



EDUCATION

OPTIONS APPRAISAL

SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As of April 2021 there were no pupils attending Southend Primary School. Pupils residing within the Southend catchment area were attending schools within the Campbeltown area. The pre-school age children within the catchment area were also attending nursery settings in Campbeltown. There were no Primary 1 pupils registered to attend Southend Primary School in session 2021-22. At the Community Services Committee on 10th June 2021, Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Southend Primary School on a temporary basis. It was agreed that the premises be retained for 2 years on a care and maintenance basis.

[SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL 27052021 Pre-Agenda Briefing of the Community Services Committee.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

On 25th August 2022, Argyll and Bute Council approved the continued mothballing of Southend Primary School and for the Education Service to begin gathering necessary information and carry out the exercise of assessing the options for the future of Southend Primary School, in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.

[SCHOOLS CONSULTATIONSCOTLAND ACT 2010 - SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

The statutory process for the closure of a rural school is laid out in the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* as amended by the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

The Act, as amended, contains a presumption against closure of a rural school and details specific requirements which the education authority is required to follow if they are formulating a proposal to close a rural school. This includes the introduction of a preliminary consultation process.

In addition, the *Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015* sets out a new right for community organisations to request the transfer of local assets into local community ownership/management. Public bodies, including councils, must consider such requests and respond to them within a reasonable timescale.

Southend Primary School has had zero pupils enrolled since elected members approved the mothballing.

On 25th August 2022, Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the preliminary requirements in relation to considering a rural school closure and look at an options appraisal for Southend Primary School. This review will enable the Education Service to identify and consider the options put forward.

The 2010 Act makes special arrangements in regard to rural schools that is in effect a presumption against their closure. There is a requirement to have special regard to the rural schools factors prior to formulating a proposal to close a rural school. In particular, it is necessary to consider any reasonable alternatives before considering closure. It is also necessary to consider the impact on the wider community of a potential closure and the impact of any different travel arrangements. These factors have been considered in this Options Appraisal.

2.0 REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

2.1 An authority that is contemplating formulating a rural school closure proposal must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act before starting to prepare its Proposal Paper. In particular, it must identify the underlying reasons why the future of the School is being considered, which, in this case, are as follows:

1. Southend Primary School has been mothballed for almost two years. The school roll fell to zero as parents were choosing to place their children in schools outwith the Southend catchment area to Castlehill Primary School. The school roll was very low and is not predicted to rise in the near future.
2. Along with several other rural councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. In January 2023 there were 15.9 fte vacancies for both Head Teachers and Teachers.
3. Whilst the School is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for maintenance.

The Council is therefore considering the future of Southend Primary School. The various options are explored within this paper.

3.0 BACKGROUND

Argyll and Bute is an area of outstanding natural beauty sitting within an ancient landscape with a strong cultural identity. Today, the culture of Argyll and Bute is reflected in its traditional industries of fishing, farming and crofting, sports such as shinty and in its world class musicians and artists as well as its modern commercial industries such as wind turbine production and fish farming.

Argyll and Bute is geographically the second largest authority in Scotland. Education is delivered in a range of settings including schools, partnerships and youth services.

3.1 Argyll and Bute Corporate Plan

The Argyll and Bute Corporate Plan identifies Argyll and Bute as an area of Scotland with outstanding places, people and potential for a prosperous future

for everyone. Our Council along with our Community Planning Partners, is committed to ensuring that Argyll and Bute's Economic Success is built on a Growing Population.

This strategic approach embraces the vision for our area, our communities and our people as outlined in the Corporate Plan. Our key service priorities support the delivery of our commitments in the plans, helping to focus on local outcomes that will achieve meaningful improvements for the area, our local communities and our citizens.

Councils have a statutory responsibility in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 to achieve best value. Our Community Services Asset Management Plan provides a review of the property assets used to deliver services. It incorporates the School Estate Management Plan which reflects the local implementation of Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future, the national school estate strategy developed by the Scottish Government in conjunction with local authorities.

The aspirations, guiding principles and objectives contained within Building Better Schools are reflected throughout Education and Children's Services Asset Management Plan (SAMP) for schools and public buildings, both in the management of the existing assets and in the design and construction of developments.

[corporate_plan_2018_181119_v2.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

3.2 Our Children Their Future

Councils, as an Education Authority, have a statutory duty in terms of the *Education (Scotland) Act 1980* to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand. This is reflected in Our Children, Their Future: Education Vision and Strategy.

[argyll_bute_vision_strategy_final_web.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

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

Southend is a scenically beautiful area situated at the end of the Kintyre peninsula, only 13 miles across the North Channel from Northern Ireland. Southend is a small and picturesque village which is situated approximately 9 miles from Campbeltown. The final stage of the Kintyre Way spans from Southend to Machrihanish. The area is home to the historic attractions of the 13th Century Dunaverty Rock and Castle, St. Ciaran's Cave, St. Columba's Chapel as well as Iron Hill Fort on the hill of Cnoc Araich where access is gained from behind Southend Primary School. There is also an 18 hole golf course. The area is popular with cyclists, hill walkers and nature enthusiasts.

3.4 The School within the Community

Southend Primary School was previously very active within the community. It was a focus for social and educational events. The pupils invited the community to attend events on many occasions every year as well as community members volunteering with drama productions and activities such as golfing lessons. Whilst being mothballed, there were no requests for the building to be used for such events. With Dunaverty Hall, a community managed charity that host various community events, being the hub of the village.

3.5 Population

Argyll and Bute has an average population density of just 0.13 persons per hectare. This coupled with the changing demographic profile of the area presents one of our greatest challenges. The table below refers directly to the Southend area showing the changing population from census 2001 to census 2011:

Table 1: Population Information

Southend Area Census			
2001		2011	
Total Resident Population	165	Total Resident Population	165
% under 16	28.48	% under 16	15.7
% 16 – 64 (pensionable age)	50	% 16 – 64 (pensionable age)	63
% pensionable age and over	21	% pensionable age and over	20

It is recognised that the census area and the catchment area of Southend Primary School differ slightly. The census cannot display results for that postcode area alone because it could impact people's privacy. Instead, it groups the postcode with nearby postcodes.

3.6 Development and House Building

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

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

- the key development areas i.e. the allocations for housing, industry and business, community facilities and infrastructure;
 - the potential areas for future development (Potential Development Areas);
 - areas requiring actions such as environmental improvement or regeneration (Areas for Action); and
 - environmental designations such as national Scenic Areas, Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas and Local Nature Conservation Sites.
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- *Appendix 1* shows the LDP2 for Southend
 - *Appendix 2* shows the LDP2 for Castlehill
 - *Appendix 3* provides the key for Local Development Plans.

3.7 **Southend Primary School**

Southend Primary School is situated outside of the village of Southend and was built in 1886 with an extension added in 2005/06. The school is co-educational and non-denominational with Early Learning and Childcare available. It has a catchment area extending from Carskiefy to Macharioch and Fiochaig to A'Chruach. The school has one large open plan classroom, Library, Active Play Area and Snug. The Hall was used by pre 5 Monday to Wednesday and was also used for activities such as physical education and drama performances. The hall can also be used as a dining area as it is next to the kitchen. The school has two playgrounds, one of which is enclosed. Within the playground there is a pavilion, Wendy House, mud kitchen area, picnic tables and raised beds for plants. The larger playground includes a wooden climbing frame and a habitat area with pond. There are also coloured number and PE tarmac markings.

