



**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

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- 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)
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- The Executive Director of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council , Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
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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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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 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



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:

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Class composition</b>
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)
	£	£	£
<b>Staff Costs</b>	657,835	440,640	217,195
<b>Property Costs</b>	83,365	47,472	35,893
<b>Supplies, Services and Travel</b>	103,646	103,646	0
<b>Income</b>	-26,439	-26,439	0
<b>Additional Transport</b>		22,390	-22,390
<b>Reduction in small schools grant</b>		67,485	-67,485
<b>Total</b>	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 (CO<sub>2</sub>) 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;

	<b>Pre Amalgamation</b>	<b>Post Amalgamation</b>	<b>Additional Transport</b>	<b>CO<sub>2</sub> Reduction</b>	
	<b>(kg of CO<sub>2</sub>)</b>	<b>(kg of CO<sub>2</sub>)</b>	<b>(kg of CO<sub>2</sub>)</b>	<b>kg</b>	<b>%</b>
	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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>152,028</b>	<b>74,438</b>	<b>25,982</b>	<b>51,608</b>	<b>34%</b>

## **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](http://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"/>
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)**

**Office Use:**