

Public Document Pack

Argyll and Bute Council

Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal Agus Bhòid

Executive Director: Douglas Hendry



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17 August 2023

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the **COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE** will be held **ON A HYBRID BASIS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS** on **THURSDAY, 24 AUGUST 2023 at 10:30 AM**, which you are requested to attend.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director

BUSINESS

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
3. **MINUTE** (Pages 3 - 12)
Community Services Committee held on 8 June 2023
4. **POLICE SCOTLAND - ARGYLL & BUTE PERFORMANCE SUMMARY REPORT - REPORTING PERIOD: APRIL - JUNE 2023** (Pages 13 - 24)
Report by Divisional Commander for Argyll and Bute, West Dunbartonshire Division, Police Scotland
5. **SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - ARGYLL & BUTE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 - 1 APRIL - 30 JUNE 2023** (Pages 25 - 34)
Report by Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
6. **ELECTION OF A TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE TO THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE** (Pages 35 - 36)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education
7. **ARGYLL AND BUTE - EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-24 (2023-24 UPDATE) AND EDUCATION SERVICE PROGRESS AND IMPACT REPORT 2022-23** (Pages 37 - 92)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education
8. **EDUCATION REFRESH STRATEGY** (Pages 93 - 124)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education

- * **9. ASN SERVICE PROVISION 2023** (Pages 125 - 150)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education
- 10. SQA SCHOOL EXAMINATION RESULTS 2023** (Pages 151 - 160)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education
- 11. SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE** (Pages 161 - 212)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education
- 12. ARMED FORCES COVENANT STATUTORY DUTY 2022** (Pages 213 - 222)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education
- 13. SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010**
 - (a) Kilchrenan Primary School (Pages 223 - 272)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education
 - (b) Achaleven Primary School (Pages 273 - 350)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education
 - (c) Southend Primary School (Pages 351 - 432)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education
 - (d) St Joseph's Primary School (Pages 433 - 476)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education

REPORTS FOR NOTING

- 14. GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN PROGRESS REPORT** (Pages 477 - 492)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services
- 15. COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023/2024** (Pages 493 - 496)

Items marked with an “asterisk” are items, on the basis of information available at the time this Agenda is published, on which the Committee may not have delegated powers to act, and which may therefore require to be referred to the Council or another Committee, and that referral may depend on the decision reached at the meeting.

Community Services Committee

Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Math Campbell-Sturgess
Councillor Garret Corner	Councillor Audrey Forrest
Councillor Amanda Hampsey	Councillor Daniel Hampsey (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Graham Hardie	Councillor Andrew Kain
Councillor Paul Donald Kennedy	Councillor Liz McCabe
Councillor Dougie McFadzean	Councillor Julie McKenzie
Councillor Yvonne McNeilly (Chair)	Councillor Iain Paterson
Councillor Gemma Penfold	Councillor Dougie Philand
Margaret Anderson	Sandy MacPherson
Lorna Stewart	Daniel Semple

Contact: Fiona McCallum, Committee Services Officer Tel: 01546 604392

MINUTES of MEETING of COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE held ON A HYBRID BASIS BY ATTENDANCE IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD OR REMOTELY BY MICROSOFT TEAMS on THURSDAY, 8 JUNE 2023

Present:

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Liz McCabe
Councillor Math Campbell-Sturgess	Councillor Dougie McFadzean
Councillor Garret Corner	Councillor Julie McKenzie
Councillor Audrey Forrest	Councillor Iain Paterson
Councillor Amanda Hampsey	Councillor Gemma Penfold
Councillor Daniel Hampsey	Councillor Douglas Philand
Councillor Graham Hardie	Margaret Anderson, Church Rep
Councillor Andrew Kain	Reverend Sandy MacPherson, Church Rep
Councillor Paul Donald Kennedy	

Attending:

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
 Jennifer Crocket, Head of Education: Wellbeing, Inclusion and Achievement
 Wendy Brownlie, Head of Education: Performance and Manager
 Stuart McLean, Committee Manager
 Simon Easton, Education Manager
 Graeme McMillan, Transformation Programme Manager
 John Blake, Fleet Waste & Transport Manager
 Chief Superintendent Lynn Ratcliff, Police Scotland
 Chief Inspector Samantha Glasgow, Police Scotland
 Chief Inspector Simon Shanks, Police Scotland
 Group Commander Fraser Grant, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 Charlotte Craig, Business Improvement Manager, Argyll & Bute HSCP
 Raymond Porter, National Partnership Director, MCR Pathways

The Chair intimated that Councillor Kieron Green had notified the Executive Director that he wished, in terms of Standing Order 22.1 to speak but not vote on item 10a of the Agenda.