Appendix 4 shows the Southend Primary School Floor Plan.

Southend Primary School is 8.7 miles from Castlehill Primary School. The area is sparsely populated. Southend Primary School is situated on the side of the B842 that leads from Campbeltown to Southend.

The Scottish Government's Rural School List 2021 classifies Southend Primary School as 'very remote rural'. This is defined as an area with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more. Southend Primary is one of 8 primary schools associated with Campbeltown Grammar School.

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

3.8 **Castlehill Primary School**

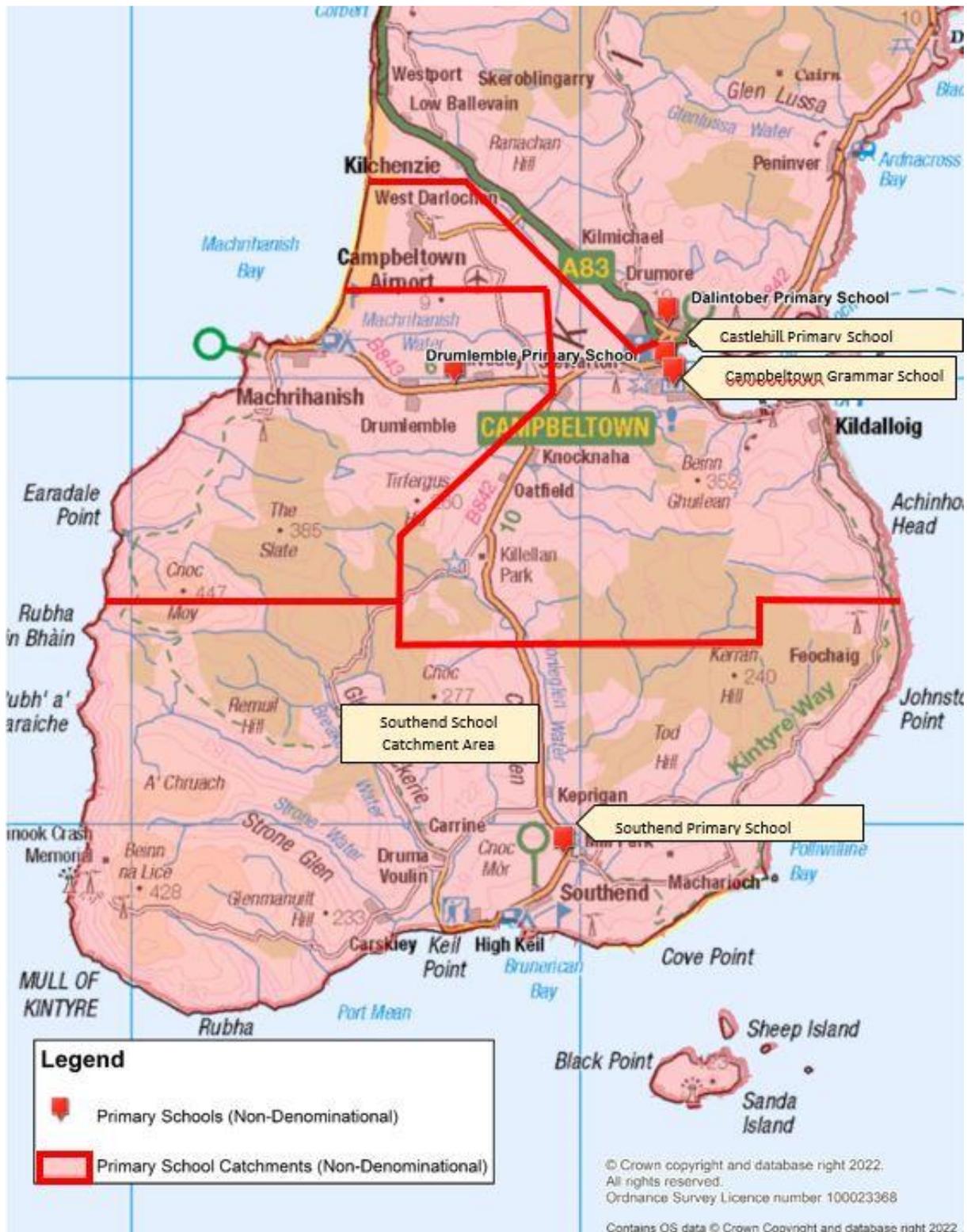
Following the mothballing of Southend Primary School, children from the Southend catchment area attended Castlehill Primary School. Castlehill Primary School is a non-denominational and co-educational school situated in the town of Campbeltown at Ralston Road. Castlehill Primary serves part of the town of Campbeltown and much of the area to the south and east of the town. The original school building was constructed in 1876 and is still used today. The school accommodation is split over two levels with a reception office, school kitchen and dining hall. The school has a playground that wraps around the school building. The school has close links with Campbeltown Nursery.

Appendix 5 shows the Castlehill Primary School Floor Plan.

The school has strong and active traditions in instrumental music, in sport and physical activity. The school enjoys the support of an active Parent Council and strong community partners.

The Primary School building has facilities for pupils, visitors and special access needs. With its central location within Campbeltown, Castlehill Primary School is not on the Scottish Government's Rural School List 2021. Campbeltown Grammar School is the associated Secondary School for Southend, Dalintober, Drumlemble, Castlehill, Carradale & Glenbarr pupils. Pupils at Rhunahaorine and Gigha are given the choice between Tarbert Academy and Campbeltown Grammar.

The Map below shows the adjoining catchment areas of Southend and Castlehill Primary Schools Catchment Areas:



3.9 Pupil Numbers

Pupil projections, and data for 2023-24 are based on the 2022 pupil census, a return prepared annually for the Scottish Government. Past pupil numbers are historic data from past pupil censuses. Pupil projections are based on 3/5 years intake and updated post P1 registration.

Table 2 shows the historic and current pupil numbers for both Southend and Castlehill Primary schools:

Table 2:	Southend PS	Castlehill PS
	Roll	Roll
Capacity	50	459
2005-06	46	289
2006-07	41	276
2007-08	38	257
2008-09	33	243
2009-2010	32	218
2010-2011	27	195
2011-2012	22	189
2012-2013	22	178
2013-2014	18	180
2014-2015	17	184
2015-2016	16	188
2016-2017	18	182
2017-2018	5	197
2018-19	6	210
2019-20	7	205
2020 -2021	0	203
2021 -2022	0	194
2022-2023	0	189

Table 3 shows projected rolls for Castlehill Primary School and estimated numbers of pupils in the Southend Primary School catchment area according to figures held by Argyll and Bute Council:

Table 3:	Southend PS	Castlehill PS
	Roll	Roll
Capacity	50	459
2023 -2024	8	189
2024 -2025	8	180
2025-2026	8	173

* A prediction based on information available at December 2022. Southend information based on prediction available at December 2019

The Southend Primary School roll further dropped to 3 over the course of the 2019-20 school year (see Table 2, above) and was expected to reduce further at the point of mothballing in April 2021. Pupils within the catchment area (as set out in Table 3, above) did not reflect the number of pupils attending the

school because parents chose to send their children to schools within the Campbeltown area.

