discontinued with effect from 30th June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of education at Southend Primary School continue their education at Drumlemble Primary School from 16th August 2011. Children accessing pre-school education at Southend Primary School pre-five unit can continue their pre-school education at Drumlemble Primary pre-five Unit.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal, the catchment area of Drumlemble Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School and all associated pre-school units as shown on the attached plan.
- 3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity

- Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Drumlemble	33.3	6,220	16	B	3,322
Southend	35.1	6,787	15	B	2,774
Post Amalgamation	59.6%	4,711	9	B	1,858

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

- 3.6 The distance from Southend Primary School to Drumlemble Primary School is 10 miles and the journey time would be around 30 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.7 The capacity for Drumlemble Primary School is 99 and the number of children to come from Southend Primary School is 22 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Drumlemble Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1/2	13
P3/4	18
P5/6/7	18
Total Roll	49
Total Number of classes	3

3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.

4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be estimated with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.

4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000

a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.

- 4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:
- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
 - Greater flexibility in grouping learners
 - Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - A wider range of staff expertise
 - Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
 - Increased management capacity.
- 4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:
- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
 - Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include *Co-operative Learning*, *Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC)*, and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic

- *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum
 - *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
 - Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
 - The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
 - Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.
- 4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in the above paragraph and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.9 Any educational effects would be positive. The management arrangements of Drumlemble Primary School will be strengthened and there will be increased opportunities for developing the range of the curriculum and the use of active teaching methodologies.
- 4.10 Drumlemble and Southend Primary Schools may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence. These may include limited peer interaction, limited access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5-7 pupils. This proposal would have a positive and beneficial effect in addressing these difficulties.
- 4.11 Staff at Drumlemble and Southend Primary Schools have worked with colleagues from other schools to enable extended professional development opportunities. This proposal would provide opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development including distributed leadership. Pupils from Drumlemble and Southend Primary Schools will benefit from the combined expertise of a larger staff team. On occasions expensive equipment and resources can be purchased by an area for use throughout all the schools in that area. The benefits of this to pupils will be increased due to the reduced number of schools.
- 4.12 Access to sporting, cultural and residential experiences are currently organised through cooperative working arrangements. There are existing links between the rural schools in this area and both schools considered in this proposal are within this group. Logistics for shared events would be simplified and expenses could be reduced. The fundraising potential of the combined school will be increased due to the larger parental and community catchment area. The larger community group could provide a broader range of expertise that could be utilised to enhance the learning experience of all pupils.
- 4.13 The proposal will increase the roll of Drumlemble Primary School and will thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The amalgamated school may be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities. Drumlemble School has a large open flexible teaching space suitable for teaching and learning methodologies that support Curriculum for Excellence.
- 4.14 There will be opportunities for pupils to benefit from working with more children of their own age and at a similar stage of development. This will result in a greater range of shared experiences and more opportunities for establishing wider friendships as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above.

- 4.15 Drumlemble Primary School meets all the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1996 and all children, including those with disabilities, will have access to the physical environment, information and a full and broad curriculum equivalent to Southend Primary School.

Pre-school users

- 4.16 Local authorities have a duty to secure free, part time pre-school education places for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.17 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break-down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.18 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead they access provision closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.19 Pre-school provision for Southend Primary would be available at Campbeltown Nursery, Dalintober and Drumlemble Primary Schools.

Gaelic learners

- 4.20 Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS) is not currently offered in any of the schools in this proposal so there would be no effect if the proposals were implemented.

Placing requests

- 4.21 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.

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.22 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools would benefit substantially from the implementation of this, and other proposals that the Council is advancing. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future throughout the County, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.23 During the period from 2005/06 to 2009/10 Southend Primary School has been used regularly by the community for a variety of activities and events. The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. Within the village of Southend there is a hall which is available for community use.
- 4.24 Drumlemble Primary School experiences no community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.25 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current Education review requires Education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.26 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	281,613	192,692	88,921
Property Costs	47,104	32,237	14,866
Supplies, Services and Travel	68,095	68,095	0
Income	-15,080	-15,080	0
Additional Transport		8,869	-8,869
Reduction in small schools grant		0	0
Total	381,731	286,813	94,918

- 4.27 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 54% of the total annual budget for operating Southend Primary School at present.

5 Specific provisions for rural schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Southend Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing other schools and transferring pupils to Southend Primary. Such an approach would not achieve the level of saving that can be achieved through this current proposal, nor would it be as viable an option as this current proposal
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

5.4 Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.

- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 8 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging just over 1 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to decline. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this, the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls
- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. Within the village of Southend there is a hall which is available for community use.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point
 - The maximum travel time for a child attending Drumlemble Primary School as a result of this proposal would be 38 minutes
 - The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.
- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.

- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 15 road traffic accidents. Of these none occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.
- 5.11 The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.
- 5.12 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed amalgamation to the likely output post amalgamation when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.13 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below:

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
Drumlemble	34,869	34,869	0	0	0%
Southend	39,230	0	12,491	26,739	68%
Total	74,099	34,869	12,491	26,739	36%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.

- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Drumlemble Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
 - Gender
 - Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
 - Belief
 - Age
 - BME (black and minority ethnic community)
- 6.5 Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the "reasonable adjustments duty". The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.
- 6.6 Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Southend Primary School.

Conclusion

- 6.7 It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other Impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Whether or not these proposals are accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 Staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.

- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to

the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.

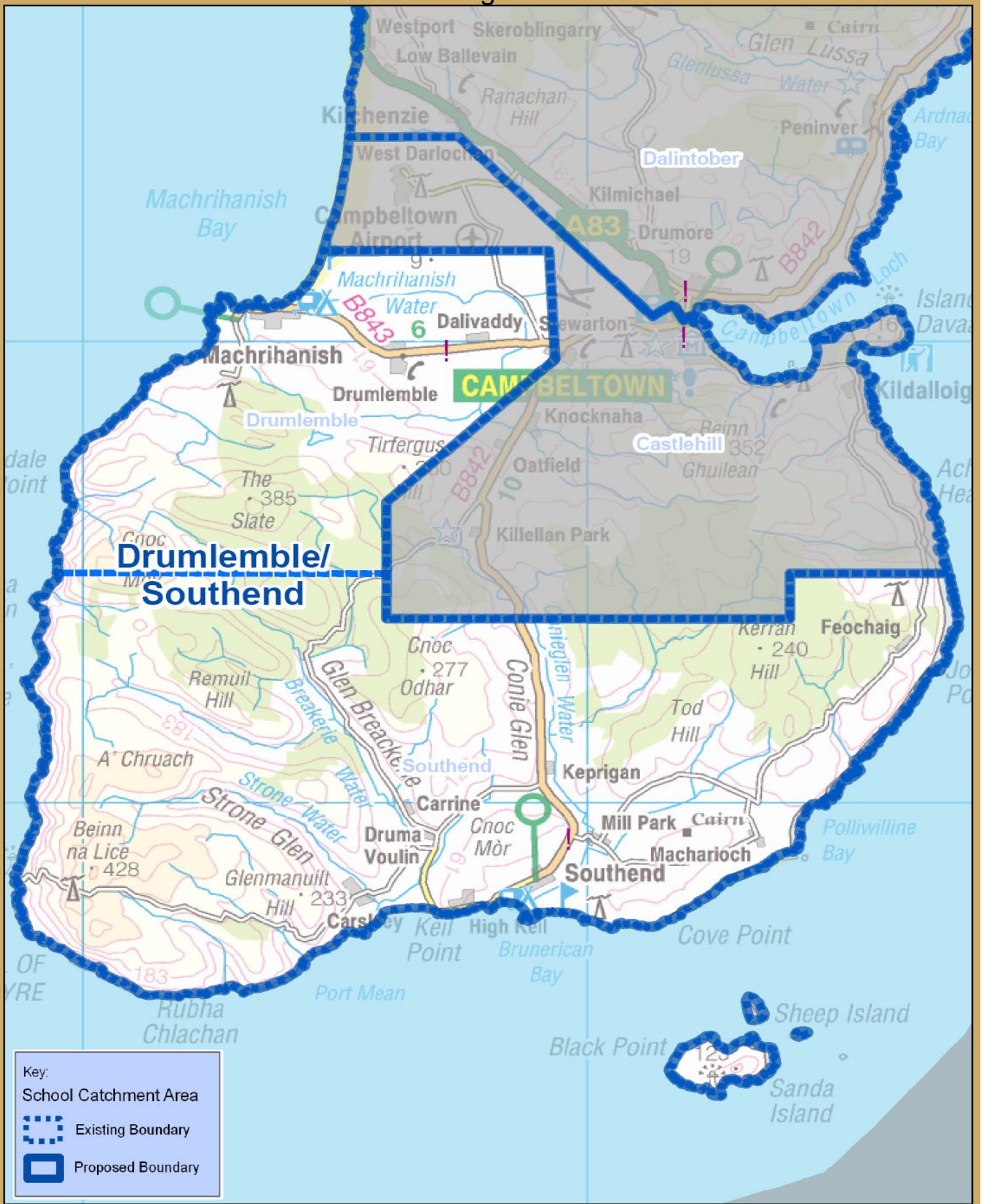
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the schools, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010

For further information contact: Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number 01369 708508.



Argyll Bute COUNCIL **School Catchment Proposals 2010**
Drumlemble/Southend

0 2,200 4,400 Meters

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APPENDIX

**Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education**

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 Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Southend Primary School continue their education at Drumlemble Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Drumlemble Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend 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)

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision at
Sandbank
and Strone Primary School

Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of
Strone and Sandbank Primary Schools**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Strone Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Strone Primary School continue their education at Sandbank Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Sandbank Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Strone Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE
- Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- The Executive Director of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council , Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoan, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal.

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the Education Service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population

- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5,816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020. This represents a rate of decline of almost double that of the last 35 years.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have seen a decline in each school over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Strone		Sandbank	
	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%
2005/06	70	58	115	55
2006-07	71	59	130	62
2007-08	65	54	126	60
2008-09	54	45	124	59
2009-10	49	41	132	63
2010-11	42	35	120	57
2011-12	39	32	110	53

- 2.13 Strone Primary School has suffered a decrease of 44% in its roll over this period and in both schools the expected occupancy rates for 2011/12 will be around 50% or less.

The scope of the school estate

- 2.14 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.15 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.16 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.17 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.18 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.19 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of at least £30m over the next three years. £12m of this will have to be found

within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.

- 2.20 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.21 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Strone Primary School will be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Strone Primary School continue their education at Sandbank Primary School from 16 August 2011.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Sandbank Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment area of Strone Primary and the associated pre-school unit as shown on the attached plan.
- 3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
 - Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll

- Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11, are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Sandbank	57.4	4,750	11	B	2,199
Strone	34.7	6,740	15	B	3,725
Post Amalgamation	77.5	4,130	8	B	1,629

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

- 3.6 The distance from Strone Primary School to Sandbank Primary School is 6.3 miles and the journey time would be around 15 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the two locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.7 The capacity for Sandbank Primary School is 209 and the number of children to come from Strone Primary School is 39 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.8 The structure for Sandbank Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and based on current rolls after amalgamation is as follows.

Year Group	Class composition
P1/2	21 = 11 +10 (in open plan area with two teachers)
P3	24
P4/5	22 = 15 + 7
P5/6	25= 5+20
P7	18
Total Roll	110 + 39 GMU
Total Number of classes	5 mainstream

3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

4.3 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be made with reasonable certainty. Allowing a growing proportion of the education budget to be absorbed by property costs will, without question, reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Reducing the number of schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other uses.

4.4 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is

not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.

4.5 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:

- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
- Greater flexibility in grouping learners
- Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
- Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
- A wider range of staff expertise
- Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
- Increased management capacity.

4.6 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:

- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
- Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include *Co-operative Learning*, *Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC)*, and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic

- *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum
 - *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
 - Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
 - The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
 - Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.
- 4.7 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in paragraph 4.6 and 4.7 and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.8 Any educational effects would be positive. The management arrangements of the school would be strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies, for example active learning and co-operative learning. The opportunities for leadership for learning by all staff will be enhanced due to the larger and more varied pool of staff available. Opportunities for professional dialogue in order to develop and improve the curriculum will be increased. The proposal would increase the roll of Sandbank Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities.
- 4.9 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Strone Primary School would benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above.
- 4.10 Strone Primary School staff work with staff from other schools in the area on professional development activities. They have recently joined with staff from other schools to form a Teacher Learning Community (TLC). This compensates for the lack of professional development opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development. Pupils from Strone Primary School would benefit from the combined expertise of a larger team. Leadership and management provision within Sandbank Primary will provide greater capacity for the development of teaching and learning.
- 4.11 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at Sandbank Primary School will be the same as or better than at Strone Primary School.
- 4.12 Strone Primary School faces a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that cannot be overcome. These may include limited peer interaction, limited access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction. This proposal would have a positive and beneficial effect in addressing these difficulties. On occasions expensive equipment and resources can be purchased by an area for use throughout all the schools in that area. The benefits of this to pupils will be increased due to the reduced number of schools.

Access to sporting, cultural and residential experiences are currently organised through cooperative working arrangements with other

schools in the area. These arrangements would continue with the added benefit of larger peer groups within which pupils can prepare for and reflect on experiences. Logistics for shared events would be simplified and expenses for transportation to events / locations be reduced. The fundraising potential of the combined school will be increased due to the larger parental and community catchment area.

Pre-school users

- 4.13 Local authorities have a duty to secure free, part time pre-school education places for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.14 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break-down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.15 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead they access provision, closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.16 There is currently no pre-school provision in Strone Primary School but this proposal would offer available pre-school provision at Sandbank Primary School. In addition there is a Gaelic Pre-5 Unit located in Sandbank Primary.

Gaelic learners

- 4.17 Gaelic medium learners in the Cowal area attend the Gaelic Unit in Sandbank Primary School so there would be no effect if the proposals were implemented. Gaelic language in the primary school will continue to be provided in Sandbank Primary School

Placing requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.19 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools will benefit substantially from the implementation of this and other proposals that the Council is advancing. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct

educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal will benefit all pupils, present and future, throughout Argyll and Bute, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.20 There have been no community lets of Strone Primary School since 2005. The current levels of community use do not indicate that the school fulfils a particular need within the community. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. The community who currently access Strone Primary School will continue to be able to use Highgate Hall which is available for community use in Kilmun which is 1 mile from Strone.
- 4.21 Sandbank Primary School experiences some community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.22 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.23 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	664,902	528,856	136,046
Property Costs	127,114	79,045	48,069
Supplies, Services and Travel	92,277	92,277	0
Income	-31,167	-31,167	0
Additional Transport		10,000	-10,000
Reduction in Small School Grant		71,133	-71,133
Total	853,126	750,144	102,982

- 4.24 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 36% of the total annual budget for operating Strone Primary School at present.

5 Specific provisions for rural schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

- 5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

- 5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Strone Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to Strone Primary School. This would be impractical given the enhanced facilities available at Sandbank Primary School. Such an approach would not achieve worthwhile savings and would do little to improve the viability of the school estate
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

- 5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

- 5.4 There have been no community lets of Strone Primary School since 2005. Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community

to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.

- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 34 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 6.8 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to decline. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls
- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. The community who currently access Strone Primary School will continue to be able to use Highgate Hall which is available for community use in Kilmun which is 1 mile from Strone.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point
 - The maximum travel time for a child attending Sandbank Primary School as a result of this proposal would be 34 minutes
 - The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in

the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.

- The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.

- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 18 road traffic accidents. Of these only 4 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none of the incidents which occurred that these times involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.
- 5.11 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.12 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below;

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
Sandbank	87,247	87,247	0	0	0%
Strone	66,033	0	7,370	58,664	89%
Total	153,281	87,247	7,370	58,664	38%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the

education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.

- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Sandbank Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the "reasonable adjustments duty". The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Strone Primary School.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out

detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Should these proposals be accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).

- 7.7 The staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 A summary of this document will be issued free of charge to all of the consultees listed on page 2 and it will also be published on the Council's website: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic

and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.

- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the schools, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

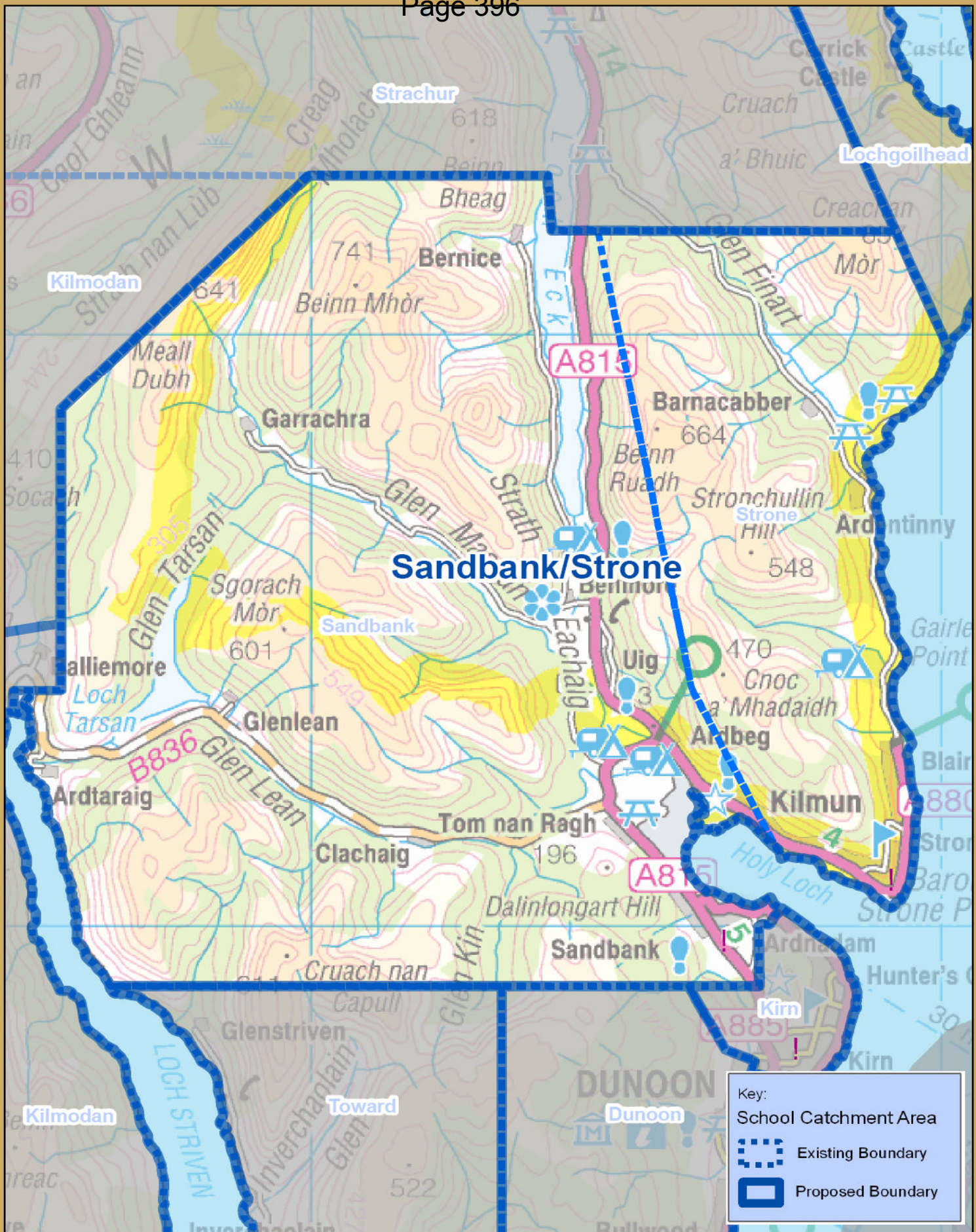
9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

**Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010**

For further information contact: Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council
Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone
number 01369 708508.

DRAFT



School Catchment Proposals 2010

Sandbank/Strone

0 1,600 3,200 Meters

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APPENDIX

 Argyll and Bute Council
 Community Services: Education

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 Strone Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Strone Primary School continue their education at Sandbank Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Sandbank Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Strone 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)

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision
St Kieran's and Castlehill Primary Schools
Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of St Kieran's
and Castlehill Primary Schools**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at St Kieran's Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of St Kieran's continue their education at Castlehill Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of St Kieran's Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE
- The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

- Bishop of RC Diocese of Argyll and the Isles

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A copy of this document is also available from:

- The Executive Director of Community Services , Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal.

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

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یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the Education Service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection.
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all the young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population

- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5,816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant and steadily growing proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have seen a decline in each school over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	St Kieran's		Castlehill	
	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%
2005/06	24	31.6%	289	73
2006-07	20	26.3%	276	70
2007-08	12	15.8%	257	65
2008-09	12	15.8%	243	62
2009-10	5	6.6%	219	56
2010-11	0	0	197	50
2011-12	0	0	187	47

St Kieran's is now empty due to voluntary transfer of the remaining children to Castlehill and Dalintober.

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant over capacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over the next three years. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.

- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of schools with small rolls would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at St Kieran's Primary School would be discontinued with effect from 30th June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of education at St Kieran's Primary Schools continue their education at Castlehill Primary School from 16th August 2011.
- 3.2 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
 - Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
 - Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

- 3.3 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Castlehill	50.0	3,972	13	B	1,985
St Kierans	0.0	125,908	0	B	0
Post Amalgamation	50.0%	3,669	13	B	1,985

- 3.4 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

- 3.5 The distance from St Kieran's Primary School to Castlehill Primary School is less than a mile and the journey time would be less than 5 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.6 The capacity for Castlehill Primary School is 394 and the number of children to come from St Kieran's Primary School is 0 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.7 The basis for grouping classes within Castlehill Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1	18
P2	21
P3	23
P4	27
P5	21
P6	37
P7	40
Total Roll	187
Total Number of classes	7

3.8 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.

4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be estimated with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.

4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.

- 4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:
- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
 - Greater flexibility in grouping learners
 - Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - A wider range of staff expertise
 - Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
 - Increased management capacity.
- 4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:
- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
 - Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include *Co-operative Learning*, *Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC)*, and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic
 - *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their

learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum

- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

- 4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in the above paragraph and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future Pupils

- 4.9 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools will benefit substantially from the implementation of this proposal and others included in the Council's current programme of school estate rationalisation. The

sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal will benefit all pupils, present and future throughout Argyll and Bute, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

- 4.10 St Kieran's faces a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that cannot be overcome. These may include limited peer interaction, limited access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction. This proposal would have a positive and beneficial effect in addressing these difficulties.
- 4.11 Any educational benefits are likely to be positive and there will be increased opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and the use of active teaching methodologies for pupils in St Kieran's Primary School.
- 4.12 Staff at St Kieran's Primary School have worked with colleagues from other schools to enable extended professional development opportunities. This proposal would provide opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development. Pupils St Kieran's Primary School will benefit from the combined expertise of a larger staff team.
- 4.13 There are already existing links between the schools in this area and access to sporting, cultural and residential experiences are currently organised through cooperative working arrangements. There are logistical and financial implications associated with this way of working. The larger school will be able to support a wider range of social and extra curricular activities.
- 4.14 There will be greater opportunities for the development of the Early Level of *Curriculum for Excellence* through Active Learning Methodologies making transition from Pre 5 to Primary 1 more effective.
- 4.15 There will be opportunities for pupils to benefit from working with different groups of children of their own age and stage of development. This will result in a greater range of shared experiences and more opportunities for establishing wider friendships as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above.

- 4.16 Castlehill Primary School has a Learning Centre, which is an integral part of the school's provision with adapted facilities, enhanced staffing and resources. This will ensure that pupils with additional support needs, including those with disabilities, have access to a full and broad curriculum equivalent to that at St Kieran's Primary School. In terms of the whole-school physical environment, Castlehill has four entrances, which have been adapted for wheelchair access. There is also an adapted toilet at the reception area. However, there is no wheelchair access to the upper level of the school.

Pre-school users

- 4.17 Local authorities have a duty to secure free, part time pre-school education places for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.18 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break-down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.19 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead they access provision, closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.20 There is currently no pre-school provision in St Kieran's Primary School and this Proposal will not alter the current arrangements.

Gaelic learners

- 4.21 Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS) is not currently offered in any of the schools in this proposal so there would be no effect if the proposals were implemented.

Placing requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.23 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools would benefit substantially from the implementation of this and other proposals being advanced by the Council. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct

educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future, throughout the County, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.24 St Kieran's has had no pupils for the last two years and has had no community lets during that time. The current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place.
- 4.25 Castlehill Primary School experiences some community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.26 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.27 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	690,956	529,083	161,873
Property Costs	145,173	121,357	23,816
Supplies, Services and Travel	115,340	115,340	0
Income	-42,997	-42,997	0
Additional Transport		0	0
Reduction in small schools grant		0	0
Total	908,472	722,783	185,689

5 Specific provisions for rural schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- Whilst St Kieran's is included in this proposal, there are currently no pupils as all pupils have moved voluntarily to Dalintober and Castlehill Primary Schools.

5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

5.4 Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that St Kieran's fulfils a particular need within the community.

5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.

5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 24 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 4.8 per year. During this period the rolls

at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to decline. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this, the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls

- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:

- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
- The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
- The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point
- The maximum travel times for a child attending Castlehill Primary School as a result of this proposal would be no greater than the current arrangements.
- The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.
- The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.

- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.

- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and

2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 29 road traffic accidents. Of these only 3 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.

- 5.11 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed amalgamation to the likely output post amalgamation when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.12 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below:

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
Castlehill	134,780	134,780	0	0	0%
St Kieran's	31,610	0	0	31,610	100%
Total	166,390	134,780	0	31,610	19%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Castlehill Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any

of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.

- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

- 6.5 Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the "reasonable adjustments duty". The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

- 6.6 Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends St Kieran's Primary School.

Conclusion

- 6.7 It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Whether or not these proposals are accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 Staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.

8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the schools, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.

9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

**Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010**

For further information contact: Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number 01369 708508.

DRAFT

APPENDIX

 Argyll and Bute Council
 Community Services: Education

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 St Kieran's Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of St Kieran's continue their education at Castlehill Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of St Kieran's 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)

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision
at Lochnell, Achaleven Ardchattan and
Barcaldine Primary Schools

Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of
Lochnell, Achaleven, Ardchattan and
Barcaldine Primary Schools**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Achaleven, Ardchattan and Barcaldine Primary Schools shall be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Achaleven, Ardchattan and Barcaldine Primary Schools continue their education at Lochnell Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment areas of Achaleven, Ardchattan and Barcaldine Primary Schools.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk.

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Council of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland

- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE
- Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- The Executive Director of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council , Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਫਿੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.
- 1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:
- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
 - To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection.
 - To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
 - To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
 - To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all the young people in Argyll and Bute
 - Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate manner as possible
 - Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
 - Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- 1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

- 2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:
- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population
 - The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
 - Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils

- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5,816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 Whilst the roll of Barcaldine Primary has slightly increased, the rolls of Achaleven and Ardchattan schools have seen a decline over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Achaleven		Ardchattan		Barcaldine		Lochnell	
	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %
2005/06	61	97%	13	23%	20	83%	79	45%
2006-07	52	83%	10	18%	23	96%	80	45%
2007-08	54	86%	12	21%	22	92%	92	52%
2008-09	39	62%	10	18%	21	88%	92	52%
2009-10	27	43%	9	16%	23	96%	87	49%
2010-11	9	14%	5	9%	23	96%	92	52%
2011-12	13	21%	3	5%	21	88%	91	51%

Achaleven has suffered a decrease of 76% in roll over this period.
Ardchattan's expected occupancy rates for 2011/12 will be below 50%.

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.

- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over the next three years. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.
- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other

staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Achaleven Primary School, Ardchattan Primary School and Barcaldine Primary School would be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Achaleven Primary School, Ardchattan Primary School and Barcaldine Primary School continue their education at Lochnell Primary School from 16 August 2011.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Lochnell Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment area of Achaleven Primary School, Ardchattan Primary School and Barcaldine Primary School as shown on the attached plan.
- 3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
 - Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
 - Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.
- 3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Achaleven	14.3	16,213	31	B	7,580

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Ardchattan	8.8	22,202	49	C	13,620
Barcaldine	100.0	4,947	4	C	869
Lochnell	52.0	8,241	8	B	1,487
Post Amalgamation	72.9%	4,382	6	B	1,061

- 3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

- 3.6 The distance from Achaleven Primary School to Lochnell Primary School is 3.5 miles and the journey time would be around 15 minutes. The distance from Ardchattan Primary School to Lochnell Primary School is 9.5 miles and the journey time would be around 20 minutes. The distance from Barcaldine Primary School to Lochnell Primary School is 4.5 miles and the journey time would be around 15 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.7 The capacity for Lochnell Primary School is 177 and the number of children to come from Achaleven Primary School is 13, from Ardchattan Primary School is 3 and from Barcaldine Primary School is 21 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Lochnell Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1	16
P1/2	18 = 6 + 12
P2/3	22 = 7 + 15
P3/4	15 = 6 + 9
P5	24
P6	17
P7	16
Total Roll	128
Total Number of classes	7

3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.

4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be made with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.

4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.

4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:

- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
- Greater flexibility in grouping learners

- Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
- Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
- A wider range of staff expertise
- Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
- Increased management capacity.

4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:

- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
- Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. These include Co-operative Learning, Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC), and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll, opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and, indeed, effective sharing of standards is problematic
- *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum
- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school

itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available

- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

- 4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in the above paragraph and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.9 Any educational effects would be positive. The management arrangements of the school would be strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies, for example active learning and co-operative learning. The opportunities for leadership for learning by all staff will be enhanced due to the larger and more varied pool of staff available. Opportunities for professional dialogue in order to develop and improve the curriculum will be increased. The proposal would increase the roll of Lochnell Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities.

- 4.10 All pupils in the combined facility would be able to access meals cooked on the premises.
- 4.11 Achaleven, Ardchattan and Barcaldine Primary Schools face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that cannot be overcome. These may include limited peer interaction, limited access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction. On occasions expensive equipment and resources can be purchased by an area for use throughout all the schools in that area. The benefits of this to pupils will be increased due to the reduced number of schools.
- 4.12 Pupils who would otherwise have attended at Achaleven Primary School, Ardchattan Primary School and Barcaldine Primary School would benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above. The opportunity to further develop the transition arrangements to Oban High School, including visits to primaries and visits into the High School will be easier to facilitate as there will be one establishment instead of four.
- 4.13 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at Lochnell Primary School would be the same as or better than at Achaleven Primary School, Ardchattan Primary School and Barcaldine Primary School .
- 4.14 All of the schools considered in this proposal have existing links with at least another school in the proposal. Access to sporting, cultural and residential experiences are currently organised through cooperative working arrangements with other schools in the area. For example, Lochnell Primary School and Achaleven Primary School pupils attend an annual residential outdoor week. Pupils from Barcaldine Primary School and Ardchattan Primary School join with other schools in their Cooperative to undertake sporting activities in Oban on a regular basis. There are logistical and financial implications associated with this way of working. As a result of the proposed change a larger, more flexible peer group will be created within which children would prepare for and reflect on experiences. The fundraising potential of the combined school will be increased due to the larger parental and community catchment area.
- 4.15 Staff at Achaleven Primary School, Ardchattan Primary School and Barcaldine Primary School have worked with colleagues from other small schools to compensate for the lack of professional development opportunities. This proposal would provide opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development. Pupils from Achaleven Primary School, Ardchattan Primary School and Barcaldine Primary School will benefit from the combined expertise of a larger staff team.

Pre-school users

- 4.16 Local authorities have a duty to secure a free, part time pre-school education place for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.17 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.18 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead access provision, closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.19 There is currently no pre-school provision in Achaleven Primary School, Ardchattan Primary School and Barcaldine Primary School. Many of the children who might fall within the catchment areas of these primary schools access the provision which exists at Lochnell Primary School. *Curriculum for Excellence* places particular emphasis on outcomes and approaches shared across pre five to primary transition. Argyll and Bute Council currently promotes joint working at early years. Under this proposal, children attending pre-school provision at Lochnell Primary School will benefit from joint working arrangements within the school which will improve continuity and progress in their learning.

Gaelic

- 4.20 Gaelic medium learners in the Oban and Lorn area attend the Gaelic Unit in Rockfield Primary School or in Strath of Appin Primary School. Gaelic learner provision will continue in Lochnell Primary School.