The Chair also intimated that Councillors Luna Martin and Andrew Vennard, who were not members of the Community Services Committee, had notified the Executive Director that they wished, in terms of Standing Order 22.1 to speak and vote on items 10a and 16 of the Agenda.

The Chair confirmed that she would exercise her discretion to allow Councillors Green, Martin and Vennard to speak but not vote on item 10a of this Minute.

The Chair also confirmed that she would exercise her discretion to allow Councillors Martin and Vennard to speak but not vote on item 16 of this Minute.

The Chair then took the opportunity to advise that Alison Palmer, who was appointed to the Committee as one of the teacher representatives, was retiring in the summer after 30 years with the Education Service.

Unfortunately, due to other commitments Alison was not in attendance today but, on behalf of the Community Services Committee, the Chair thanked Alison for her contribution to this Committee and wished her all the best for a long and happy retirement.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Alison Palmer (Teacher Representative) and Lorna Stewart (Teacher Representative).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTE

The Minute of the Community Services Committee held on 9 March 2023 was approved as a correct record.

4. ARGYLL & BUTE LOCAL POLICING PLAN 2020-2023) - QUARTERLY REPORT (QTR4 - 2022/23)

Chief Superintendent Lynn Ratcliff presented the Quarter 4 – 2022/23 update in relation to the Argyll and Bute Local Policing Plan 2020 – 2023.

Thereafter, she, along with Chief Inspector Simon Shanks, Area Commander for Oban, Lorn, the Isles, Mid Argyll and Kintyre, and Chief Inspector Samantha Glasgow, Area Commander for Bute, Cowal and Helensburgh, responded to a number of questions asked.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report for Quarter 4 2022/23 by Divisional Commander for Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Division, Police Scotland, submitted)

5. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - ARGYLL & BUTE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q4 - 1 JANUARY - 31 MARCH 2023

With the aid of power point slides, Group Commander Fraser Grant presented a report highlighting Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's review of local performance within Argyll and Bute for Q4 2022-2023 and responded to a number of questions asked.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Q4 2022-2023 Report by Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, submitted)

Margaret Anderson, Church Representative, joined the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item.

6. ARGYLL AND BUTE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022-23

Consideration was given to a report detailing the annual performance of the Argyll & Bute Health and Social Care Partnership during 2022-23.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and noted the report which was approved by the Argyll and Bute Integration Joint Board on 31 May 2023.

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer, Argyll & Bute HSCP dated 1 June 2023 and Argyll and Bute IJB Annual Performance Report 2022-23, submitted)

7. MCR PATHWAYS SECONDARY SCHOOL PILOT - SESSION 2023-24

Founded in 2007, MCR Pathways is a third sector, national mentoring programme for young people, engaged with 19 separate local authorities.

A report setting out the rationale for the planning relating to a pilot of the MCR Pathways Programme in three Argyll and Bute secondary schools in school session 2023-24 was considered along with a presentation given by Raymond Porter, National Partnership Director for MCR Pathways.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

1. endorse the engagement and planning between MCR Pathways and Argyll and Bute Council Education Service to establish the vision and implementation plan for the MCR Pathways Programme; and
2. note both the potential input to the programme of members of the Argyll and Bute community, and the anticipated positive outcomes for young people, the council and the wider Argyll and Bute community.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 8 June 2023, submitted)

At this point, due to technical difficulties, the Chair ruled and the Committee agreed to vary the order of business and take Agenda item 9 (Education (Scotland) Act 2016 – Learning Hours Consultation) before Agenda item 8 (Developing the Young Workforce – 2022-2023)

8. EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2016 - LEARNING HOURS CONSULTATION

The Scottish Government are consulting on their plans to set a legal minimum number of hours of school education school pupils should receive each year. Consideration was given to a report setting out a draft response to this consultation.