4.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Meetings

A Community Engagement Meeting was held in Southend Primary School, on 17th November, 2022 from 09:00-18:00 hours. This was to seek the views of the community on the future of Southend Primary School. This meeting was attended by 43 people. There was also a meeting in Dalintober Primary School to gather opinions from parents who will be impacted by any decision that is made in relation to Southend Primary School. Dalintober Primary School have 3 members of staff re-deployed from Southend PS to Dalintober PS. Virtual meetings took place with a young person from Campbeltown Grammar School who was impacted by the mothballing of Southend Primary School and the Head Teacher of Southend Primary School who currently teaches at Dalintober Primary School. The Head Teacher at Dalintober Primary School took part in a virtual meeting. Meetings were also offered to Castlehill and Drumlemble Parent Councils. Three secondary aged young people and one primary aged young person participated in the Community Engagement Meeting. The parent and toddler group within Southend were contacted on two occasions to be given the opportunity to feed into the preliminary engagement exercise. An email contact was also given to individuals during the Community Engagement event to encourage more feedback from this group. No response was received.

4.2 Content of Meetings

Attendees at the meetings were given an overview of the information that the Council would be using in this Options Appraisal, this included pupil projections, development information and local services and facilities.

The questions were as follows:

Over the last three years, what has been the effect of mothballing Southend School on you, your family and community?

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

- *Continue with mothballing*
- *Re-open the school*
- *Close the school*
- *Re-open the school but widen the catchment area*

Attendees also noted questions regarding the future of the school, and points of information that should be considered in the Options Appraisal.

4.3 Feedback

There was a range of viewpoints on the future of Southend School:

- **Community and Parents**

The majority of the community felt that continuing to mothball the school was not an option. It was felt that a decision should be made as the building would only continue to deteriorate. A small number felt this might be beneficial to allow pre 5 children in the area to get to the stage where they were ready to attend school. The majority of the community believed that the most viable option is to formally close the school as decline in school roll at the school had been as a result of parents choosing to send their children to schools within the Campbeltown area. There was a small percentage of people in support of opening the school but said that they would need to see what this looked like before they were able to commit to sending their child to school there. There are 18 children who attend a local baby and toddler group. This was seen as a strong reason to keep the school open by some members of the community. The group was approached to provide feedback and members of the group were encouraged to discuss and provide feedback via direct email. Neither opportunity provided further feedback. The community were all in agreement that changing the catchment area would not be a viable option given the geographical area.

- **Children/young people**

The young people who were now at Campbeltown Grammar had voiced that they loved being at school at Southend Primary and had had a positive experience. A younger pupil reported that their transport to school at Castlehill had improved since Southend Primary School had been mothballed, they enjoyed being at Castlehill Primary school. Another pupil reported that they benefitted from more friends and a wider range of opportunities having moved from Southend to Castlehill Primary School. There are currently no pupils at Southend Primary and pupils felt that they did not want to give an opinion on what should happen to the school but did feel a decision should be made about the building, mothballing was not a viable option for them. A young person who had attended the school would have liked to have seen it re-open but recognised that this would cost money. A younger pupil did not want the re-opening of the school if it would impact on their transport to Castlehill Primary as they found service prior to mothballing stressful.

- **Staff**

Staff members were sad at the thought of the School being closed but felt that they had dealt with the most difficult period when the decision was made to mothball the school. Staff members felt that the low pupil numbers was not providing a rich educational experience for pupils.

General Comments:

“We would like to see parents choosing the school.”

“My child attends school in town and this has been good for her socially. My youngest is likely to follow her to the same school as opposed to attending Southend Primary”

“The school didn’t close due to lack of children, it closed due to parental choice.”

“We would only send our child to the school if numbers permitted.”

“Individual communities will be lost if there is an amalgamation (new large school campus). Communities are all diverse.”

“There is a lot of potential through the Pre 5 group.”

“In an ideal world it is great to see small schools but difficult to get staff.”

“We think it won’t re-open if we are being realistic. Can it be staffed?”

“Realistically, I can’t see it re-opening”

“The longer it is left mothballed, the more it will deteriorate.”

“I personally can’t see me moving my children if the school re-opened. I value the standardisation, social aspect and social contact in a big school. Schools in town have capacity to take increased numbers.”

5.0 THE PROPOSAL AND REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSAL AS CONSIDERED BY THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Southend Primary School has been mothballed for almost 2 years. The school roll had dramatically declined after 2017. Although the census information illustrates that in 2019-20 the school roll was 7 pupils (see Table 2, above), this reduced to 3 (2 of which were siblings) over the course of the year. Discussion took place with the Head Teacher and parent community at the time, who all acknowledged the limitations that pupil numbers were placing on the opportunity for social interaction. The decision was made by the relevant parents that the pupils would have the opportunity for increased social interaction at Castlehill Primary School. The decline in pupil numbers at Southend Primary School was as a result of placing requests to Castlehill Primary School, with a small number also choosing to attend Drumlembie

Primary School and Dalintober Primary School. A small number of parents with pre-school children are supportive of the school re-opening. Parents with children at Castlehill Primary School wished current arrangements to continue and reported that siblings would be attending Castlehill Primary School. There is very limited support for the re-opening of Southend Primary School.

Whilst the building is mothballed it continues to deteriorate. The Community is very proactive and have positive suggestions as to how the building could be used. Along with several other rural councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. In January 2023 there were 15.9 fte vacancies for both Head Teachers and Teachers. Recruitment in the South Kintyre area is challenging due to the rural location.

The Council is required to consider the future of Southend Primary School. The following options are explored within this paper:

- a) Re-open Southend Primary School.
- b) Continued Mothballing of Southend Primary with the pupils zoned to Castlehill Primary School.
- c) Re-open Southend Primary School and realign its catchment area.
- d) Close Southend Primary School and realign its catchment area to Castlehill Primary School.

6.0 OPTION A: RE-OPEN SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL

6.1 Community Feedback

Of the 43 community members that attended the Options Appraisal engagement event, only 3 families wished for the school to re-open. There was concern expressed that they were being asked to give views on this without knowing fully what the school would look like. Pupil numbers and staffing would influence their final parental decision. It was also felt that the ELC needed to be in place for this to be a successful school as if pre-school children are attending an ELC in Campbeltown, they would progress to the same school in town as their peers as opposed to breaking up friendship groups. The community were divided in their opinions.

6.2 Pupil Numbers

If the school were to reopen in August 2023, the maximum pupil numbers from the catchment would be one. This would be one new pupil. All parents involved in the consultation stated that they would not move their child from another school as they were settled and friendships were established. Pupils currently within the catchment area of Southend Primary School either attend Castlehill Primary School, Drumlemble or Dalintober Primary School. It has been stated that without a viable number of pupils for the School parents would not be considering placing their children to attend Southend Primary School if it were to re-open.

If the school were to re-open sustainability may not be viable due to the fact that pupil numbers over the next four years are not predicted to rise and are well below the capacity of the school building. It has also been stated that parents would choose to place their children in a school within Campbeltown as older siblings were already attending school there or because it is more convenient for after school clubs.