Placing requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.22 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools will benefit substantially from the implementation of this and other proposals that the Council is advancing. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future throughout the County, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.23 Achaleven and Ardchattan Primary Schools proposal have experienced regular community use over the past 5 years. The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. There are currently village halls available for community use in Benderloch, Connel and North Connel which are a short distance from the schools involved in the proposal.
- 4.24 Lochnell Primary School experiences no community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.25 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.26 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	657,835	440,640	217,195
Property Costs	83,365	47,472	35,893
Supplies, Services and Travel	103,646	103,646	0
Income	-26,439	-26,439	0
Additional Transport		22,390	-22,390
Reduction in small schools grant		67,485	-67,485
Total	818,407	655,195	163,213

- 4.27 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 40% of the total annual budget for operating Achaleven, Ardchattan and Barcaldine Primary Schools at present.

5 Specific Provisions for Rural Schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Achaleven Primary School and Ardchattan Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to either of these two schools. Such an approach would create added logistical problems such as transport difficulties, and would not achieve worthwhile savings. This would not significantly improve the viability of the school estate. It would not be possible to increase the roll of Barcaldine Primary School by closing another school as it is almost at capacity
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

5.4 Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.

- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 37 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 7.4 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to decline. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls
- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point
 - The maximum travel time for a child attending Lochnell Primary School as a result of this proposal would be 22 minutes
 - The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.
 - The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.
- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.

- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 15 road traffic accidents. Of these only 3 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.
- 5.11 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.12 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below;

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
Achaleven	37,113	0	4,372	32,741	88%
Ardchattan	26,299	0	10,368	15,931	61%
Barcaldine	14,178	0	11,242	2,936	21%
Lochnell	74,438	74,438	0	0	0%
Total	152,028	74,438	25,982	51,608	34%

6 Equal Opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Lochnell Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation

of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.

- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the "reasonable adjustments duty". The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Achaleven, Ardchattan and Barcaldine Primary Schools.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Whether or not these proposals are accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.

- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 Staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk.
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period of at least 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions

and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.

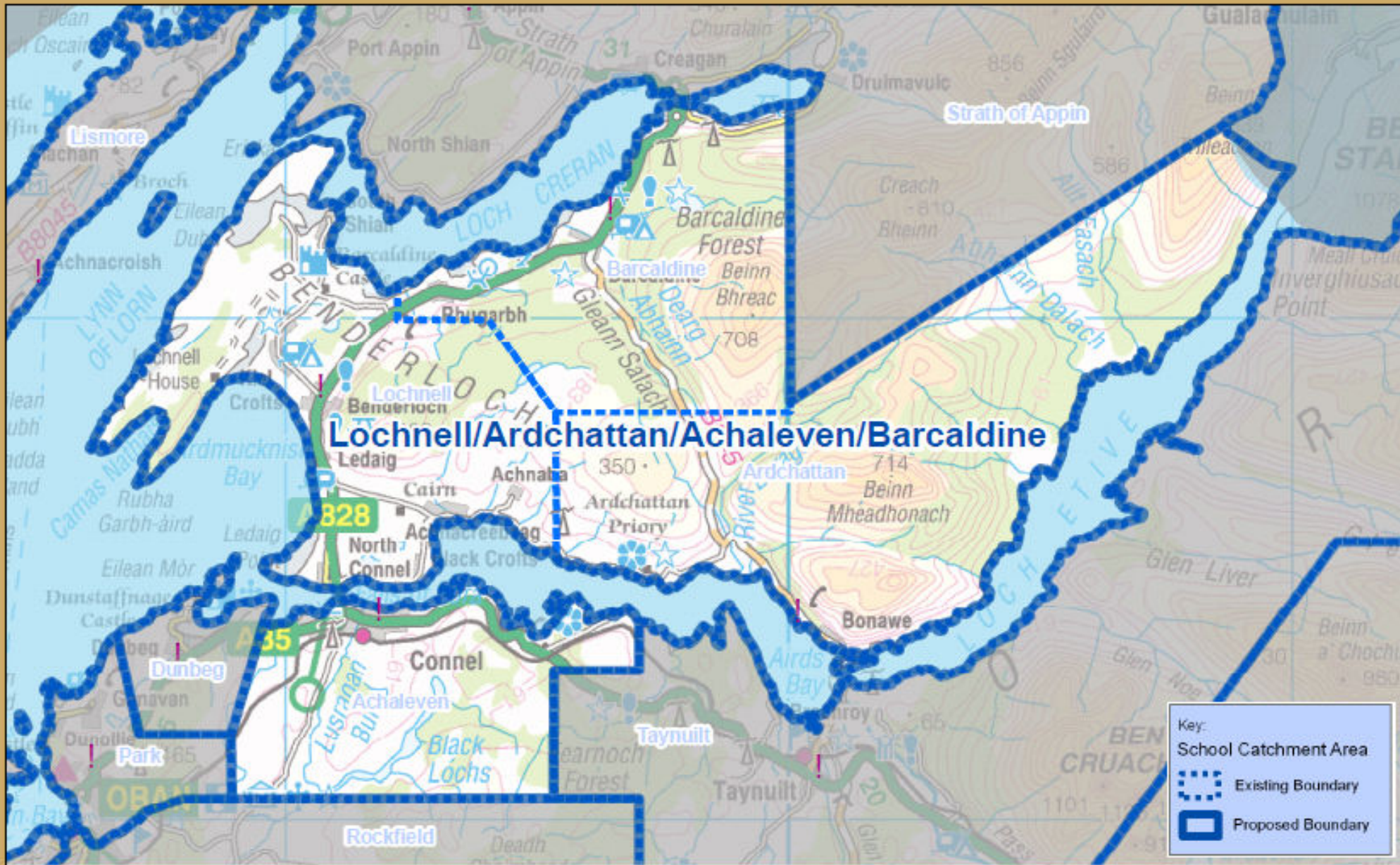
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the schools, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

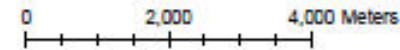
- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

**Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010**

For further information contact: Carol Walker, Head of Education, Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council, Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number 01369 708508.



School Catchment Proposals 2010
Lochnell/Ardchattan/Achaleven/Barcaldine



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Draft

APPENDIX

 Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: 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 Achaleven, Ardchattan and Barcaldine Primary Schools shall be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Achaleven, Ardchattan and Barcaldine Primary Schools continue their education at Lochnell Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment areas of Achaleven, Ardchattan and Barcaldine Primary Schools.	
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)

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

**Review of Education Provision
Taynuilt and Kilchrenan Primary Schools**

Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of
Taynuilt and Kilchrenan Primary School**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Kilchrenan Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Kilchrenan Primary School continue their education at Taynuilt Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Taynuilt Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Kilchrenan Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE

- The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinity of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinity of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

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ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the Education Service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all the young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate a manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population

- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020. .
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 Whilst the roll of Taynuilt Primary has increased slightly, Kilchrenan Primary has seen a decline over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Kilchrenan		Taynuilt	
	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %
2005/06	21	50%	69	68%
2006-07	23	55%	74	73%
2007-08	20	48%	77	75%
2008-09	19	45%	79	77%
2009-10	18	43%	78	76%
2010-11	10	24%	87	85%
2011-12	12	29%	79	77%

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools with a small roll have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal to be amalgamated each have an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is expected to be around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.

- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of schools with small rolls would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Kilchrenan Primary School will be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Kilchrenan Primary School continue their education at Taynuilt Primary School from 16 August 2011.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Taynuilt Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment area of Kilchrenan Primary School as shown on the attached plan.
- 3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
 - Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance

- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m ² /pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Kilchrenan	23.8	10,806	18	B	5,247
Taynuilt	85.3	4,247	7	B	1,221
Post Amalgamation	79.8%	4,280	6	B	1,095

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

- 3.6 The distance from Kilchrenan Primary School to Taynuilt Primary School is 6.5 miles and the journey time would be around 12 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the two locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.7 The capacity for Taynuilt Primary School, with the addition of new classroom space, would be 114 and the number of children to come from Kilchrenan Primary School is 12 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Taynuilt Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1 - 3	33 = 11+13+9 (with two teachers)
P4/5	20 = 9 + 11
P5/6	18 = 6 + 12
P6/7	20 = 9 + 11
Total Roll	91
Total Number of classes	4, P1-3 requiring large central double bay.

3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.

4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be made with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.

4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.

- 4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:
- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children.
 - Greater flexibility in grouping learners.
 - Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*.
 - Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
 - A wider range of staff expertise.
 - Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff.
 - Increased management capacity.
- 4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties as detailed above in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:
- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
 - Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include *Co-operative Learning*, *Thinking Actively in a Social Context* (TASC), and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic
 - *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate

ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum

- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

- 4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in the above paragraphs and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.9 Any educational effects would be positive. there is currently more management time available at Taynuilt Primary School. There would

be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active teaching methodologies, for example active learning and co-operative learning. The opportunities for leadership for learning by all staff will be enhanced. Opportunities for professional dialogue in order to develop and improve the curriculum will be increased.

- 4.10 At present meals are cooked at Taynuilt Primary School and transported to Kilchrenan Primary School. Following the amalgamation of the two schools, this would result in an improved service in this area with freshly cooked and prepared meals for all pupils. This impacts on the health and well being of pupils.
- 4.11 Kilchrenan Primary School faces a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that cannot be overcome. These may include limited peer interaction, limited access to a range of learning professionals and specialists for P5 to P7. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction.
- 4.12 It is intended to increase the number of teaching spaces in Taynuilt Primary School to better accommodate the existing school population and this will also contribute to accommodating the additional pupils from Kilchrenan Primary. The proposal would increase the roll of Taynuilt Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities. Pupils who would otherwise have attended Kilchrenan Primary School would benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above. On occasions expensive equipment and resources can be purchased by an area for use throughout all the schools in that area. The benefits of this to pupils will be increased due to the reduced number of schools.
- 4.13 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at Taynuilt Primary School would be the same as or better than at Kilchrenan Primary School.
- 4.14 The declining roll at Kilchrenan Primary School has made it increasingly difficult to provide opportunities for peer interaction and group work in line with *Curriculum for Excellence* developments. Steps have been taken by the cooperative group of which Kilchrenan Primary School and Taynuilt Primary School are members, to provide opportunities for pupils from the various schools to work together. However, these measures have organisational and financial implications. Children attending an amalgamated school would have these opportunities on a daily basis.

- 4.15 Staff at Kilchrenan Primary School have worked with colleagues from Taynuilt Primary School, as part of the cooperative structure, to enhance professional development opportunities. This proposal would provide opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development. Pupils at Kilchrenan Primary School would benefit from the combined expertise of a larger staff team.
- 4.16 Kilchrenan Primary School does not have access to a gym hall and facilities on site are reduced by the sloping nature of the playground area. Taynuilt Primary School has a fully functioning and flexible hall on site with space available to groups and classes on a daily basis. They also have extensive outdoor areas available for outdoor physical education.
- 4.17 Access to sporting, cultural and residential experiences are currently organised through cooperative working arrangements with other schools in the area. These arrangements would continue with the added benefit of larger peer groups within which pupils can prepare for and reflect on experiences. Logistics for shared events would be simplified and expenses for transportation to events/locations be reduced. The fundraising potential of the combined school may be increased due to the larger parental and community catchment area.
- 4.18 Kilchrenan Primary School staff work with staff from other schools in the area on professional development activities. They have recently joined with staff from other schools to form a Teacher Learning Community (TLC). This compensates for the lack of professional development opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development but brings logistic problems in particular with regard to travel. This proposal would ensure that pupils from Kilchrenan Primary School would benefit from the combined expertise of a larger team.

Pre-school users

- 4.19 Local authorities have a duty to secure a free, part time pre-school education place for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.20 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 Commissioned Providers.
- 4.21 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and they instead access provision closer to their place of work where this is provided.

- 4.22 The current situation would be maintained, where there is no pre-school provision in Kilchrenan Primary School and pre-school provision is available at Taynuilt Primary School. The transition process at early level from pre five to primary one will be enhanced for all pupils in the pre-school provision as all pupils will move to Taynuilt Primary School.

Gaelic

- 4.23 Gaelic medium education is available in the Oban and Lorn area at Rockfield Primary School or Strath of Appin Primary School. Gaelic learner education would be available at Taynuilt Primary the language learning development benefiting by enhanced opportunities for talking and listening with a wider group.

Placing requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.25 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools would benefit substantially from the implementation of this proposal and other proposals. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future throughout Argyll and Bute, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.26 Kilchrenan Primary School has had one community let during the period of 2005/06 to 2009/10. The current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. Within the village of Kilchrenan there is a hall which is available for community use.
- 4.27 Taynuilt Primary School experiences some community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would

be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.28 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.29 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	379,186	326,534	52,652
Property Costs	53,853	44,083	9,771
Supplies, Services and Travel	59,566	59,566	0
Income	-15,030	-15,030	0
Additional Transport		12,933	-12,933
Reduction in small schools grant		21,887	-21,887
Total	477,576	449,973	27,603

- 4.30 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 26% of the total annual budget for operating Kilchrenan Primary School at present.

5 Specific provisions for rural schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

- 5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:
- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
 - Create a more sustainable estate
 - Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint head teacherships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Kilchrenan Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to Kilchrenan Primary School. The nearest school would be Taynuilt Primary School and the capacity of Kilchrenan Primary School is too small to allow this option
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

5.4 Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.

5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.

5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 58 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 11.6 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to decline. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls.

- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. Within the village of Kilchrenan there is a hall which is available for community use.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point. The maximum travel time for a child attending Taynuilt Primary School as a result of this proposal would be 39 minutes
 - The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.
- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 12 road traffic accidents. Of these only 3 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.
- 5.11 The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along

school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.

- 5.12 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.13 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below;

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
Kilchrenan	28,542	0	2,232	26,310	92%
Taynuilt	71,374	71,374	0	0	0%
Total	99,916	71,374	2,232	26,310	26%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Taynuilt Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the “reasonable adjustments duty”. The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Kilchrenan Primary School.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. It is expected that this would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Whether or not these proposals are accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school.

As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.

- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 Staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons

for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.

- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the school, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take

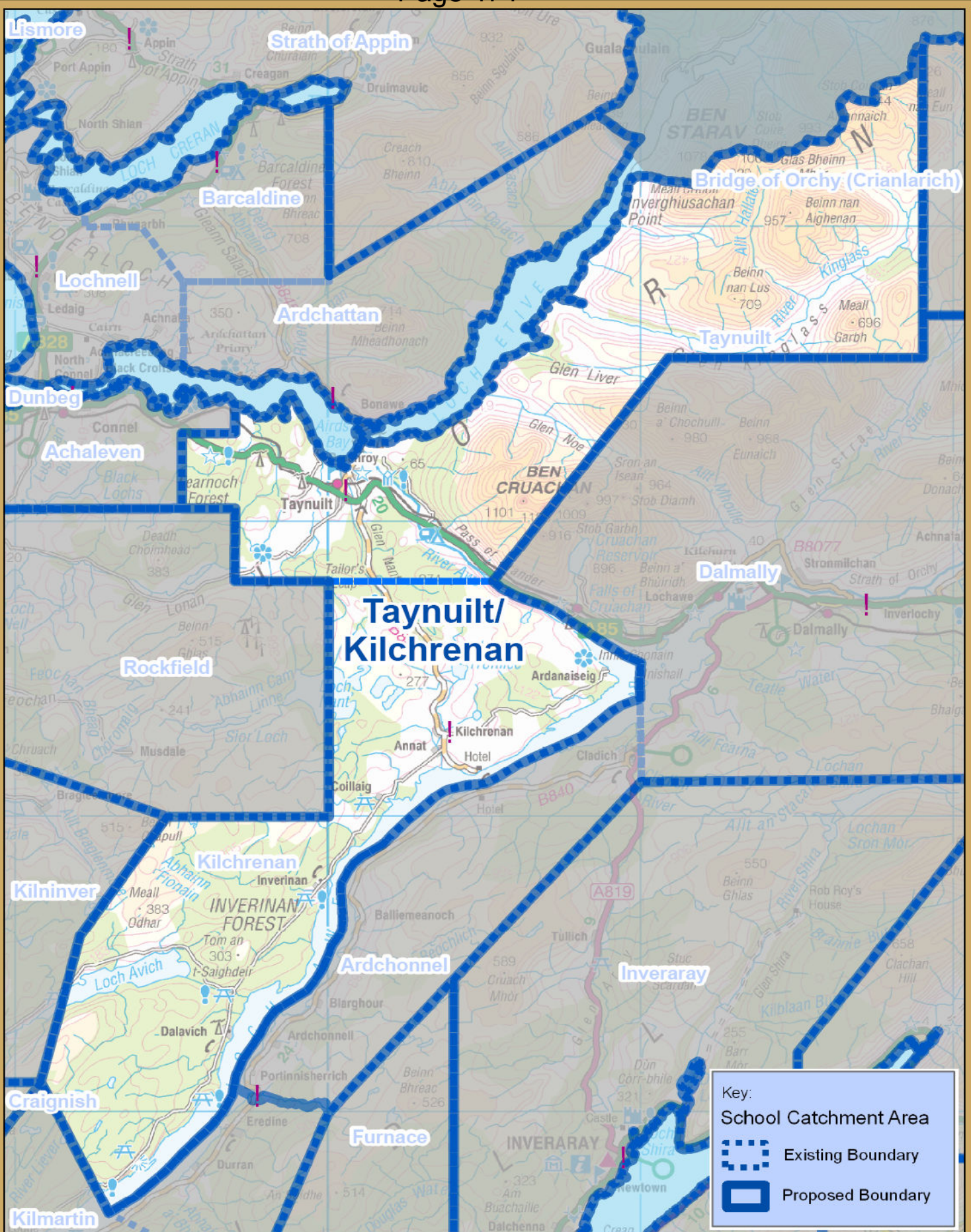
account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6-week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

**Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010**

For further information contact: Carol Walker, Head of Education, Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council, Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone 01369 708508



School Catchment Proposals 2010

Taynuilt/Kilchrenan

0 3,300 6,600 Meters

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APPENDIX

 Argyll and Bute Council
 Community Services: Education

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 Kilchrenan Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Kilchrenan Primary School continue their education at Taynuilt Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Taynuilt Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Kilchrenan 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)

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Argyll and Bute Council

Community Services: Education

Education Provision

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision

Dalmally, Kilmartin, Ardchnonnell Primary Schools

Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of
Ardchnonnel Primary School and Dalmally Primary School
or Kilmartin Primary School**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Ardchnonnel Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Ardchnonnel Primary School continue their education at Dalmally Primary School or Kilmartin Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment areas of Dalmally Primary School and Kilmartin Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ardchnonnel Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police

- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE
- The Highlands and Islands Transportation Partnership (HITRANS)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the Education Service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection.
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all the young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate a manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Councils area for the size of the pupil population
- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high

- Schools are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.

- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its Education Services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have generally seen a decline in each school over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Ardchnonnell		Kilmartin		Dalmally	
	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %
2005/06	3	8%	46	81%	52	39%
2006-07	3	8%	57	100%	59	45%
2007-08	0	0%	58	102%	58	44%
2008-09	0	0%	53	93%	48	36%
2009-10	0	0%	54	95%	46	35%
2010-11	0	0%	39	68%	41	31%
2011-12	0	0%	41	72%	31	23%

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.
- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of schools with small rolls would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Ardchnonnel Primary School will be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that any future pupils in the current catchment area of Ardchnonnel Primary School undertake their education at Dalmally Primary School or Kilmartin Primary School from 16 August 2011. Pre-school provision for pupils whose home is within the catchment area of Ardchnonnel Primary School will continue in either Kilmartin or Dalmally Primary Schools as at present.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal, the catchment areas of Dalmally and Kilmartin Primary Schools and associated pre-school units would be extended to include the current catchment area of Ardchnonnel Primary School as shown on the attached plans.
- 3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any

proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:

- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
- Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance.
- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m ² /pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Ardchnonnel	0.0	0	0	N/A	0
Dalmally	31.1	5,808	14	B	3,446
Kilmartin	68.4	5,409	13	B	2,194
Post Amalgamation	42.3	5,636	14	B	2,836

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

There would be no changes to occupancy levels/costs per pupil/condition and energy use as there are no pupils at Ardchnonnel Primary.

Feasibility considerations:

3.6 The distance from Ardchnonnel Primary School to Dalmally Primary School is 20 miles and the journey time would be around 40 minutes. The distance from Ardchnonnel Primary School to Kilmartin Primary School is 18 miles and the journey time would be around 50 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. The redefined catchment area would be from Ardchnonnel Primary School north to Dalmally Primary School and from Ardchnonnel Primary School south to Kilmartin Primary School. There are no specific

known safety concerns with regard to the road between the two locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.

- 3.7 The capacity for Dalmally Primary School is 132 and the capacity for Kilmartin Primary is 57. At the present time there are no pupils at Ardchnonnel Primary School to transfer to either school.
- 3.8 There would be no change to the class structure of either Dalmally Primary School or Kilmartin Primary School.

4 Educational benefit statement

- 4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.
- 4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

- 4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.
- 4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be estimated with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a damaging effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.
- 4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a

year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a small school for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.

4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:

- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
- Greater flexibility in grouping learners
- Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
- Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
- A wider range of staff expertise
- Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
- Increased management capacity.

4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:

- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
- Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include Co-operative Learning, Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC), and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic

- *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum
- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in the above paragraph and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

- 4.9 As there are no pupils transferring, the effect of implementing the proposal on present and future pupils from the catchment areas of Ardchnnell, Dalmally and Kilmartin Primary Schools would be neutral.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

There have been no pupils in Ardchnnell Primary School since school session 2006/2007 and therefore the educational benefits specific to this proposal are not relevant.

Pre-school users

- 4.10 Local authorities have a duty to secure a free, part time pre-school education place for all eligible children, should their parents wish one. Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 Commissioned Providers.
- 4.11 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and they instead access provision closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.12 Ardchnnell Primary School did not have pre-school provision. Current pre-school pupils in the Ardchnnell Primary School catchment area travel to Dalmally Primary School or Kilmartin Primary School. Future pre-school pupils would travel to the receiving school as delineated by the revised catchment areas.

Gaelic

- 4.13 Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS) is offered in both Dalmally and Kilmartin Primary School and this provision will continue.

Placing requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.15 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools would benefit substantially from the implementation of this proposal and other proposals. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the

greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future throughout Argyll and Bute by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.16 None of the schools affected by this proposal had any community lets during the period from 2005/06 to 2009/10. The current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place.

Financial impact

- 4.17 Council has a clear vision for its education service which is based on striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings being which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.18 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	371,986	371,986	0
Property Costs	44,074	44,074	0
Supplies, Services and Travel	49,364	49,364	0
Income	-14,570	-14,570	0
Additional Transport		0	0
Reduction in small schools grant		0	0
Total	450,855	450,855	0

5 Specific provision for rural schools

The Council has had special regard to the undernoted factors when considering this proposal:

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with small rolls
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

5.2 In formulating the current proposal, the Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities and these include;

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above.
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Ardchnonnel Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to Ardchnonnel Primary School. This is not feasible due to the fact that Ardchnonnel Primary School has had no pupils since 2006/2007. In addition, the capacity of Archonnel Primary School is 38 and the school would not be able to receive sufficient pupils from another school to make this option educationally viable. Such an approach would also incur costs and would do little to improve the viability of the school estate
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within the school building.

5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

5.4 Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.

- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 46 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 9.2 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to decline. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls
- 5.7 As the school has been mothballed since the start of Session 2007/8 there has been no use of the building by community users for three years.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point
 - The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes
 - The time it takes for pupils have to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.
- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that

there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.

- 5.11 The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.
- 5.12 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal. The school has not been operational for 3 years and does not currently produce any significant CO2 emissions. However, as there will be no additional transportation requirements resulting from the proposal the overall effect on the carbon footprint of the affected schools will be neutral.

6 Equal Opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Ardchnonnell Primary and its amalgamation with either Dalmally and Kilmartin Primary Schools, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age

- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the "reasonable adjustments duty". The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Ardchnonnell Primary School.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. It is expected that this would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Whether or not these proposals are accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards
- 7.3 Staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.

The Council will then receive a report on the consultation and will reach a view on the proposal.

- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the

requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.

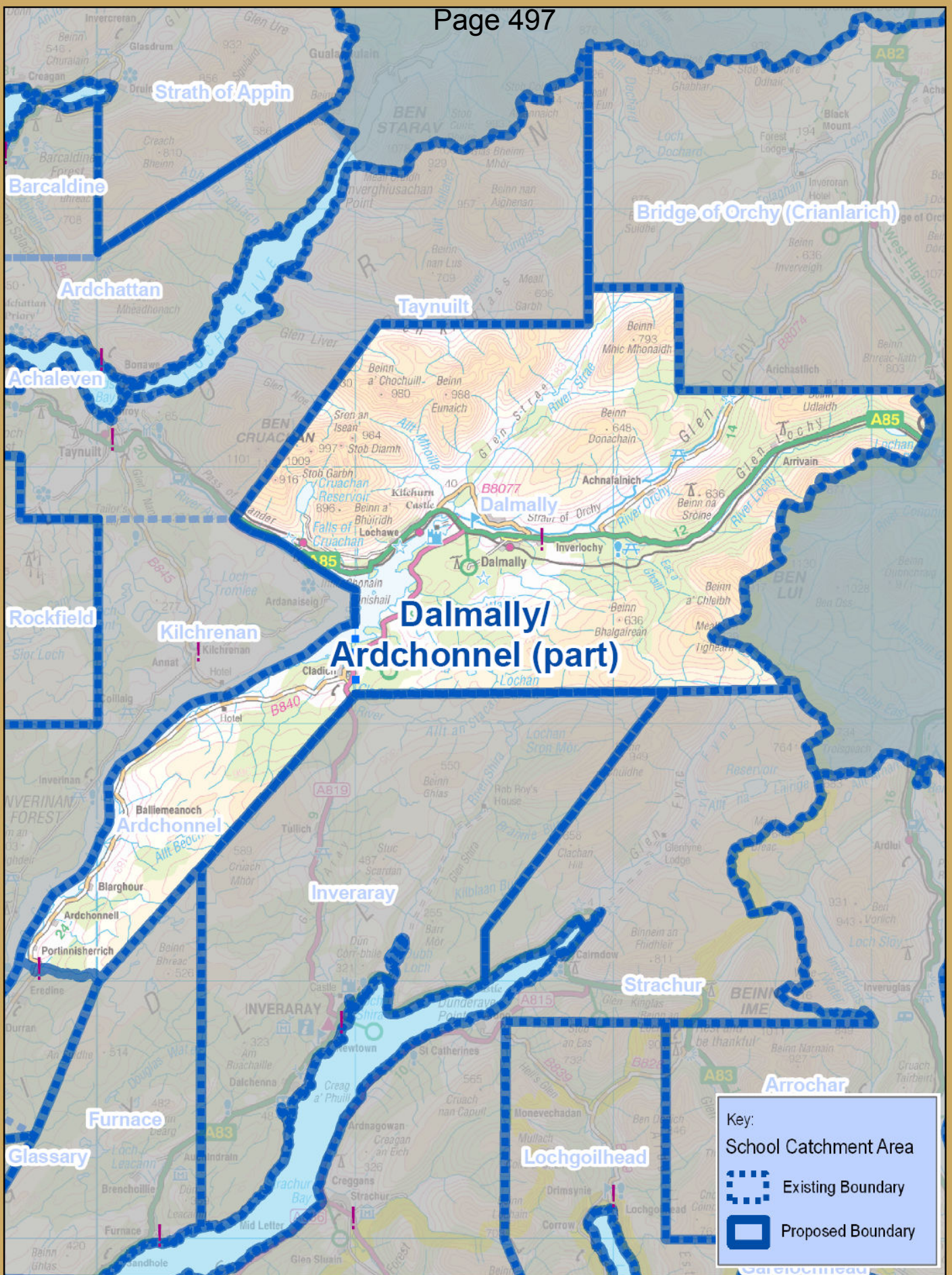
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the school, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6-week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

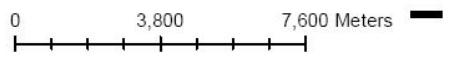
- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010

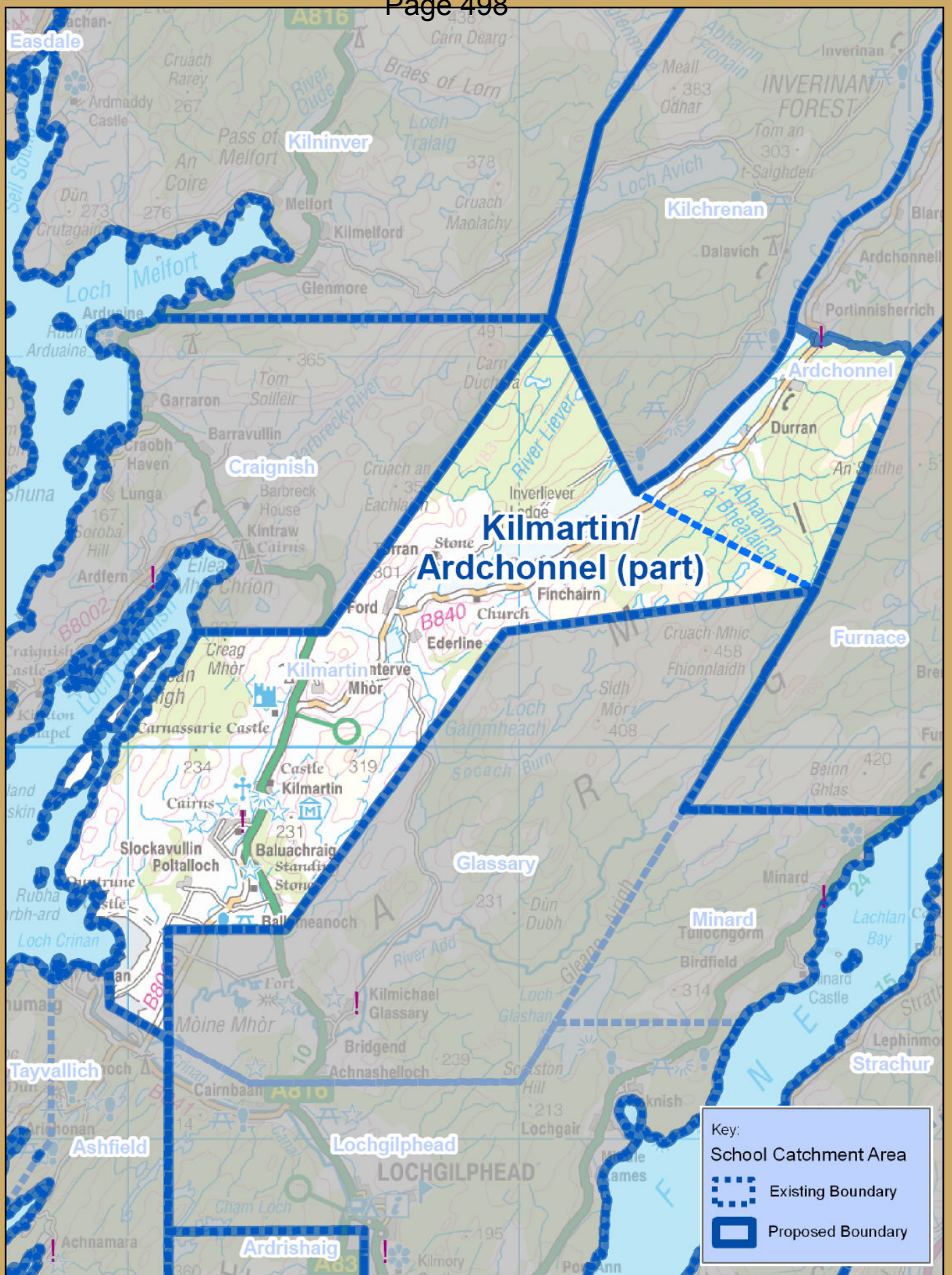
For further information contact: Carol Walker, Head of Education, Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council, Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number 01369 708508.