Decision

The Committee:

1. noted the terms of the draft consultation response, as prepared by Officers and set out in full at Appendix 1 of the report; and
2. agreed that Officers now formally submit that response to the Scottish Government, on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 5 May 2023, submitted)

9. DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE - 2022-2023

Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland’s Youth Employment Strategy was published by the Scottish Government in December 2014 and sets out the plans to implement the 39 recommendations as set out by the report Education for All.

A report summarising work and progress across Argyll and Bute Council relating to Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

1. note the scope and variety of DYW initiatives and activities across Argyll and Bute;
2. acknowledge the importance of the Scottish Government’s continued policy commitment to DYW, and associated funding for regional DYW Groups; and
3. note the contribution of the DYW team and its work towards securing Argyll and Bute a position in the upper quartile of Scottish Local Authorities with regards to the Annual Participation Measure, in which the council was placed 5th out of 32 local authorities in the period April 2021 to March 2022.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 8 June 2023, submitted)

At this point the Chair ruled, and the Committee agreed, to take a short comfort break.

The Committee reconvened at 1.10 pm.

Due to technical difficulties, Councillor Dougie Philand did not return to the meeting.

10. SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

(a) Luing Primary School

A report providing details of a draft proposal for Luing Primary School formulated in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended (the 2010 Act) was considered.

Motion

To agree to adopt the draft proposal, as set out in Appendix A, as a “relevant proposal” that is now to proceed to statutory consultation under the 2010 Act.

Moved by Councillor Yvonne McNeilly, seconded by Councillor Daniel Hampsey

Amendment

The Community Services Committee acknowledges the work of officers in preparing the report set before us today.

We support Option (b) as identified by officers-

“The continued mothballing of Luing Primary School with the pupils zoned to Easdale Primary School”, with the addition of “to be reviewed in one year.”

The reasons for this are:

- I. After a long decline, Luing’s population is rising. From 220 residents, it dropped to 163 in 2020 and has since increased to 179.
- II. There are initiatives currently in progress on the island which have the potential to encourage regeneration of the area and which will create jobs.
- III. The availability of a local primary school will enhance the chances of people coming to “A place where people want to come to live, work and do business as a result of action to combat and reverse decline.” (Priorities for Argyll and Bute Council 2022-2027, Our Vision.)

Moved by Councillor Audrey Forrest, seconded by Councillor Dougie McFadzean

As the meeting was being held on a hybrid basis, vote was required to be taken by calling the roll and Members voted as follows:

Motion

Amendment

Councillor G Corner
Councillor A Hampsey
Councillor D Hampsey
Councillor G Hardie
Councillor A Kain
Councillor P Kennedy
Councillor L McCabe
Councillor Y McNeilly
Councillor G Penfold
M Anderson
Reverend S MacPherson

Councillor G Blair
Councillor M Campbell-Sturgess
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor D McFadzean
Councillor J McKenzie
Councillor I Paterson

The Motion was carried by 11 votes to 6 and the Committee resolved accordingly.

Decision

The Committee agreed to adopt the draft proposal, as set out in Appendix A of the

report, as a “relevant proposal” that would now proceed to statutory consultation under the 2010 Act.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 16 May 2023 and Proposal Paper – Luing Primary School dated June 2023, submitted)

Margaret Anderson, Church Representative, left the meeting at this point.

(b) Minard Primary School

A report providing details of a draft proposal for Minard Primary School formulated in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended (the 2010 Act) was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed to adopt the draft proposal, as set out in Appendix A of the report, as a “relevant proposal” that would now proceed to statutory consultation under the 2010 Act.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 16 May 2023 and Proposal Paper – Minard Primary School dated June 2023, submitted)

11. ROTHESAY JOINT CAMPUS ELC DELIVERY

A report providing details of a planned change to the current Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) delivery model within Rothesay Joint Campus was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted:-

1. the work of the early years team in identifying a solution to the childcare issue on Bute; and
2. the plan to deliver non-statutory childcare from within existing revenue.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 24 April 2023, submitted)

12. DALINTOBER AND CASTLEHILL PRIMARY SCHOOLS, CAMPBELTOWN

Following on from the motion tabled at the Community Services Committee on 9 March 2023 in respect of Dalintober and Castlehill Primary Schools, a report providing an update on progress that has been made in the interim period was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted:-