Parents felt that the ELC may be beneficial to the area and that this may grow numbers for the school in the longer term. The ELC had previously been open part time. Four Children attended the ELC on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. During the pandemic, parents had to choose between Southend ELC and Campbeltown ELC as split placements were not permitted. This resulted in no pupils attending the Southend ELC. As friendships are formed at ELC, parents have chosen not to split friendships when children are progressing onto school, therefore Castlehill Primary becomes a preferred option.

Table 4: Pupil Numbers

Southend Primary	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
Approved Capacity	50	50	50
Roll Projection	8	8	8

6.3 Financial Information

The total amount including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration to re-open the school is **£139,024**.

The annual cost of mothballing Southend Primary School is **£5,936**.

The cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£7,300**.

6.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons why the future of Southend Primary School is being considered are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Southend Primary School to increase. Southend Primary School is currently mothballed. The mothballing of the school was due to decline in pupil numbers as a result of parental choice. Some members of the community (who did not have school age children) stated that the way to re-open the school was to insist that parents within the catchment area send their children to the school. However parents have the legal right to express a preference for a particular school that they want their children to attend, and the placing request system is in place to consider this.

6.4.1 Community Impact

The reopening of the school would enable the premises to be used by the community. It would also be a possibility that the school pupils would invite the community to specific events. The presence of a school and the facilities/activities that may be offered could make the area a more attractive place to live. Reopening the school may therefore encourage families with school age children to move to the community. This in turn may make the community more sustainable.

However the community have demonstrated that there is a limited desire for the school to reopen. The majority who attended the community engagement indicated the need for the school to become a facility for the community or local tourism to use rather than an educational establishment.

As Southend has an established community hall, Southend Primary School has not been used for community use since it has been mothballed. Respondents noted the negative impact of the school mothballing on the community as:

- The visual impact on the community of the mothballed school.
- The continued deterioration of the building.

If the school were to reopen as an educational establishment there would be an economic impact with respect to the expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard. There would also be costs relating to staffing, and ongoing maintenance. The reopening of the school and the potential relocation of families may have a positive effect on the wider economy of the community.

6.4.2 Travel Arrangements

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two years. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Southend community. Southend Primary School is situated outside of Southend village with no pavement running from the village to the school. If Southend Primary school was to reopen there could be a positive impact on the health and wellbeing and education of pupils who are able to walk or cycle to school but the lack of safe routes to the school limits this. Staff would either travel to the school by car, or if they live locally could walk or cycle. There may be a positive environmental impact as the use of vehicles to transport pupils may decrease. Conversely, there could be increased car usage by staff which may mean these travel arrangements have a negative environmental impact. The respective positive and negative impact may therefore balance.

6.5 Educational Benefits

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. There are no specific educational benefits from reopening the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

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

With continued mothballing of the building, there would be issues with respect to the current condition and suitability of the school buildings and facilities which would negatively impact learning and teaching.

6.6 Summary

The 43 people who attended the consultation were divided in relation to the re-opening of Southend Primary as a school. If the school reopened, pupil numbers within the catchment area would be eight, as of the September 2022 census, and this is not predicted to rise over the next three years. The catchment numbers are similar to that when the school roll dropped to an unsustainable number in April 2021 when the school was mothballed. The catchment numbers do not reflect the school roll numbers.

There are financial implications if the school is to be reopened. The total amount including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration to re-open the school is **£139,024** with the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£7,300**.

If the School was to be reopened, the premises would be able to be used by the community, in addition to its use as an educational facility. However, with the village hall being in regular use, this impact would be limited. The reopening of the School may encourage families with school age children to move to the community, which may make the community more sustainable.

The travel distance (sourced from AA Route Planner) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. Adverse weather can be a factor, however this is the same for other local schools and areas. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost 2 years. Should the school reopen, there may be a positive environmental impact as the use of vehicles to transport pupils may decrease. Conversely, there could be increased car usage by staff which may mean these travel arrangements have a negative environmental impact. The positive and negative impact may balance.

There are no specific educational benefits from reopening the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

When considering the above alongside projected low pupil numbers, the challenges in recruiting teaching staff and the expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard and the limited local support for reopening Southend Primary School this is not considered to be a reasonable option.

7.0 OPTION B: CONTINUED MOTHBALLING OF SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS ZONED TO CASTLEHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Statutory Guidance for the 2010 Act, in relation to mothballing, states *“the maximum length of its duration is likely to depend on the location of the school and the desirability of maintaining capacity to re-open a school there, but it is unlikely that it should exceed 3 years in areas that are not very remote.”* Southend Primary School has been mothballed for 2 years.

7.1 Community Feedback

There are many ideas for the future of the building being discussed by the community as base for outdoor activities, gym and tourism facility. Only one person voiced that mothballing would not bother them as their child was not of school age yet. Everyone else at the community meeting felt that mothballing the school over a long period is wasteful due to deterioration of the property and should not be prolonged:

“As long as it’s maintained, we don’t care what happens to it.”

“The longer it is left mothballed, the more it will deteriorate.”

“Not viable. Decision needs to be made.”

“I don’t think there is any point to continuing to mothball the schools.” (Young Person)

“This wouldn’t bother me as my child isn’t quite ready to go to school.”

7.2 Pupil Numbers

Pupil numbers are not projected to increase over the next 4 years, as per Table 4 above.

7.3 Financial Information

The current annual cost (2022/23) to the Council of the mothballed Southend Primary School is **£5,936**. This includes electricity, heating oil, and ground maintenance, building maintenance and repair costs. It does not take into

account the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school which is **£7,300**. There is no current annual transport cost of taking pupils to alternative schools.

7.4 **Assessment of Rural Factors**

The reasons why the future of Southend Primary School is being considered are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Southend Primary School to increase. Southend Primary School is currently mothballed. Only a small number of parents whose children are within the catchment area attended the community engagement event. No parents planned on moving their child to Southend PS should the school re-open. To reopen the school would not in itself increase the pupil numbers.

7.4.1 Community Impact

If pupils are to continue their education in Castlehill Primary School there would be no change to the current impact on the community. If the mothballing of Southend was to continue the building would deteriorate further and eventually become unavailable. There is concern with regards to the deterioration of the property and the impact of this on the neighbouring residential property that has a shared wall. This could have a detrimental effect on the sustainability of the Southend community. As the school is situated outside of the village of Southend, the building and grounds are currently not being used. There were some signs of minor vandalism of outside planters on the school property. The community view the buildings and grounds as an opportunity to develop an outdoor learning facility for residential use or a bunk house/youth hostel accommodation. As the Kintyre Way is a popular tourist destination and the area lends itself to the active tourism industry, the community felt that this use may continue to benefit young people as well as attract tourism into the local economy. This may make the area a more attractive place to live.

7.4.2 Travel Arrangements

There is no change to the travel arrangements that are currently in place nor to the environmental impact from these. The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two years. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Southend community. Continued mothballing of Southend Primary School would have no effect on current staff travel. The small number of children has minimal effect on staffing within the receiving primary schools.

7.5 **Educational Benefits**

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. There are no specific educational benefits from reopening the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

Southend Primary School is a remote rural school, Castlehill Primary School has a central location and is therefore not classified as a rural school (Scottish Government classification). Children from Southend area, attending Castlehill Primary School are benefitting from learning with a number of peers at the same age and stage as themselves as opposed to a single classroom/multi composite classrooms. Pupils also benefit from increased friendship groups that a large school can offer. Outdoor learning is currently provided at Castlehill Primary.