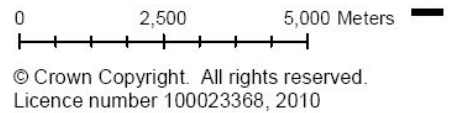
School Catchment Proposals 2010
Dalmally/Ardchannel (part)



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School Catchment Proposals 2010
Kilmartin/Ardchonnell (part)





APPENDIX

**Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education**

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 Ardchnnell Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Ardchnnell Primary School continue their education at Dalmally Primary School or Kilmartin Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment areas of Dalmally Primary School and Kilmartin Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ardchnnell 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)

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT : NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision
Clachan, Skipness, Glenbarr
and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools

Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of
Clachan, Glenbarr, Skipness and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Glenbarr, Skipness and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Glenbarr, Skipness and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools continue their education at Clachan Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Clachan Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment areas of Glenbarr, Skipness and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue

- HMIE
- The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the Education Service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection.
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Council area for the size of the pupil population

- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5,816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have remained static or seen a decline in each school over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Skipness		Glenbarr		Rhunahaorine		Clachan	
	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%
2005-06	7	27	14	28	9	27	12	23
2006-07	7	27	11	22	12	36	8	15
2007-08	7	27	9	18	14	42	14	26
2008-09	7	27	14	28	12	36	12	23
2009-10	6	23	15	30	15	45	13	25
2010-11	1	4	11	22	14	42	11	21
2011-12	0	0	11	22	14	42	9	17

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.
- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Glenbarr, Skipness and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools will be discontinued with effect from 30th June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Glenbarr, Skipness and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools continue their education at Clachan Primary School from 16th August 2011. The current pre-school provision offered in Rhunahaorine Primary School will be offered in Clachan Primary School. There is currently no pre-school provision in Glenbarr Primary School or Skipness Primary School but this proposal would offer pre-school provision at Clachan Primary School.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Clachan Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment areas of Glenbarr, Skipness and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools and all associated pre-school units as shown on the attached plan.

3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:

- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
- Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m ² /pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Clachan	20.8	10,620	27	B	5,549
Glenbarr	22.0	12,785	29	B	7,202
Rhunahaorine	42.4	9,741	18	B	6,999
Skipness	3.0	113,925	115	B	14,798
Post Amalgamation	69.8%	6,015	8	B	1,650

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

3.6 The distance from Glenbarr Primary School to Clachan Primary School is 14 miles and the journey time would be around 25 minutes. The distance from Skipness Primary School to Clachan Primary School is 13 miles and the journey time would be around 30 minutes. The distance from Rhunahaorine Primary School to Clachan Primary School is 6 miles and the journey time would be around 11 minutes.

Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.

3.7 The capacity for Clachan Primary School is 53 and the number of children to come from Glenbarr Primary School is 11. There will be no children coming from Skipness Primary School. The number of children to come from Rhunahaorine Primary School is 14 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).

3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Clachan Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1/2/3	16
P4/5/6/7	18
Total Roll	34
Total Number of classes	2

3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General education benefits

4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become

more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.

- 4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be estimated with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.
- 4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.
- 4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:
- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
 - Greater flexibility in grouping learners
 - Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - A wider range of staff expertise
 - Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
 - Increased management capacity.
- 4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:
- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
 - Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer

group among the learners. They include *Co-operative Learning*, *Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC)*, and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic

- *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum
- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited

- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.
- 4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in paragraph 4.6 and 4.7 and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.9 Any educational effects would be positive. The management arrangements of Clachan Primary School will be strengthened and there will be increased opportunities for developing the range of the curriculum and the use of active teaching methodologies.
- 4.10 Staff at Glenbarr, Skipness and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools have worked with colleagues from other schools to enable extended professional development opportunities. This proposal would provide opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development including distributed leadership opportunities. Pupils from Glenbarr, Skipness and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools would benefit from the combined expertise of a larger staff team.
- 4.11 The management arrangements of Clachan Primary School will be strengthened and there will be opportunities for increasing the breadth of the curriculum and increasing the use of active teaching methodologies. On occasions expensive equipment and resources can be purchased by an area for use throughout all the schools in that area. The benefits of this to pupils will be increased due to the reduced number of schools.
- 4.12 The logistics of organising sporting, cultural and residential experiences/ events would be simplified within one establishment. The improved logistics would also include the enhanced involvement of children in the shared planning and preparation process. The fundraising potential of the combined school will be increased due to the larger parental and community catchment area. The larger community group could provide a broader range of expertise that could be utilised to enhance the learning experience of all pupils.

- 4.13 The proposal will increase the roll of Clachan Primary School and will thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The amalgamated school may be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities. Clachan school has a large open flexible teaching space suitable for teaching and learning methodologies that will support Curriculum for Excellence.
- 4.14 There will be opportunities for pupils to benefit from working with more children of their own age and at a similar stage of development. This will result in a greater range of shared experiences and more opportunities for establishing wider friendships as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above.
- 4.15 Clachan Primary School meets all the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1996 and all children, including those with disabilities will have access to the physical environment, information and a full and broad curriculum equivalent to, Skipness, Rhunahaorine and Glenbarr Primary Schools.

Pre-school users

- 4.16 Local authorities have a duty to secure a free, part time pre-school education place for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.17 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.18 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead they access provision closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.19 The current pre-school provision offered in Rhunahaorine Primary School will be provided under the management of Clachan Primary School within existing accommodation in the Clachan area. There is currently no pre-school provision in Glenbarr or Skipness Primary Schools but this proposal would offer pre-school provision.

Gaelic learners

- 4.20 Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS) is currently provided by a member of staff in Rhunahaorine, consequently this provision could continue in Clachan Primary School as a result of this proposal.

Placing requests

- 4.21 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.

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.22 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools would benefit substantially from the implementation of this, and other proposals that the Council is advancing. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future throughout the county, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.23 During the period from 2005/06 to 2008/09 none of the schools included in this proposal were booked for community use.
- 4.24 The current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. Within the village of Tayinloan, where Rhunahaorine School is situated there is a hall which is available for community use. The village of Skipness has a village hall which the community can access. Glenbarr Primary would be able to use the existing local facilities provided in Tayinloan and Campbeltown which are a short distance away. These facilities include 3 other schools as well as publically accessible sports facilities and halls.
- 4.25 Clachan Primary School experiences no community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which may occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.26 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires education to

examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.

- 4.27 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	388,938	143,131	245,807
Property Costs	51,661	12,252	39,410
Supplies, Services and Travel	77,058	77,058	0
Income	-9,902	-9,902	0
Additional Transport		27,030	-27,030
Reduction in small schools grant		0	0
Total	507,755	249,569	258,187

- 4.28 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 67.8% of the total annual budget for operating Skipness, Glenbarr and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools at present.

5 Specific provisions for rural schools

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

- 5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

- 5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Rhunahaorine, Skipness or Glenbarr Primary Schools in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to either

Rhunahaorine, Skipness or Glenbarr Primary Schools. Such an approach would not achieve worthwhile savings and would do little to improve the viability of the school estate

- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

- 5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

- 5.4 Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.
- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 15 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 3 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal remained static or have continued to decline. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this, the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls.
- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. All the facilities detailed in 4.24 will still be available to the community.

Travel and the environment

- 5.8 A key criterion is the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of rationalisation:

- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school

 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point

 - The maximum travel time for a child attending Clachan Primary School as a result of this proposal would be around 36 minutes
 - The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.
- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 51 road traffic accidents. Of these only 3 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.
- 5.11 The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.
- 5.12 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.13 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂)

emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below:

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO2 Reduction	
	(kg of CO2)	(kg of CO2)	(kg of CO2)	kg	%
Clachan	20,458	20,458	0	0	0%
Glenbarr	27,502	0	17,488	10,015	36%
Rhunahaorine	32,025	0	0	32,025	100%
Skipness	6,240	0	0	6,240	100%
Total	86,226	20,458	17,488	48,280	56%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Clachan Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender

- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the “reasonable adjustments duty”. The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Glenbarr, Skipness and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA’s in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA’s then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council’s current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Should these proposals be accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council’s Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council’s Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council’s School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.

- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 The staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education

Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.

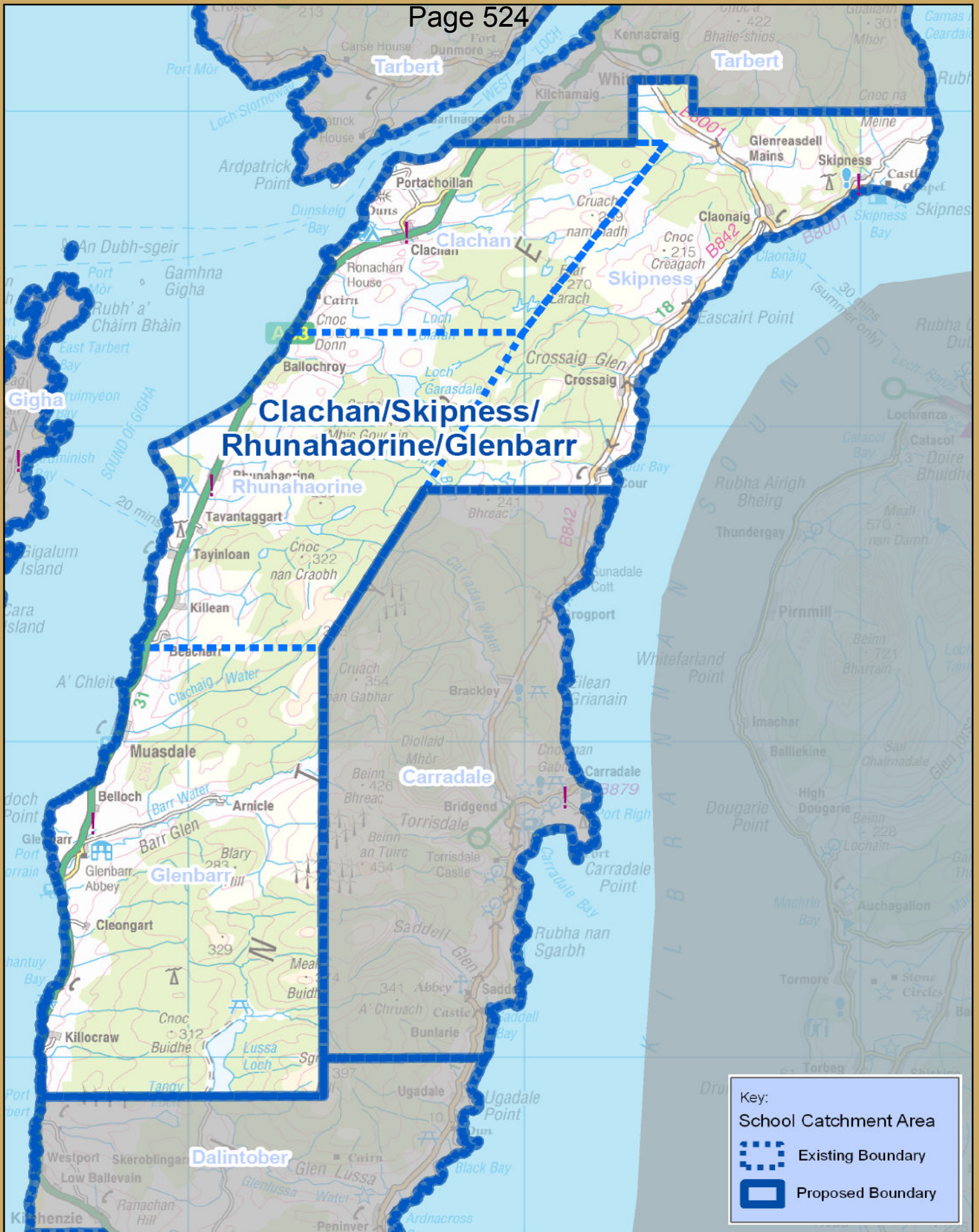
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the school, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

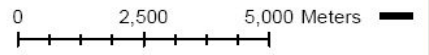
**Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010**

For further information contact: Carol Walker, Head of Education, Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council, Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number 01369 708508.



School Catchment Proposals 2010

Clachan/Skipness/Rhunahaorine/Glenbarr



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APPENDIX

 Argyll and Bute Council
 Community Services: 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:	
<p>Education provision at Glenbarr, Skipness and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Glenbarr, Skipness and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools continue their education at Clachan Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Clachan Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment areas of Glenbarr, Skipness and Rhunahaorine Primary Schools.</p>	
<p>This part of the form must be completed for a valid response:</p>	
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)			

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision

Tayvallich and Ashfield Primary Schools

Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of Tayvallich
and Ashfield Primary Schools**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Ashfield Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Ashfield Primary School continue their education at Tayvallich Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ashfield Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)

- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE
- The Highlands and Island Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.

1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:

- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
- To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection.
- To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
- To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all young people in Argyll and Bute
- Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate manner as possible
- Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
- Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:

- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population

- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council's area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5,816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have remained static or seen a decline in each school over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Tayvallich		Ashfield	
	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%
2005-06	27	56	9	24
2006-07	21	44	10	26
2007-08	18	38	8	21
2008-09	17	35	6	16
2009-10	26	54	4	11
2010-11	28	58	8	21
2011-12	27	56	8	21

The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.

- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Ashfield Primary School will be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Ashfield Primary School continue their education at Tayvallich Primary School from 16 August 2011. Pre-school provision for pupils whose home is within the catchment area of Ashfield Primary School will continue in Tayvallich Primary School.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment area of Ashfield Primary School as shown on the attached plan.
- 3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
 - Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government

- guidance
- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m ² /pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Ashfield	21.1%	15,206	32	B	11,553
Tayvallich	56.3%	5,463	7	B	1,058
Post Amalgamation	75.0%	5,408	5	B	823

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

- 3.6 The distance from Ashfield Primary School to Tayvallich Primary School is 9 miles and the journey time would be around 35 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the two locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.7 The capacity for Tayvallich Primary School is 48 and the number of children to come from Ashfield Primary School is 8 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Tayvallich Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1 - 3	16 = 2 + 7 + 7
P4 - 7	19 = 3 + 7 + 5 + 4
Total Roll	35
Total Number of classes	2

3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.

4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be estimated with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.

4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.

- 4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:
- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children
 - Greater flexibility in grouping learners
 - Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - A wider range of staff expertise
 - Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
 - Increased management capacity.
- 4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:
- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
 - Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include *Co-operative Learning*, *Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC)*, and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic
 - *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which would be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their

learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum

- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

- 4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in paragraph 4.6 and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

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

proposal would increase the roll of Tayvallich Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities. Combining the schools will enable pooling of expensive resources and equipment such as gymnastic equipment and interactive whiteboards. Pupils at the combined school will have access to the multi-purpose sports facilities at the Tayvallich village hall.

- 4.10 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Ashfield Primary School would benefit from daily interaction in a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above. Pupils in the combined school will have more shared experiences and opportunity for friendships. This will enhance their confidence and make the transition to secondary easier. At a time when the curriculum is being extended this is a significant advantage. Larger year groups make the provision of specialist services more viable and provide enhanced opportunities for school trips.
- 4.11 Tayvallich Primary School meets all the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1996 and all children, including those with disabilities would have access to the physical environment, information and a full and broad curriculum equivalent to Ashfield Primary.
- 4.12 Ashfield Primary School may face specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence*. They have already made steps to counter balance this by:
- Ensuring that pupils work in larger peer groups, pupils from Ashfield Primary School work with pupils from Glassary Primary School and occasionally Tayvallich Primary School on a range of activities. Pupils will be able to work in larger peer groups as a result of this proposal
 - Ensuring that strong links exist between Ashfield Primary School and Tayvallich Primary School and both schools participate in a range of activities. This is evidenced by the residential experience opportunity and expressive arts workshops. Ashfield Primary School staff work with staff from other schools in the area on professional development activities. They have recently joined with staff from other schools to form a Teacher Learning Community (TLC). This compensates for the lack of professional development opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development but brings logistic problems in particular with regard to travel. Pupils from Ashfield Primary School would benefit from the combined expertise of a larger team
 - Forging links with other staff groups, staff at Ashfield Primary School have worked with colleagues from other small schools to compensate for the lack of professional development opportunities. This proposal would provide opportunities within the establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional

development. Pupils from Ashfield Primary School would benefit from the combined expertise of a larger staff team.