1. that initial steps had been taken to progress this work with colleagues in both Education and Commercial Services; and
2. that a further report would be tabled at the Community Services Committee prior to the end of the current year.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education and Commercial Services dated 25 May 2023, submitted)

13. EXTERNAL EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENT INSPECTION REPORT

A report providing details of all external establishment inspections reports received across Argyll and Bute Education Service during the period January to May 2023 was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted:-

1. the contents of this report;
2. this quarterly report would be presented on an ongoing basis to the Community Services Committee detailing all establishment inspections conducted and published by Education Scotland within that period; and
3. that Ward Members would receive copies of school inspection reports for schools within their area as published by Education Scotland.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated May 2023, submitted)

14. GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN UPDATE

A report providing an update on progress in delivering the actions in the approved Argyll and Bute Council Gaelic Language Plan following the changes made as a result of the letter from Scottish Ministers, was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted:-

1. the approval of the plan and that dates would be rolled forward;
2. that progress being made in delivering the Council's Gaelic Language Plan would be reported as normal in August 2023; and
3. the timescale for the production of a new National Gaelic Language Plan.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated June 2023, submitted)

15. COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023 - 2024

The Community Services Committee work plan for 2023-2024 was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the work plan.

(Reference: Community Services Committee Work Plan 2023-2024, submitted)

16. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

The following Notice of Motion under Standing Order 13 was before the Community Services Committee for consideration –

The Seat Belts on School Transport (Scotland) Act 2017 requires that each passenger seat in vehicles used for dedicated school transportation must be equipped with a seatbelt. Public service buses that also provide school transport require seatbelts, dependent on age, with vehicles designed for urban use (urban buses) exempt from this.

This motion is made in light of the unique hazards of rural roads and the need to ensure the safety and well-being of schoolchildren, and to fulfil the council's responsibility to ensure safe routes to school in Argyll and Bute.

Advice from the School and Public Transport Team, as the Council's professional advisors in relation to matters of this nature, is that the current arrangements are legally compliant and safe and that Argyll and Bute Council are compliant with all relevant legislation relating to the transporting of school children and the travelling public throughout Argyll and Bute with seatbelts fitted to all dedicated school transport vehicles.

Notwithstanding that advice, we believe that urban buses are not suitable for rural routes due to the unique characteristics of rural roads (winding bends, bumpy or uneven surfaces, poor lighting, often high speed limits and lack of seat belts and accessibility to medical care in case of an accident. These characteristics can become particularly challenging in poor weather conditions.

For example, as it currently stands, children as young as 4 on the Isle of Seil may be expected to travel on an urban bus with no seatbelts for over three miles from Cuan to get to school in Easdale. The windy island road is poorly lit and uneven, and the speed limit for this journey is the national speed limit 60mph.

The use of seat belts on all school transportation is crucial for the safety of children and ensuring safe routes to school.

The Committee is therefore asked to agree officers are requested to submit a paper to them which will identify and detail the costs associated with ensuring all buses commissioned by Argyll and Bute Council for the purposes of transporting children to and from school in Argyll and Bute are required to have seatbelts, and advising how such a requirement could be introduced.

Moved by Councillor Math Campbell-Sturgess, seconded by Councillor Dougie McFadzean

Amendment

To agree to take no action.

Moved by Councillor Yvonne McNeilly, seconded by Councillor Julie McKenzie

As the meeting was being held on a hybrid basis the vote was required to be taken by taken by calling the roll and Members voted as follows -

Motion

Amendment

Councillor G Blair

Councillor M Campbell-Sturgess

Councillor A Forrest

Councillor D McFadzean

Councillor I Paterson

Councillor G Corner

Councillor A Hampsey

Councillor D Hampsey

Councillor G Hardie

Councillor A Kain

Councillor P Kennedy

Councillor L McCabe

Councillor J McKenzie

Councillor Y McNeilly

Councillor G Penfold

Reverend S MacPherson

The Amendment was carried by 11 votes to 5 and the Committee resolved accordingly.

Decision

The Committee agreed to take no action.