The partnership between Campbeltown nursery and Castlehill Primary School enhances the transition process for the children moving from Nursery into Primary one, through liaison between the two settings. Transition to secondary school is enhanced through joint planning and educational experiences. A young person reported that the transition to secondary school was easier for them as they knew more people when moving from Castlehill to Campbeltown Grammar as opposed to if they had remained at Southend Primary School.

7.6 Summary

The majority of people who attended the community engagement event were not in favour of continuing the two year mothballing of Southend Primary School. There was a significant view at the community meetings that mothballing the school over a long period was wasteful due to deterioration of the property and potentially affected sustainability of the community. Pupil numbers are not predicted to rise in terms of pre-school children living within the catchment area. Mothballing had no positive impact on the reasons for the proposal.

The current annual cost (2022/23) to the Council of the mothballed Southend Primary School is **£5,936**. This includes electricity, heating oil, and ground maintenance, building maintenance and repair costs. It does not take into account the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school which is **£7,300**. There is no current annual transport cost of taking pupils to alternative schools.

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. Adverse weather can be a factor, however this is the same for other local schools and areas. The travel arrangements have been in place for more than two years. Should the school continue to be mothballed these travel arrangements would continue.

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

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

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

8.1 Community Feedback

The existing catchment area for Southend Primary School is very rural and very sparsely populated. It already covers a broad area.

When considering the option to realign the catchment area of Southend, the map within Section 3.8, above, demonstrates that the boundary could only be moved closer to Campbeltown. Everyone within the community engagement event felt that this was an unrealistic proposal for Southend Primary School. They did not believe a change of boundary would make any difference. The community felt that by moving the boundary closer to town, you would be increasing transport time for pupils who already attended school within the Campbeltown area. Transport would go against the direction of travel for parents who were working within the Campbeltown area and where many after school clubs are based. Extension of any boundary into the Drumlemble catchment area would require an additional bus service and would impact on pupil numbers of another remote and rural school.

Community views are:

"Not viable"

"Cost of fuel needs to be considered"

8.2 Pupil Numbers

The pupil numbers within this new catchment area would not increase the roll significantly. As part of any possible forthcoming consultation, there would be discussions with the parent body of Castlehill Primary School regarding the future of Southend Primary School. During the preliminary engagement exercise there were views represented from the Parent Councils of Drumlemble and Dalintober Primary Schools. Both schools expressed their concern over the staffing of schools within the area. There was no representation from the Parent Council of Castlehill Primary School at the Options Appraisal Meeting or following. They were approached to give their views. It was felt by attendees at the meeting that moving the catchment area of Southend Primary School was not an option due to the remote nature of the location, the road and accepted direction of travel.

8.3 Financial Information

The total amount including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration to re-open the school is **£139,024**.

The cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£7,300**.

There would also be a financial cost associated with the recruitment of additional staff and ongoing associated costs.

8.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons why the future of Southend Primary School is being reviewed are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Southend Primary School to increase. Southend Primary School is currently mothballed and the pupils are rezoned to Castlehill Primary School.

To reopen Southend Primary School **and** realign its catchment area could increase the pupil numbers if families were to send their children to Southend Primary School however the geography of the local area and existing wide catchment area does not lend itself to this option.

8.4.1 Community Impact

The reopening of the school with a larger catchment area would enable the premises to be used by the community. It would also be a possibility that the school pupils would invite the community in to specific events. The presence of a school and the facilities/activities that may be offered could make the area a more attractive place to live. Reopening the school may therefore encourage families with school age children to move to the community. This in turn may make the community more sustainable. However, the community has given no support for this option.

If the school were to reopen as an educational establishment there would be an economic impact with respect to the expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard. There would also be costs relating to staffing, and ongoing maintenance. The reopening of the school and the potential relocation of families may have a positive effect on the wider economy of the community.

8.4.2 Travel Arrangements

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two

years. Any change in boundary would require a new bus route with expenditure associated with it. This is not a realistic proposal as it would be likely to have minimal impact on pupil numbers at Southend Primary School and parents reported that they choose to place children in schools closer to Campbeltown due to after school childcare or clubs and activities. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Southend community.

If Southend Primary school was to reopen there could be a positive impact on the health and wellbeing and education of pupils who are able to walk or cycle to school but the lack of safe routes to the school limits this. Staff would either travel to the school by car, or if they live locally could walk or cycle. The bus route for a small number of pupils would have a negative impact on the environment especially as this may result in increased car traffic at end of school day to get pupils to clubs on time. Conversely, there could be increased car usage by staff which may mean these travel arrangements have a negative environmental impact. The proposal could create a negative environmental impact.

8.5 Educational Benefits

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. There are no specific educational benefits from reopening the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

Southend Primary School is a remote rural school, Castlehill Primary School has a central location and is therefore not classified as a rural school (Scottish Government classification). Children from Southend area, attending Castlehill Primary School are benefitting from learning with a number of peers at the same age and stage as themselves as opposed to a single classroom/multi composite classroom. Pupils also benefit from increased friendship groups that a large school can offer. Outdoor learning is currently provided at Castlehill Primary.

The outdoor facilities either in the school grounds or in the immediate neighbourhood of Southend Primary School would offer the opportunity to develop a curriculum that maximises the use of the local environment supporting the individual needs of the learners.

8.6 Summary

There was no support, by those who attended the community engagement event, in favour of re-opening Southend Primary as a school, and realigning its catchment area due to the remote nature of the school's location.

There are financial implications if the school is to be reopened. The total amount including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration to re-open the school is **£139,024**. The cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£7,300**. There would also be a financial cost associated with the recruitment of additional staff and ongoing associated costs.

If the School was to be reopened, the premises would be able to be used by the community, in addition to its use as an educational facility. The reopening of the school may encourage families with school age children to move to the community, which may make the community more sustainable.

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two years. Any change in boundary would require a new bus route with expenditure associated with it.

There are no specific educational benefits from reopening the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

Due to the geographic location of this very remote rural primary school it is unlikely that the catchment area could be made more sustainable. While this option could in theory contribute to sustainability of the community that may not be the case as most pupils in the neighbouring catchment area travel in the direction of Campbeltown, towards the larger centre of population, and not towards Southend. It would require pupils who may have already settled in Castlehill Primary School and Dalintober Primary School to move to Southend Primary School. Many Southend families have stated they would not move their children back to Southend as their children are currently settled in school. All families would be entitled to submit a placing request to attend Castlehill Primary School, Dalintober Primary School or Drumlemble Primary School. It is unlikely that pupil numbers would increase significantly.

When considering the above, alongside the challenges in recruiting teaching staff, the considerable expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard and the lack of local support for reopening Southend Primary School, this is not considered to be a reasonable option.