- 4.13 Ashfield Primary School currently has one multi-composite class and Tayvallich Primary School has two. This proposal would result in pupils from Ashfield Primary School being in a class with a smaller age range. Although pupils at Ashfield Primary School benefit from suitable facilities for PE the small number of pupils in the school restrict the activities that can be offered. PE facilities at Tayvallich are provided at the village hall and there is access to the multi-purpose sports facilities at the village hall.
- 4.14 The head teacher of Ashfield Primary School has a management time allocation of 0.2 FTE thus making it more difficult to manage and lead the school. Leadership time for the combined new school would provide greater capacity for the development of teaching and learning.

Pre-school users

- 4.15 Local authorities have a duty to secure a free, part time pre-school education places for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.16 Local authorities have a duty to secure free, part time pre-school education places for all eligible children, should their parents wish one. Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break-down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.17 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead they access provision closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.18 There is currently no pre-school provision in Ashfield Primary School but this proposal would offer available pre-school provision at Tayvallich Primary School.

Gaelic learners

- 4.19 Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS) is not currently offered in any of the schools in this proposal so there would be no effect if the proposals were implemented.

Placing requests

- 4.20 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.

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.21 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools will benefit substantially from the implementation of this, and other proposals that the Council advancing. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal will benefit all pupils, present and future throughout Argyll and Bute, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.22 There have been no community lets in Ashfield or Tayvallich Primary Schools in the last five years.
- 4.23 The current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities and, within the village of Achnamara, where Ashfield Primary School is located, there is a hall which is available for community use.

Financial impact

- 4.24 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current Education review requires Education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.25 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	212,167	148,466	63,701
Property Costs	28,001	11,774	16,227
Supplies, Services and Travel	39,815	39,815	0
Income	-5,364	-5,364	0
Additional Transport		14,000	-14,000
Reduction in small schools grant		0	0
Total	274,619	208,691	65,928

- 4.26 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 54% of the total annual budget for operating Ashfield Primary at present.

5 Specific provisions for rural schools

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

- 5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

- 5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Ashfield Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to Ashfield Primary School. This new school would not provide significantly better peer group opportunities for pupils or collegiate opportunities for staff as discussed above. Such an approach would not achieve worthwhile savings and would do little to improve the viability of the school estate
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

- 5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

- 5.4 There have been no community lets in Ashfield Primary School in the last five years. Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.
- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 20 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 4 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have remained static. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls.
- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. There is a village hall in Achnamara run by a voluntary committee. The Hall Committee runs a programme of events and the Hall is also available for hire for private events.
- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point
 -
 - The maximum travel time for a child attending Tayvallich Primary School as a result of this proposal would be 35 minutes

- The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes.

- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 3 road traffic accidents. Of these 2 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.
- 5.11 The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of pick up and drop off points along school bus routes. Any new pick up and drop off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.
- 5.12 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of this proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed amalgamation to the likely output post amalgamation when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.13 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below:

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
Ashfield	30,371	0	2,965	27,406	90%
Tayvallich	16,108	16,108	0	0	0%
Total	46,479	16,108	2,965	27,406	59%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Tayvallich Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the "reasonable adjustments duty". The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Ashfield Primary School.

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Should these proposals be accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).

- 7.7 The staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk.
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held on at Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic

and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.

- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the schools, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

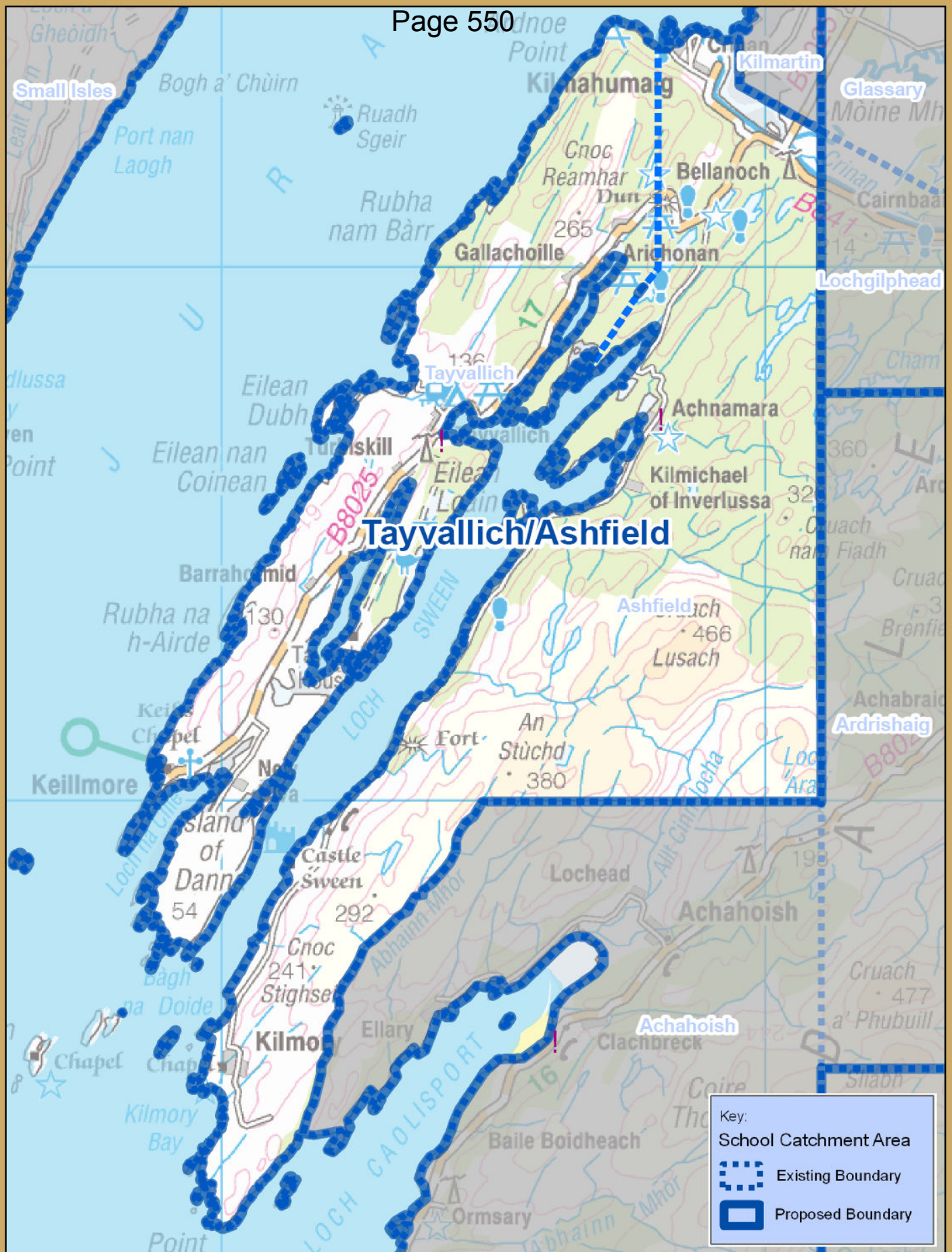
9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

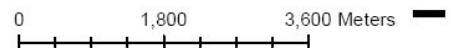
**Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010**

For further information contact: Carol Walker, Head of Education, Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council, Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number 01369 708508

Draft



School Catchment Proposals 2010
Tayvallich/Ashfield



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APPENDIX

 Argyll and Bute Council
 Community Services: Education

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 Ashfield Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.. Pupils of Ashfield Primary School continue their education at Tayvallich Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ashfield 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)

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Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

Education Provision
PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision at
Ardrishaig and Achahoish Primary Schools
Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of Achahoish and
Ardrishaig Primary Schools**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Achahoish Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Achahoish Primary School continue their education at Ardrishaig Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Ardrishaig Primary Schools shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Achahoish Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue

- HMIE
- The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal

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 of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT

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

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.
- 1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:
- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
 - To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection
 - To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
 - To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
 - To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all young people in Argyll and Bute
 - Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate a manner as possible
 - Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
 - Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- 1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

- 2.1 In general the main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:
- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population

- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils
- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century.

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5,816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.
- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The roll of Ardrishaig Primary School has seen a decline over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Ardrishaig		Achahoish	
	Roll	Occ%	Roll	Occ%
2005-06	134	76	13	31
2006-07	136	77	14	33
2007-08	128	73	14	33
2008-09	137	78	11	26
2009-10	133	76	14	33
2010-11	123	70	15	36
2011-12	125	71	17	41

It should be noted that there are currently 5 placing requests in Achahoish

The Scope of the School Estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.
- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable

maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of at least £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.
- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Achahoish Primary School will be discontinued with effect from June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Achahoish Primary School continue their education at Ardrishaig Primary School from 16 August 2011. Arrangements for pre-school provision for pupils whose home is within the catchment area of Achahoish Primary School would continue as at present.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Ardrishaig Primary School will be extended to include the current catchment area of Achahoish Primary School as shown on the attached plan.

3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:

- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
- Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
- Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll.

3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Achahoish	35.7	8,854	23	A	2,942
Ardrishaig	69.9	4,012	7	B	1,438
Post Amalgamation	78.4%	4,125	6	B	1,282

3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodate needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

3.6 The distance from Achahoish Primary School to Ardrishaig Primary School is 9 miles and the journey time would be around 25 minutes. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the two locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.

- 3.7 The capacity for Ardrishaig Primary School is 176 and the number of children to come from Achahoish Primary School is currently 17 (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Ardrishaig Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1	16
P1/2	18 = 6 + 12
P2/3	23 = 10 + 13
P3/4	20 = 6 + 14
P4/5	23 = 6 + 17
P6	19
P7	23
Total Roll	142
Total Number of classes	7

- 3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

- 4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more purely educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

- 4.2 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.
- 4.3 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be made with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding

available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.

- 4.4 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.
- 4.5 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:
- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children.
 - Greater flexibility in grouping learners
 - Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
 - A wider range of staff expertise
 - Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
 - Increased management capacity
- 4.6 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties, as detailed above in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:
- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting, socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
 - Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. These include Co-operative Learning, Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC), and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council

has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic

- *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum
- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice, schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available
- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

- 4.7 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.8 There would be positive educational benefits associated with this proposal. The management arrangements of the school would be strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies. The proposal would increase the roll of Ardrishaig Primary School and will thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities. Pupils in the combined school will have more shared experiences and opportunity for friendships. This will enhance their confidence and make the transition to secondary easier. At a time when the curriculum is being extended this is a significant advantage. Larger year groups make the provision of specialist services more viable and provide enhanced opportunities for school trips.
- 4.9 Achahoish Primary School faces some difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that cannot be overcome. These may include limited daily peer interaction,. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction. Access to a wider range of learning professionals and specialists required to extend opportunities for P5 to P7 can be provided more time-efficiently in the combined school. This proposal would have a positive and beneficial effect in addressing these difficulties.
- 4.10 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Achahoish Primary School would benefit from a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above. Combining the schools will enable pooling of expensive resources and equipment such as gymnastic equipment and interactive whiteboards.
- 4.11 Ardrishaig Primary School meets all the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1996 and all children, including those with disabilities will have access to the physical environment, information and a full and broad curriculum equivalent to Achahoish Primary School. Facilities will continue to be reviewed to ensure all pupils have full access to all required facilities for a full curriculum.

4.12 Whilst Achahoish Primary School faces a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* they have already made steps to counter balance this by:

- Ensuring Achahoish Primary School staff work with staff from other schools in the area on professional development activities. They have recently joined with staff from other schools to form a Teacher Learning Community (TLC). This compensates for the lack of professional development opportunities within the one establishment for sharing effective practice and enhancing professional development but brings logistic problems in particular with regard to travel. Pupils from Achahoish Primary School will benefit from the combined expertise of a larger team
- Achahoish Primary School currently has one multi-composite class and Ardrishaig Primary School has seven classes. This proposal will result in pupils from Achahoish Primary School being in a class with a smaller age range
- The Head Teacher of Achahoish Primary School has a management time allocation of 0.2 FTE thus making it more difficult to manage and lead the school. Leadership time allocated to the combined new school would provide greater capacity for the development of quality teaching and learning.

Pre-school users

4.13 Local authorities have a duty to secure free, part time pre-school education places for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.

4.14 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The break down of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.

4.15 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead they access provision closer to their place of work, where this is provided.

4.16 There is no pre-school provision currently available in either school and provision will continue through the current arrangements.

Gaelic learners

4.17 Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS) will continue to be provided in Ardrishaig Primary School.

Placing requests

4.18 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.

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.19 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools will benefit substantially from the implementation of this, and other proposals that the Council is advancing. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal will benefit all pupils, present and future throughout Argyll and Bute, by allowing the more effective use of resources for educational purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.20 During the period from 2005/06 to 2009/10 Achahoish and Ardrishaig Primary Schools had no community lets.
- 4.21 The current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. There is a very well equipped community hall in the village of Ormsary which provides accommodation for many community events and sports facilities would be available in Lochgilphead which is nearby.
- 4.22 Ardrishaig Primary School experiences no community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.23 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.24 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving / (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	476,580	432,302	44,278
Property Costs	92,124	80,592	11,533
Supplies, Services and Travel	83,020	81,830	1,190
Income	-25,448	-25,448	0
Additional Transport		18,000	-18,000
Reduction in small schools grant		31,007	-31,007
Total	626,276	618,282	7,994

5 Specific provision for rural schools

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint head teacherships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Achahoish Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to Achahoish Primary School. This would be impracticable due to the capacity of Achahoish Primary School for such an increased roll. Such an approach would not achieve worthwhile savings and would do little to improve the viability of the school estate
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This

would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

- 5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

- 5.4 Achahoish Primary School has had no community lets within the last five years and, whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the school fulfils a particular need within the community.
- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 31 completions of new residential buildings in the Ardrishaig catchment area and none in Achahoish. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to remain broadly static. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls
- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. There is a very well equipped community hall in the village of Ormsary which provides accommodation for many community events.
- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 -
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school

- The route was plotted on an Ordinance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point.
 - The maximum travel time for a child attending Ardrishaig Primary School as a result of this proposal would be 39 minutes. The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes
- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 16 road traffic accidents. Of these only 2 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for School transport.
- 5.11 The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.
- 5.12 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to the proposed amalgamation to the likely output post amalgamation when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.13 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below:

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO2 Reduction	
	(kg of CO2)	(kg of CO2)	(kg of CO2)	kg	%
Achahoish	24,011	0	3,398	20,613	86%
Ardrishaig	62,821	62,821	0	0	0%
Total	86,831	62,821	3,398	20,613	24%

6 Equal opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Ardrishaig Primary, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should

take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage - this is the “reasonable adjustments duty”. The Council is committed to providing a fully accessible service to all children within the Argyll and Bute Council area.

Subject to a more detailed EIA, it is considered that this proposal will not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability who attends Achahoish Primary School

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA’s in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA’s then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council’s current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Should these proposals be accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council’s Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council’s Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council’s School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council’s HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation

with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.

- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 The staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other

relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.

- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the schools, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

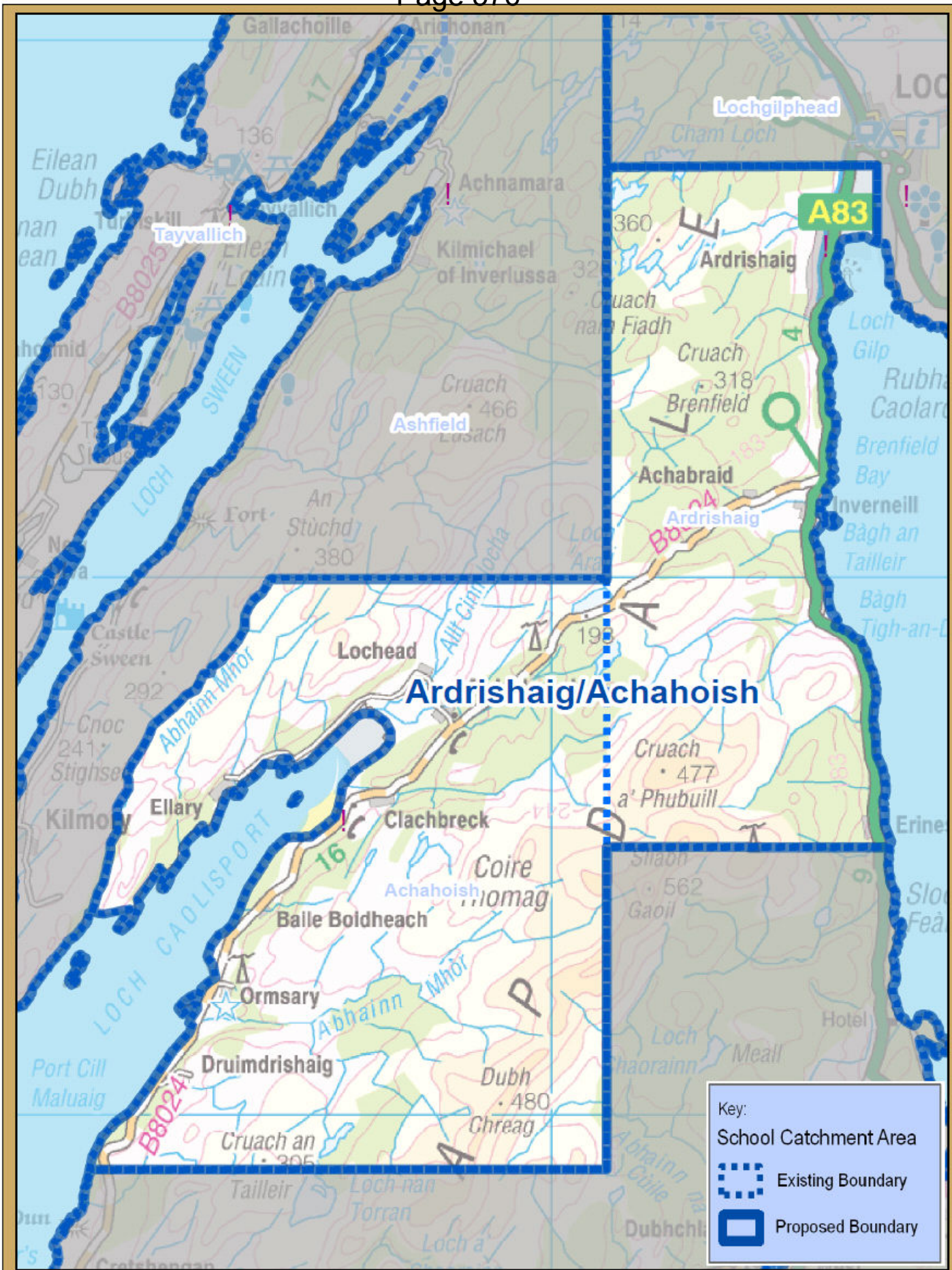
- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for

the provision of high quality education and considers that this can also be enhanced by the clear and defined educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010

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Draft



School Catchment Proposals 2010 Ardrishaig/Achahoish

**Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education**

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 Achahoish Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Achahoish Primary School continue their education at Ardrishaig Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Ardrishaig Primary Schools shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Achahoish 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)

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Argyll and Bute Council

Community Services: Education

Education Provision

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: NOVEMBER 2010

Review of Education Provision

**Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary Department,
and Glassary and Minard Primary Schools**

Argyll and Bute Council

**Proposal for the amalgamation of
Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School**

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011.

Pupils of Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School continue their education at Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011.

The catchment area of Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment areas of Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council web-site: <https://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Strathclyde Police
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)

- Area Commander, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- HMIE
- Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Argyll and Bute Councillors

A copy of this document is also available from:

- The Executive Director of Community Services , Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal

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 of Community Services, 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.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਈਂਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.
- 1.2 The Council's overall vision for the education service has the following aims:
- To strive continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute
 - To become a learning organisation that is outward looking and values creativity and shared reflection
 - To promote actively partnership working and equality of opportunity
 - To ensure that resources are managed effectively and that best value is secured
 - To equip our children and young people with the skills and knowledge they require in order to become:
 - Successful Learners
 - Confident Individuals
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Effective Contributors

That vision is supported by the Council's educational aspirations which are to:

- Provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for all young people in Argyll and Bute
 - Meet the individual needs of young people in as appropriate manner as possible
 - Ensure that standards of education continue to rise
 - Carry through successfully programmes of educational improvement and modernisation such as the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- 1.3 It is impossible to fulfil the vision and aspirations without constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The need for change has been increased by the requirement to respond to the financial problems created by global economic circumstances.

2 Reason for the proposal

- 2.1 The main issues underpinning the Council's decision to consult on the proposal contained in this document are as follows:
- There are now too many schools within the Council's area for the size of the pupil population
 - Costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high
 - Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the

resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect educational attainment of pupils

- 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate
- Many schools are not designed or equipped to meet the requirements of education in the early twenty-first century

These issues will all become more pressing as a result of the economic circumstances facing the Council and, indeed, all public bodies over the next few years.

Demand changes

- 2.2 School rolls have fallen steadily over many years. When local government in Scotland was reorganised in 1975 the total number of primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute was 9124. At the time of the next reorganisation in 1996, this figure had fallen to 8373. In the school session 2010/11 the school roll fell below 6000 to 5,816. Overall this represents a decline of 36% over 35 years.
- 2.3 Rolls across all schools in the Council area are expected to drop further by about 12% by 2015 and 19% by 2020.
- 2.4 Information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) provides population projections for Council areas for the period 2008 - 2033

	2010	2015		2020	
		Number	% reduction	Number	% reduction
Primary (5-11)	6,048	5,634	-7%	5,562	-8%
Secondary (12-18)	7,677	6,403	-17%	5,620	-27%
Total	13,725	12,037	-12%	11,182	-19%

- 2.5 The GROS figures continue to provide estimates to 2033. The primary age population begins to show a sustained recovery from 2022 onwards. However, by 2033 this population is expected to rise to 5,838 which remains some 3% under the 2010 primary school aged population figure.
- 2.6 The secondary school population is projected to show a sustained recovery from 2025 rising to an estimated population of 5,729 by 2033 which is some 25% under the 2010 figure.

Effect on school occupancies

- 2.7 If the above reduction in the primary aged population was to be applied to the Council's 2010/11 primary school population of 5,816 we would expect a cumulative reduction in the primary school roll of 407 pupils by 2015 and 465 pupils by 2020.

- 2.8 The table below shows the capacity that would be available in the Council's primary schools should the reductions in primary aged pupils above be reflected in the school rolls.

	School Rolls	Capacity (no amalgamation)	Spare Capacity	Capacity (with Amalgamation)	Spare Capacity
2010/11 School Roll	5,816	11384	5,568	9816	4,000
7% reduction by 2015 (from GROS)	5,409	11384	5,975	9816	4,407
8% reduction by 2020 (from GROS)	5,351	11384	6,033	9816	4,465
3% reduction by 2033 (from GROS)	5,642	11384	5,742	9816	4,174

- 2.9 This table demonstrates that there would be considerable spare capacity within the primary school estate even if the proposals are implemented. Also, that spare capacity is projected to increase until at least 2022.
- 2.10 Although this decline will affect different parts of the Council area to differing extents, the current problem of under-occupancy of schools will inevitably increase unless the school estate is markedly reduced.
- 2.11 The reduction in the school age population means that the Council has too many schools for its requirements. Retention of all of these schools means that the council struggles to meet its responsibility for Best Value in the delivery of its education services. A significant proportion of the education budget is being devoted to the upkeep of buildings that are not required rather than to core educational purposes such as high quality teaching and resources. The result of this is that all young people receive fewer educational resources than could otherwise be available.
- 2.12 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have seen a decline in each school over recent years as the following table demonstrates:

	Lochgilphead		Minard		Glassary	
	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %	Roll	Occ %
2005/06	220	64%	18	55%	23	41%
2006-07	215	63%	17	52%	21	38%
2007-08	200	58%	14	42%	20	36%
2008-09	204	60%	12	36%	17	30%
2009-10	203	59%	8	24%	17	30%
2010-11	208	61%	10	30%	20	36%
2011-12	212	62%	8	24%	23	41%

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The scope of the school estate

- 2.13 All councils have a duty to provide Best Value in the delivery of their services. They have to ensure that public money is spent wisely and in ways that produce the highest quality of service at a sustainable cost.
- 2.14 For Argyll and Bute Council a sparse and widely-scattered rural population makes the cost-effective delivery of service difficult to achieve. In the case

of the education service, maintaining schools with very small numbers of pupils entails very high costs.

- 2.15 In some cases, the local geography means that there is no practical alternative to keeping a school open. There are, however, many cases where schools which have small rolls have been retained although there are places available at other more cost-effective schools within acceptable travelling distances.
- 2.16 The Council is concerned about the condition of its school estate and the financial burden that it imposes on the education budget. On 17 May 2010 it agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the school estate. This review revealed that there is significant overcapacity in the estate with 59% of primary schools being less than half full. Comparable national figures show that typically only 20% of primary schools would have occupancies under 50%. The condition of school buildings is broadly in line with the national average. The schools considered in this proposal each has an occupancy level as outlined at 2.5.
- 2.17 An investment of £61.72m would be required to bring the whole estate up to the Scottish Government's Grade A condition. £25m would be needed even to bring the condition up to a sustainable condition in which routine cyclical maintenance would prevent further decline. The Council's current capital budget is around £4.49m. In the current economic climate there is a possibility that this may be reduced but it is not expected to increase materially. The school estate is thus unsustainable in its current form. If action is not taken, unavoidable maintenance work will consume a steadily rising proportion of the budget without ever bringing the condition of buildings to a satisfactory standard.

Financial background

- 2.18 The current economic situation makes these issues both more serious and more urgent. The Council will require to make savings of £30m over a three year period. £12m of this will have to be found within the education budget. Measures that will be taken by the UK Government to reduce current levels of borrowing and debt make it possible that these figures will be increased.
- 2.19 The Council's firm intention is to minimise the impact that these savings will have on the quality of services. In the case of education, every attempt will be made to avoid large reductions in key areas of expenditure such as teachers, support staff and educational supplies. The obvious consequence is that large savings will need to be made in lower priority areas such as property-related expenditure.
- 2.20 In June 2010, the Council held a series of consultation meetings regarding the implications of the economic situation for future spending on education. These meetings involved members of parent councils, head teachers, other staff, trade unions, local councillors, senior pupils from secondary

schools and the press. Those attending the meetings heard a presentation on the financial circumstances and the likely scale of savings to be made. They were then divided into groups and invited to discuss the possibilities. A very wide range of suggestions was discussed. However, it is significant that every group at every meeting concluded that a reduction in the size of the school estate through the amalgamation of small schools would have to be part of any savings package. Some groups saw educational advantages in such amalgamations while others reached their conclusions reluctantly. The view was, nevertheless, common to all groups. This was not true of any other option.

3 Feasibility of the proposal

- 3.1 The Council proposes that education provision at Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School will be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011 and that pupils at appropriate stages of Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School continue their education at Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary School from 16th August 2011.
- 3.2 As a result of this proposal the catchment area of Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary School would be extended to include the current catchment area of Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School.
- 3.3 When deciding how this overprovision of school places should be addressed the Council's first priority was to ensure that educational standards would be maintained. The Council has formally agreed criteria by which the improvement in building efficiency resulting from any proposed change to the school estate could be measured. These criteria were:
- Occupancy levels – 2010/11 school roll as a percentage of the school capacity
 - Cost per pupil – The 2010/11 school budget divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Sufficiency of provision – The internal area of the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
 - Building condition – A grading from A (excellent) to D (bad) of the condition of each building in line with Scottish Government guidance
 - Energy use per pupil - The most recent energy consumption figure for the school divided by the 2010/11 school roll
- 3.4 The building criteria results for the schools included in this proposal, which are based on the school rolls and building information for 2010/11 and are shown in the table below:

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
	%	£/pupil	m2/pupil	Grade	KWh/yr/pupil
Glassary	35.7	7,156	11	B	2,885

Name of School	Occupancy	Cost per Pupil	Sufficiency	Condition	Energy Use
Lochgilphead	60.8	3,349	13	A	3,217
Minard	30.3	9,963	23	B	3,057
Post Amalgamation	69.9%	3,412	11	A	2,812

- 3.5 In order to determine the feasibility of any proposals consideration was given to whether there were any travel distance time or safety issues that would preclude the proposed changes taking place (for instance, long ferry crossings or excessive travel times). Finally, the ability of the proposed receiving school to accommodate the combined roll was assessed after analysing the likely number of classes required in session 2011/2012. Regard was also given to accommodation needs in subsequent sessions.

Feasibility considerations

- 3.6 The distance from Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School to Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary School is 5 miles and 13 miles and the journey times would be around 10 and 20 minutes respectively. Consideration has been given at paragraph 5.7 in regard to the likely maximum journey time for pupils. There are no specific known safety concerns with regard to the road between the two locations and the travel time is not considered excessive. Consideration has been given not only to travel between the schools but also to the longest journeys likely to be undertaken by any individual pupil.
- 3.7 The capacity for Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary School is 342 and the number of children to come from Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School is 22 (Glassary) and 8 (Minard) (based on expected 2011/12 rolls).
- 3.8 The basis for grouping classes within Primary School is based on school rolls projected to the start of the school year 2011 and would be as follows:

Year Group	Class composition
P1a	18
P1b	18
P1/2	19 = 8 + 11
P2	30
P3	29
P3/4	25 = 6 + 19
P4/5	24 = 9 + 15
P5/6	24 = 17 + 7
P6/7	25 = 19 + 6
P7	31
Total Roll	243
Total Number of classes	10

- 3.9 This class structure complies with statutory and all other requirements.

4 Educational benefit statement

4.1 The Council considers that the reduction of its school estate through a programme of amalgamation would have significant educational as well as financial benefits. It considers that the distinction between educational and financial benefits is, in any event, by no means clear-cut. Continuing to offer a high quality of education is absolutely dependent on financial sustainability. Unless a significant proportion of savings is made from the reduction in the school estate, the sustainability of the current quality of education provision will be difficult to guarantee.

4.2 This section of the paper details the Council's assessment of considerations of a more direct educational nature. These are presented in two sub-sections. The first deals with general issues that relate to this proposal but are equally relevant to any of the proposals the Council is issuing for consultation at this time. The second contains issues specifically related to the schools covered by this proposal.

General educational benefits

4.3 The most important factor influencing quality in education is the quality of interaction between teacher and learner; in other words, the skill of the teacher. This, however, is a factor that is subject to constant change. Teachers move to other jobs, retire, are promoted, become more skilled. The individual learner may encounter different members of staff in different years. In short, teaching quality can be affected by a whole range of factors that are not substantially related to changes to the school estate.

4.4 By contrast, the effect of decisions on the use of resources can be estimated with reasonable certainty. If a growing proportion of the education budget is spent on property costs this will reduce the funding available for more productive areas of expenditure. This, in turn, will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service. Amalgamating schools will reduce property costs and free resources for other purposes within the education budget.

4.5 At present, costs per pupil vary enormously between schools. In the primary sector, there are 14 schools where it costs more than £10,000 a year to educate a single child while the lowest cost is under £3,000 per year. Where there is no alternative to retaining a school with a small roll for geographical reasons, this is reasonable. Where this is not the case, however, it is inequitable and serves to reduce the resources available for all pupils in the Council's area.

4.6 The Council assesses that the amalgamation of under-occupied schools with a small roll can bring educational benefits including:

- Increased opportunities for peer interaction among children

- Greater flexibility in grouping learners
- Improved ability to implement the educational methodologies inherent in *Curriculum for Excellence*
- Increased capacity to meet the extended objectives of *Curriculum for Excellence*
- A wider range of staff expertise
- Increased opportunities for collaborative planning and sharing effective practice among a larger group of staff
- Increased management capacity.