9.0 OPTION D: CLOSE SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA FOR CASTLEHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL TO INCLUDE THE CURRENT SOUTHEND CATCHMENT AREA

9.1 Community Feedback

The majority of people who attended the Options Appraisal meeting were not in favour of re-opening Southend Primary as a school. They commented that the closure of the school was not down to pupil numbers but parental choice. The small numbers of those in favour of the school re-opening wanted to know

what this would like in terms of staffing and pupil numbers before they would commit to sending their children there. Some members of the community with no children wished the school to open but wanted parents to use the local school as opposed to schools based in Campbeltown, it was explained that parental choice would mean that this is something that could not be enforced. Additionally, with respect to low numbers in future school roll projections, the sustainability of the School did not support re-opening of the School. Projected numbers are similar to the numbers when the school was mothballed. Comments in relation to the closure of Southend Primary School and attendance at Castlehill Primary School were positive:

"We think it won't re-open if we are being realistic. Can it be staffed?"

"My child attends school in town and this has been good for her socially. My youngest is likely to follow her to the same school as opposed to attend Southend Primary"

"I think it should close."

"No one is saying to me that we should keep it open."

"Security and cost of current situation is too much."

"Realistically, I can't see it re-opening"

"I personally can't see me moving my children if the school re-opened. I value the standardisation, social aspect and social contact in a big school. Schools in town have capacity to take increased numbers."

"My two children attended Castlehill on placing request. We now have transport."

"Disappointing but understand why it had to happen."

"A small school is not equitable to a large school as there is 1 teacher between 4/5 pupils as opposed to larger class sizes"

"I lived there, I did not choose for my child to go to Southend. I have now moved out the area. My child wanted to be in the mix of pupils."

"I would hate to see it close but I have chosen to put my child elsewhere."

"I feel we have a lot of small schools. Our school has benefitted from the staffing. We are concerned about current staffing levels, re-opening the school would place further pressures on this."

"Money saved but not re-opening school could be used to support other schools"

"Large schools benefit from the social contacts."

“Socially, I feel it is better for children to be in a larger social group”

A number of parents commented on the wish for there to be an ELC or pre 5 facility. Members of the community commented that it was sad to see the building not being used at all and that a re-purposing of the building would be better for the community. Suggestions included for residential trips, bunk house or youth hostel type facility that would make use of the local environment for active tourism.

9.2 Pupil Numbers

Table 5: Schools Occupancy:

<i>Primary</i>	<i>2023/24</i>	<i>2024/25</i>
<i>Approved Capacity Castlehill Primary</i>	<i>459</i>	<i>459</i>
<i>Projected Roll Castlehill Primary</i>	<i>185</i>	<i>180</i>
<i>Southend Projected Roll</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Total Roll Projection Castlehill Primary</i>	<i>193</i>	<i>189</i>
<i>Occupancy</i>	<i>42%</i>	<i>41%</i>

Pupils from Southend Primary catchment area would attend Castlehill Primary School. As there is a declining school roll at Castlehill Primary School, the predicted occupancy rate for Castlehill Primary School is 41%, easily accommodating any additional numbers.

9.3 Financial Information

As there is an existing bus route for pupils to attend Campbeltown Grammar School, there is no additional service required to transport pupils in Southend to Castlehill Primary School. An existing West Coast bus means that there would be no additional annual transport costs. If Southend Primary School were to be closed it would generate savings of **£5,936**, the current annual cost of mothballing (2022-23) to the Council. This includes electricity, heating oil, and ground maintenance, building maintenance and repair costs.

9.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons why the future of Southend Primary School is being reviewed are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Southend Primary School to increase. Southend Primary School is currently mothballed and were there pupils they would be rezoned to other schools. To reopen the school would not increase the pupil numbers.

9.4.1 Community Impact

There was support in the community for the closure of the school. The community were realistic that given the current financial climate, the building may be sold off. Within Southend there is a village hall. The majority of those who attended stated the school building should be used to benefit young people in the area, support the local economy and not fall into further disrepair, as that would adversely impact on the visual impact of the village. While it is accepted that school closure may have an adverse effect on community sustainability to a degree, it was felt that the mothballing of the school and the building not being used at all was a bigger negative impact to the community. Southend community felt that they benefitted greatly from vibrant use of their local hall. A re-purposing of the building could potentially have a very positive impact on the sustainability of the community if this option were to progress. The buildings forming the school premises are situated within walking distance of the village. If the building was re-purposed for residential or tourism use, this would have a positive impact on the sustainability of the village. Formal closure of the school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed.

9.4.2 Travel Arrangements

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two years. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Southend community. This option would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Southend Primary School, in terms of travel would have a neutral effect on the environment. There is currently no annual transport cost for pupils to travel to Castlehill Primary School and the use of the existing West Coast Motors service bus would not incur additional costs in the immediate future.

9.5 **Educational Benefits**

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. There are no specific educational benefits as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

Southend Primary School is a remote rural school, Castlehill Primary School has a central location and is therefore not classified as a rural school (Scottish Government classification). Children from Southend area, attending Castlehill Primary School are benefitting from learning with a number of peers at the same age and stage as themselves as opposed to single classroom/multi composite classrooms. Pupils also benefit from increased friendship groups that a large school can offer. Outdoor learning is currently provided at Castlehill Primary. The pupils would be transitioning to Campbeltown Grammar School with an established friendship group.

In Castlehill Primary School children benefit from being part of a social context in which they can build relationships with different groups and individuals, develop social skills, meet challenges and exercise responsibilities as members of a social group. They are able to interact and socialise with groups of children of their own gender, take part in team activities and move with their peers to secondary school. One pupil reported that they had increased opportunities as a result of being at a larger school. Another pupil reported that they were less stressed now because of the transport arrangements in place.

9.6 Summary

From those who attended the community engagement event, there was support for the closure of Southend Primary as a school, and realigning the catchment area of Castlehill Primary School due to the remote nature of the school's location. They also commented on the potential for the school premises to be used to attract people into the area for residential activities, travel and tourism.

Current capacity for Castlehill Primary School is 42%. As there are existing transport arrangements in place and transport is not currently in place for Southend Primary School, there is no increased annual cost to transport pupils to Castlehill Primary School and use of the existing West Coast Motors service bus would not incur additional costs.

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two years and this option would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Southend community. The closure of Southend Primary School would therefore have a neutral effect on the environment. Castlehill Primary School currently accommodates pupils from Southend Primary School and pupil numbers are not projected to increase significantly. Castlehill Primary School has capacity to continue to accommodate the projected pupil numbers.

In Castlehill Primary School, children benefit from a positive learning environment with learning and teaching which is better matched to the needs of the young people who attend the school. In addition there are more opportunities for personal and social development in this setting.

This has been identified as a reasonable option for further consideration.

10.0 OVERVIEW OF OPTIONS

Option	Option Description	Outcome
A	Re-open Southend Primary School with the existing catchment area.	Not a reasonable option.
B	Continued Mothballing of Southend Primary School with the pupils zoned to Castlehill Primary School.	Not a reasonable option.
C	Re-open Southend Primary School and extend its catchment area.	Not a reasonable option
D	Close Southend Primary School and realign the catchment area of Castlehill Primary School to include the current catchment area for Southend Primary School.	A reasonable option with strong representation that the school becomes a facility the community can develop.