4.7 The Council has assessed that schools with a small roll may face a number of specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* which is designed to equip Scottish young people to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In particular:

- Children encounter a very limited peer group. This is very restricting socially, and it has an impact on the kind of teaching approaches that can be used. The ethos of schools with a small roll is generally highly supportive but pupils' social experience remains very restricted. Although those schools often seek to overcome this problem by collaborating with other schools, the everyday experience of children cannot be enlarged
- Argyll and Bute Council has systematically supported the introduction of a number of innovative pedagogies. These are largely dependent on the existence of an adequate size of peer group among the learners. They include Co-operative Learning, Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC), and other active learning techniques which operate best when there is a group of pupils at broadly the same stage. Increasingly, learning is seen as a collaborative activity with discussion among learners playing a vital role. In schools with a small roll opportunities for working together are very limited. The Council has also supported the development of *Assessment is for Learning* and is now promoting the more sophisticated approaches to assessment outlined in *Building the Curriculum 5*. In a school with few pupils at any given stage, learner involvement in assessment, the use of peer moderation and effective sharing of standards is problematic
- *Curriculum for Excellence* involves significant changes in educational methodology, largely intended to promote deep forms of learning and the acquisition of skills which will be valued in the workplace of the future. These often require learners to work in teams, to engage in discussion, to generate ideas collaboratively and to work together in presenting their learning. Such approaches are much more difficult to implement where there are few learners at the same level in the curriculum
- *Curriculum for Excellence* also aims to increase the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils can access. In practice,

schools with a small roll often find it difficult and prohibitively expensive to offer a broad range of opportunities outwith the school itself. Access to sporting, cultural, residential and vocational experiences is difficult to organise. A school with a larger roll in a more extensive community faces less difficulty in making such opportunities available.

- Argyll and Bute Council has a highly valued professional teaching force. However, there are several professional problems associated with schools with a small roll. Teachers have fewer opportunities to shape their professional development within small staff groups. There are also fewer opportunities for sharing effective practice or for planning collaboratively with colleagues. It is difficult to ensure that all necessary professional development can be accessed. Internal sources of support are restricted.
- The management resources of schools with a small roll are limited. There is no group of senior managers as there is in schools with a larger roll and the capacity for strategic leadership is correspondingly reduced. This lack of opportunity to discuss leadership issues and to share effective management practice is creating an ever increasing level of management isolation. Management time is also severely limited
- Schools with a larger roll are able to call on the combined expertise of a relatively extensive staff team. In schools with a small roll, the range of teacher expertise available to children is inevitably restricted even though individual teachers may be highly skilled. At a time when the curriculum is being extended, this is a significant disadvantage to pupils.

- 4.8 Many of the Council's schools with a small roll are very successful and staff have worked very hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the facilities within the buildings and pupil numbers. This proposal would have a positive effect on the issues raised in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 and would support schools in providing enhanced opportunities for pupils.

Educational benefits specific to this proposal

Existing and future pupils

- 4.9 There would be positive education benefits associated with this proposal. The management arrangements of the school would be strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies. The proposal would increase the roll of Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary Department and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school may be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities. Pupils attending the new combined school will benefit from access to a variety of more spacious classrooms in a new 3-18 campus

with excellent facilities including all weather pitches. Combining the schools will enable pooling of expensive resources and equipment such as gymnastic equipment and interactive whiteboards.

Pupils attending the combined school will benefit from freshly cooked meals on the premises.

- 4.10 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Glassary Primary School or Minard Primary School will benefit from daily interaction with a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 above. Pupils in the combined school will have more shared experiences and opportunity for friendships. This will enhance their confidence and make the transition to secondary easier. At a time when the curriculum is being extended this is a significant advantage. Larger year groups make the provision of specialist services more viable and provide enhanced opportunities for school trips.
- 4.11 So far as pupils with additional needs are concerned, access and special facilities at Lochgilphead Joint Campus will be better than at Glassary Primary School or Minard Primary School. The Learning Centre in Lochgilphead Joint Campus provides on site specialist support for a variety of physical and developmental needs in purpose built accommodation.
- 4.12 Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School face **some** specific difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* and whilst staff have endeavoured to address these issues, there are some that cannot be overcome. These may include limited daily peer interaction. Whilst the introduction of modern technology has helped to some degree with social interaction, it is no substitute for personal interaction. Access to a wider range of learning professionals and specialists required to extend opportunities for P5 to P7 can be provided more time efficiently in the Joint Campus. This proposal would have a positive and beneficial effect in addressing these difficulties.
- 4.13 Pupils in both Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School currently work in multi-composite classes. Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary School have single stage and composite classes. This proposal would result in pupils from Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School being in a class with a smaller age range.
- 4.14 Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary School has extensive school grounds and better facilities. Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary Department also has a fully equipped gym and access to all of the facilities within the joint campus. Neither Glassary Primary nor Minard Primary currently have PE facilities on site. The buildings and playgrounds of these schools offer limited opportunity to provide appropriate learning across the physical education curriculum. This can effect the overall quality grade given for delivery of the curriculum during an HMI evaluation.

- 4.15 The head teacher of Glassary Primary School has a management time allocation of 0.2FTE and the head teacher of Minard Primary School has a management time allocation of 0.2 FTE thus making it more difficult to manage and lead the school. Leadership time for the combined new school would provide greater capacity for the development of teaching and learning.

Pre-school users

- 4.16 Local authorities have a duty to secure a free, part time pre-school education place for all eligible children, should their parents wish one.
- 4.17 Argyll and Bute Council meet their duty by securing sufficient pre-school education places within local authority units and commissioned providers. The breakdown of provision at August 2010 was 50 local authority units (this includes the Gaelic units at Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen and Tiree) and 26 commissioned providers.
- 4.18 Parents have the right to access pre-school provision where it is most convenient. Many parents do not utilise local provision due to work patterns and instead they access provision, closer to their place of work, where this is provided.
- 4.19 There is currently no pre-school provision in either Glassary Primary School or Minard Primary School but this proposal would offer available pre-school provision at Lochgilphead Joint Campus.

Gaelic learners

- 4.20 Gaelic learners provision is provided within Lochgilphead Joint Campus.

Placing requests

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

Other pupils in the authority

- 4.22 All pupils attending Argyll and Bute schools would benefit substantially from the implementation of this and other proposals being advanced by the Council. The sustainability of the Council's education service budget is an issue of the greatest educational as well as financial significance. Particularly at a time of very severe budgetary constraint the Council cannot afford to divert resources away from direct educational purposes such as teacher staffing and educational supplies by retaining buildings that are not required. The proposal would benefit all pupils, present and future throughout the county, by allowing the more effective use of resources for education purposes.

Other users of the facility

- 4.23 During the period from 2005/06 to 2009/10 the schools included in this proposal were used on the following number of occasions for community use. This is in addition to school based activities such as parents' evenings and school events.

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Minard	1	0	0	0	0
Glassary	1	1	3	3	4
Lochgilphead	3	6	20	8	9

- 4.24 The current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a significant need within the community. Regardless of this the communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. There is an existing village hall in Minard which is regularly used by the community.
- 4.25 Lochgilphead Primary School experiences some community use at present and the Council considers that there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate any increase in use which would occur as a result of this proposal. As such the Council considers that there would be no adverse impact on the community users of the schools included in this proposal.

Financial impact

- 4.26 The Council has a clear vision for its education service which includes striving continuously to improve the quality of education for all in Argyll and Bute. The Council's current education review requires education to examine how they may achieve savings of around 15% of their current budgets while minimising any adverse impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This proposal has identified financial savings which can be made to the schools budget and these will contribute to increasing the education service's long term sustainability.
- 4.27 It is expected that the specific proposal would reduce the aggregate costs of operating the schools as described in the table below:

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving/ (cost)
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	751,867	647,162	104,705
Property Costs	24,390	1,801	22,588
Supplies, Services and Travel	112,422	112,422	0
NPDO	80,365	80,365	0

	Total (Pre-Amalgamation)	Post Amalgamation	Saving/ (cost)
Income	-29,617	-29,617	0
Additional Transport		38,880	-38,880
Reduction in small schools grant		56,542	-56,542
Total	939,426	907,555	31,871

- 4.28 The anticipated saving shown above represents some 13% of the total annual budget for operating Minard and Glassary Primary Schools at present.

5 Specific provisions for rural schools

Any viable alternative to the closure proposal

- 5.1 The Council's proposals for rationalising its school estate (including the proposal in this paper) are intended to:

- Address the educational issues that face schools with a small roll
- Create a more sustainable estate
- Achieve significant savings.

It is against these criteria that any alternative proposals must be judged.

- 5.2 The Council has considered a range of alternative possibilities but does not consider that any of them are worth pursuing. These include:

- Altered organisational arrangements such as the establishment of one or more joint headships would not meet any of the three criteria indicated above
- The only possibility of increasing the pupil roll of Glassary Primary School or Minard Primary School in the foreseeable future is by closing another school and transferring the pupils to Glassary Primary School or Minard Primary School. Any new school would not provide significantly better peer group opportunities for pupils or collegiate opportunities for staff as discussed above. Such an approach would not achieve worthwhile savings and would do little to improve the viability of the school estate
- There are no opportunities for moving any other public services into the premises. No significant private sector use could be accommodated within part of the school building. The only option for increasing usage would be to seek to extend community use of the premises outside school hours. This would be likely to increase the Council's costs and would not meet either of the other criteria.

- 5.3 As part of the consultation process the Council would welcome creative proposals from communities regarding ways of retaining schools on a cost effective basis. Such proposals would require to demonstrate community

support and would also require to meet all of the criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

The likely effect on the local community

- 5.4 Whilst the Council would consider engaging with the community to discuss the future use of the school buildings in this proposal, the current levels of community use do not indicate that the schools fulfil a particular need within the community.
- 5.5 Studies of the sustainability of rural communities do not generally see the existence of a school as being of comparable importance to local employment opportunities, the availability of housing, private sector led economic diversity or clean energy. None of these issues are affected by the proposal.
- 5.6 As further evidence of this, there have been 92 completions of new residential buildings in the catchment areas affected by this proposal over the last 5 years averaging 18.4 per year. During this period the rolls at the schools affected by this proposal have continued to decline. The Council is not aware of any major residential developments which are due to take place in the catchment areas covered by this proposal. Regardless of this the evidence of previous developments in the area would indicate that any future residential building is unlikely to materially impact on the schools rolls.
- 5.7 The communities covered by the catchment areas of the schools included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place. There is an existing village hall in Minard which is regularly used by the community.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required

- 5.8 The Council has considered the travel implications for pupils which would arise in the event of amalgamation:
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that no pupil's journey to or from school will take longer than 45 minutes. This is in line with the approach taken by other similar authorities such as Highland Council and Perth and Kinross
 - The Council assessed the relevant journey time by undertaking and timing the relevant journey to ascertain the maximum travel time for a child to attend the receiving school
 - The route was plotted on an Ordnance Survey map, including each pick up point of existing entitled pupils and Pre-5 children due to commence school next session. The route was driven and a stop of 30 seconds was made at each pupil pick up point. The maximum travel time

for a child attending Lochgilphead Primary School as a result of this proposal would be under 29 minutes

- The time it takes for pupils to travel to and from school is clearly important in any assessment of the requirement to make relevant and appropriate provision. Distances themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions and the time that such travelling takes
- The Council has recently instigated planning for a rolling programme of assessment of the suitability of Pick Up and Drop Off points along school bus routes. Any new Pick Up and Drop Off points that may be required as a result of this proposal will be assessed prior to the new routes commencing.

- 5.9 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.
- 5.10 The Council has taken into consideration the safety of the proposed new school transportation routes that would result from the proposal. The Council have reviewed the number of accidents that have occurred on the proposed routes included in this proposal. Between 2005 and 2009 on all of the roads in the catchment areas covered by this proposal there have been 35 road traffic accidents. Of these only 8 occurred during school morning or afternoon travel periods and none of the reported incidents involved buses. The Council and its partners currently operate service buses along all of the major roads covered by this proposal. The Council does not consider that there is any inherent reason that would render any proposed route as unsafe or inappropriate for school transport.
- 5.11 The Council has also considered the environmental impact of its proposal by comparing the carbon output of the schools prior to amalgamation to the likely output afterwards when additional transportation is taken into account.
- 5.12 Having taken these factors into account the Council has made a conservative calculation as to the impact on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the schools included in the proposal. This assessment indicates that the carbon footprint of the schools included in the proposal would be materially reduced as detailed in the table below;

	Pre Amalgamation	Post Amalgamation	Additional Transport	CO ₂ Reduction	
	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	(kg of CO ₂)	kg	%
Glassary	31,386	0	3,464	27,922	89%
Lochgilphead	236,943	236,943	0	0	0%
Minard	16,632	0	4,130	12,502	75%
Total	284,961	236,943	7,595	40,424	14%

6 Equal Opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the education service. In addition, they provide more and better information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 6.2 The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council is preparing to carry out detailed EIAs, consideration has been given to the likely factors that require to be examined in an EIA. Having regard to Lochgilphead Joint Campus, it is not believed that the amalgamation of these schools would have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups in accordance with Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- 6.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, young people, trade unions and elected Council members and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

The equality target groups are:

- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Belief
- Age
- BME (black and minority ethnic community)

Conclusion

It is not considered that introducing this change will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups. The Council will carry out detailed EIA's in regard to the relevant Schools and if any issues are identified by the EIA's then these shall be addressed by the Council.

7 Other impacts

Asset management

- 7.1 The reduction in the number of buildings that would result from this proposal would mean that the Council's current revenue maintenance and capital works budget would be spread across fewer properties. This would

enable the Council to better maintain those properties that remain and achieve the objectives of its asset management plans and strategies.

Implications for staff

- 7.2 Should these proposals be accepted, staffing in all schools in Argyll and Bute will continue to be staffed in accordance with current staffing standards.
- 7.3 In the event of the schools amalgamating, the following action will be taken in relation to staff as detailed in Argyll and Bute Council's Transfer Policy and Guidance for Teachers. All teachers are appointed to the service of the Education Authority and not to a particular school. As such, they may be transferred between schools in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Transfer Policy outlines the appropriate process regarding such circumstances, and teachers affected by the review of the Council's School Estate will be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 7.4 A redeployment process is available for non-teaching staff which can be invoked in all circumstances where employees may require to be redeployed, which can include displacement. Local Government Employees (LGE) will, therefore, be treated in accordance with the principles and processes relating to this procedure.
- 7.5 A consultation process for all staff has been developed by the Council's HR team (Modernisation). This details the process for consultation with staff and representatives for employees affected in these and similar circumstances. This will be followed in regard to management of displaced staff.
- 7.6 Statutory timescales will be followed. As far as possible timescales outlined in the documents will also be followed, although the timing of the review may require that agreement be reached on alternative timescales where it is not possible to adhere to those detailed in the document(s).
- 7.7 The staffing allocation for Classroom and Pupil Support Assistants may vary due to the outcome of the Education (Non Estates) Service Review.

8 Consultation arrangements

- 8.1 This document was considered by the Council on 25 November 2010 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for 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.
- 8.2 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.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations> or www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

- 8.3 The period for consultation will extend from 13 December 2010 when an advertisement will appear in local newspapers until the close of business on 24 February 2011 which covers a period in excess of 30 school days.
- 8.4 A public meeting will be held at a time and venue to be notified. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 8.5 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Head of Education, Argyll and Bute Council Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 24 February 2011.
- 8.6 When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE.) HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a summary of any oral representation made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.
- 8.7 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the HMIE Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 8.8 In the event that the Council decides to amalgamate the schools, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that

decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse or grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Council's overall school rolls have decreased significantly in the past few years and are expected to continue to do so. This is the case across the authority area but also specifically in the schools covered by this proposal. The continuing maintenance of these schools draws funding away from areas of spending which have a direct benefit to the continuing education of the children of Argyll and Bute.
- 9.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will improve the sustainability both of local education in this area but also across the authority area. Argyll and Bute Council has a reputation for the provision of high quality education and considers that this can be continued through the delivery of the educational benefits to the users of our schools from implementing this proposal.

**Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director
November 2010**

For further information contact: Carol Walker, Head of Education, Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council, Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ. Telephone number 01369 708508.

Lochgilphead/Glassary/Minard

A816

LOCHGILPHEAD

A83

A83

Key:

- School Catchment Area
- Existing Boundary
- Proposed Boundary



School Catchment Proposals 2010 Lochgilphead/Glassary/Minard

0 2,200 4,400 Meters

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Draft

APPENDIX

 Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services: Education

 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 Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School be discontinued with effect from the beginning of the October holiday period 2011. Pupils of Glassary Primary School and Minard Primary School continue their education at Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary School from the first school day following the October holiday period 2011. The catchment area of Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment areas of Glassary Primary School and Minard 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)

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