11. DETAILED ANALYSIS OF REASONABLE OPTION: CLOSE SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA FOR CASTLEHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL TO INCLUDE THE CURRENT SOUTHEND CATCHMENT AREA

11.1 Pupil Projections

<i>Primary</i>	<i>2023/24</i>	<i>2024/25</i>
<i>Castlehill Primary Approved Capacity</i>	<i>459</i>	<i>459</i>
<i>Castlehill Primary Projected Roll</i>	<i>185</i>	<i>180</i>
<i>Southend Primary Projected Roll</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Total Roll Projection</i>	<i>193</i>	<i>189</i>
<i>Occupancy</i>	<i>42%</i>	<i>41%</i>

11.2 Educational Benefits

This statement focusses on Castlehill Primary School, which is the school most Southend Pupils have been attending since May 2021.

11.2.1 Learning and Teaching

The curriculum includes a broad range of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, to help every child and young person to develop knowledge, skills and attributes for success in learning, life and work.

In Castlehill Primary School, children are encouraged to be eager and active participants who are engaged, resilient and highly motivated during their learning. Children know that their views are sought, valued and acted upon. The learning environment encourages a high level of achievement, providing a wide range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential within the four contexts of learning.

In Castlehill Primary School children may be taught in single year group classes or composite classes composed of children from no more than two year groups. Children benefit from being part of a social context in which they can build relationships with different groups and individuals, develop social skills, meet challenges and exercise responsibilities as members of a social group. They are able to interact and socialise with groups of children through a variety of learning activities as well as take part in team activities and move with their peers to secondary school.

There is a continual challenge for all schools to deliver a school improvement agenda and deliver effectively the principles and outcomes of curriculum for excellence. The National Improvement Framework priorities include raising attainment for all, and closing the gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. At Castlehill Primary School, staff are challenged and supported through a range of continuous professional development and review opportunities gained by working and learning with a range of colleagues. The school is part of a leadership structure arrangement in which the Head Teacher is responsible for three schools Castlehill Primary School, Drumlemble Primary School and Carradale Primary School. There is a Depute Head Teacher and Principal Teacher appointed to each of the three Primary Schools to support this

leadership structure. This structure provides increased opportunity for collegiate working. Castlehill Primary School is part of the Kintyre Schools Cluster and MAKI cluster, which means that staff can be supported to work together, moderation and tracking of pupil progress is enabled and staff work across stage appropriate groups. Colleagues within Castlehill Primary School are able to support and challenge each other on a daily basis. The whole staff are able to bring a range of talents and skills to benefit outcomes for learners.

Castlehill Primary School has been focussing on the development of Nurture and Rights Respecting Schools approach, both taking into consideration the incorporation of UNCRC into Scottish law. The focus on wellbeing and nurture is evident in activities such as reflection afternoons for pupils and parents. The impact of these approaches has been evidenced using SHANNARI webs. Castlehill Primary School encourages outdoor learning activities and learning through play. Partnership working with local employers and the Parent Council has helped to develop resources and outdoor learning zones to support this approach.

Castlehill Primary School is in a central location within Campbeltown, unlike Southend Primary which is a very remote rural school. However, as the Head Teacher is responsible for Carradale Primary and Drumlemble Primary, both of which are remote rural schools (Scottish Government classification), there is a strong understanding of the rural communities that the school serves.

The school has strong links with Campbeltown Nursery, with which it coordinates an active transition calendar, and with Campbeltown Grammar School with which it liaises, alongside all other South Kintyre schools, throughout the year to ensure a smooth transition for P7 pupils into S1.

11.2.2 Outcomes

Through the GIRFEC practice model, meeting the needs of every child continues to be a priority and teachers carefully plan and assess to ensure each child has the opportunity to reach their potential. Careful tracking and monitoring procedures are in place to evidence pupil progress. This includes professional dialogue with teachers, learning discussions with children, classroom observations, assessment and looking at pupil work. Planning for Progress meetings are being further strengthened. These discussions between home and school improve parental engagement whilst focussing on next steps for learning. Where appropriate, intervention is put in place, while working effectively with other agencies and parents to ensure the needs of each child are met.

In Castlehill Primary, like other schools in the Kintyre area, standards of attainment have been impacted by the pandemic. Whilst most children are achieving national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy, writing has been a specific area for development across the school but with a particular focus on the current P5 and P7 cohorts. Maths strategies include SEAL for P1-3 and Number Talks for P4-7. Castlehill Primary continues to develop positive relationships within the school through a focus on Nurture and Rights Respecting Schools. A larger staff, parent body and partner group by nature increases the breadth of talent and interest that may be available to share within a school setting. This applies both in terms of the wider curriculum and within aspects of the curriculum that may be enhanced by staff individual expertise e.g. PE, language, science, expressive arts teaching.

11.2.3 Experiences - Broadening the Range of Opportunities

Children are offered a range of active, planned experiences which help them develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing both now and in the future. Castlehill Primary has been restoring its community links as part of its Covid Recovery Plans, providing enhanced opportunities for social interaction and skills development.

11.2.4 Environment for Learning

Castlehill Primary School is a suitably-equipped and well supported school, situated in the town of Campbeltown. The school building is large and the grounds wrap around the building, providing ample space for play and outdoor learning. The building has facilities for pupils and visitors with special access needs.

11.3.1 Community Impact

Whilst there was some variance of community views within Southend, the majority of parents supported closure of the school. Suggestions for the building was for this to be retained for an ELC or used for residential trips or sold to be converted into a bunk house or youth hostel that would support the local tourist industry. There were suggestions that the play equipment could be moved to benefit the children in the local area. Other suggestions also included using the grounds for community gardens. Within Southend there is a Village Hall which houses community events. Almost all people who attended the Options Appraisal Meeting strongly stated the school building should be re-purposed and not allowed to fall in to further disrepair, as that would adversely impact on the neighbouring property and the visual impact of the

village. It is accepted that a school closure may have an adverse effect on community sustainability, but a change of use could be an asset to the community. The school premises are situated within walking distance of the village. If the local plans for the building progress, this would have a positive impact on the sustainability of the village. Formal closure of the school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed.

11.3.2 Travel Arrangements

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two years. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Southend community. Pupils will travel on the existing West Coast Motors service bus and eventually all the pupils will travel to Castlehill Primary School. The environmental impact of travel will be minimal, as these arrangements are currently in place due to the mothballing of Southend Primary School. The closure of Southend Primary School, in terms of travel would have a neutral effect on the environment. There is currently no annual transport cost for pupils to travel to Castlehill Primary School as the route was already in place and the use of the existing West Coast Motors service bus would not incur additional costs in the immediate future.

11.4 **Assessment of Rural Factors**

The reasons why the future of Southend Primary School is being reviewed are stated at Section 2 of this report. There is currently no expectation for the pupil numbers to increase at the School. Southend Primary School is mothballed with no current pupils. Having considered all the alternatives above, the option to close Southend Primary School and realign the catchment area for Castlehill Primary School to include the former Southend Primary School catchment area is considered the most reasonable means to address the reasons identified at Section 2 of this report.

11.5 **Financial Impact**

The main elements included within a school budget are Teacher employment costs (i.e. basic salary costs plus related employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions plus any relevant individual allowances); Local Government employee costs and an allocation for discretionary expenditure incurred by the school (i.e. educational equipment, materials, staff travel, etc.). Teacher staffing budgets are calculated on an annual basis and within the Primary sector are determined, taking cognisance of the SNCT class size maxima, by the number of classes required to provide for the specific number and age of the pupils in each school. When a school ceases to be operational

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

The annual running costs during mothballing of Southend Primary School are a total of **£5,936**.

Annual savings generated through closing Southend Primary School would be **£5,936**.

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

11.6 Environmental Impact

Pupils are currently travelling to Castlehill Primary School. However this option would have a neutral environmental impact on the current position and would have no impact on the current travel arrangements for staff and pupils. The journey to Castlehill Primary is a relatively short journey. Travel is an accepted aspect of rural life.

12.0 CONCLUSION

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

- Community feedback;
- Pupil numbers;
- Financial Information;
- Assessment of rural factors, including community impact, economic impact and travel arrangements, and
- Educational Benefits.

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

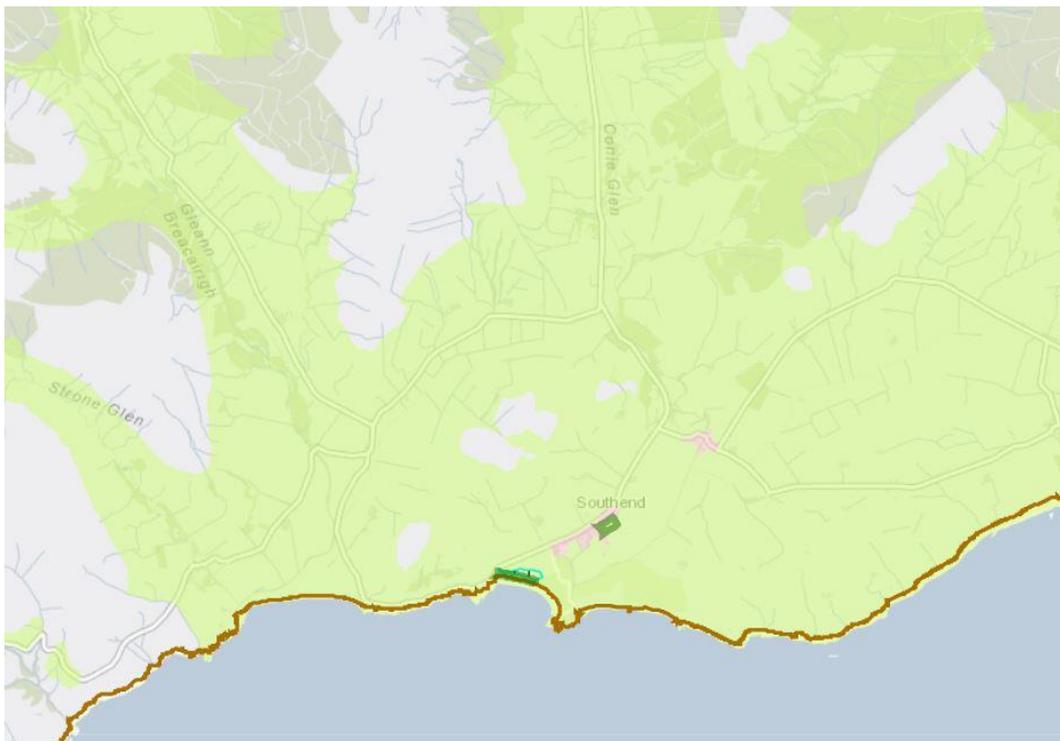
After consideration of the preliminary requirements, as set out in the Act, and the options, and having regard to the specific reasons identified at Section 2 of

this report, closing Southend Primary School and realigning the catchment area of Castlehill Primary School to include the current catchment area for Southend Primary School is put forward as the most reasonable option in order to address the underlying reasons for the possible proposal.

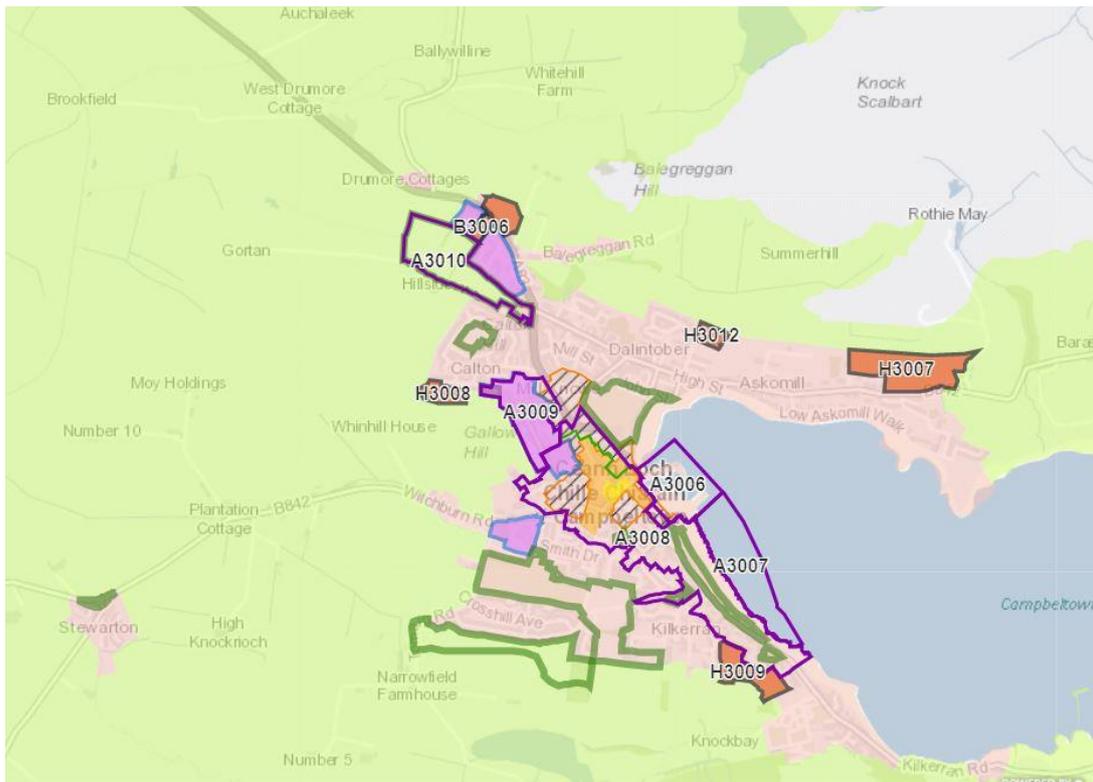
Members are asked to:

- Note the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements; and
- Agree that Officers now formulate a draft closure proposal that will come back to a future meeting of the Committee for approval by Members which would subsequently trigger the formal consultation process under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

Appendix 1



Appendix 2



Appendix 3

Transport Infrastructure		Wild Land		Tourism Infrastructure	
Area for Action		Garden Designed Landscape		Core Shopping Area	Marine Consultation Area
Strategic Economic Investment Location		National Nature Reserve		Main Town Centre	Settlement & Spatial Strategy Areas
Open Space Protection Area		Special Area of Conservation		Edge of Town Centre	Settlement Area
Strategic Masterplan		Ramsar		Waste Management Site	Greenbelt
	Allocations		National Scenic Area		Remote Countryside Area
	Potential Development Area		Site of Special Scientific Interest		
	Conservation Area		Special Protection Area		
	Local Landscape Area		Established Business and Industry Area		

Appendix 5