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Argyll & Bute Performance Summary Report Reporting Period: April—June 2023



Total Crime



+9.6%



172 Crimes

Incidents Recorded

+17.2%



Common Assault

+10.2%



Overall Dishonesty

+17.6%



Domestic Abuse Incidents

-2.7%



+873*PYTD, +289*5YR AVG

+18*PYTD, +42*5YR AVG

+35*PYTD, +41*5YR AVG

-5*PYTD, -20*5YR AVG

Violent Crime

-14%



Sexual Crime

+16.9%



Road Deaths and Serious Injuries

-21.1%*



Disorder Complaints

+7.2%*



-7*PYTD, +15*5YR AVG

+10*PYTD, +19*5YR AVG

4*on PYTD

+39*PYTD

Missing People

+10.3%*



Counter Terrorism



The National Terrorism Threat level is SUBSTANTIAL. This means that an attack is likely.

Housebreaking

+26.7%



+5*PYTD

+4*PYTD, -5*5YR AVG

Argyll & Bute Performance Summary Report Reporting Period: April—June 2023



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Introduction

I am pleased to present this performance summary report to Committee for its information and consideration.






Please note that all data included in this report are management information and not official statistics. All data are sourced from Police Scotland internal systems and are correct as of date of publication. Unless stated otherwise numerical comparisons are against the previous five year average for the same data period specified.

POLICE SCOTLAND'S POLICING PRIORITIES 2023-2026

- Protecting vulnerable people
- Working with communities
- Tackling crime in the digital age
- Support for operational policing

ARGYLL & BUTE POLICING PRIORITIES 2023-2026

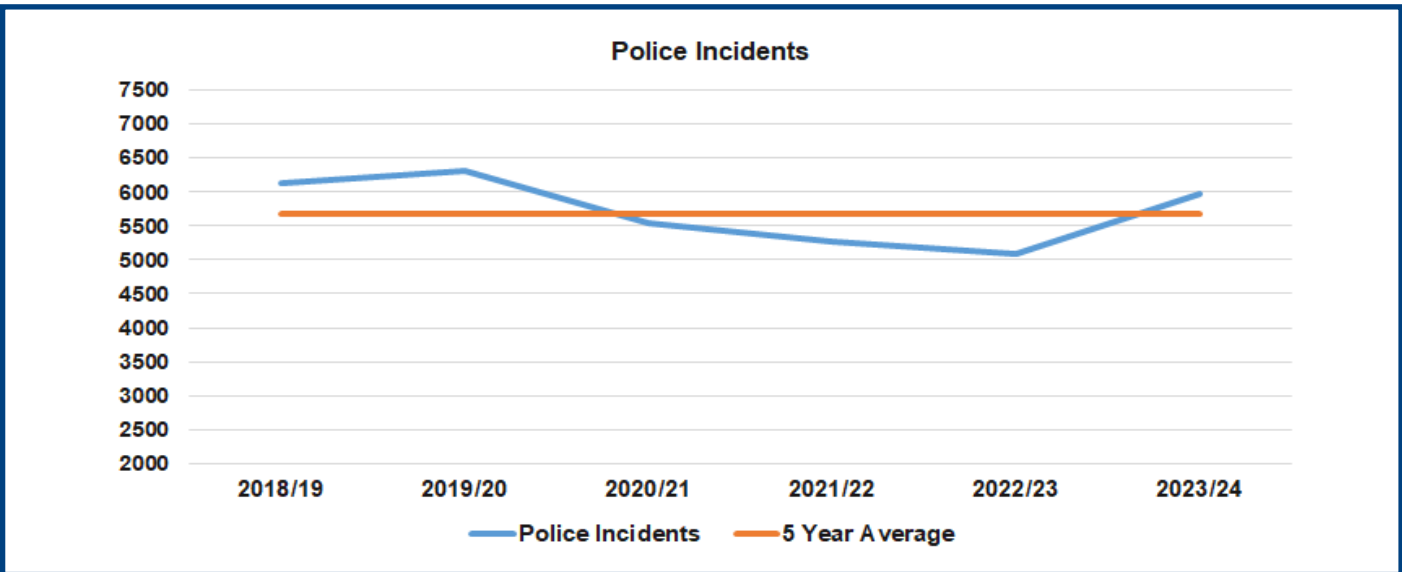
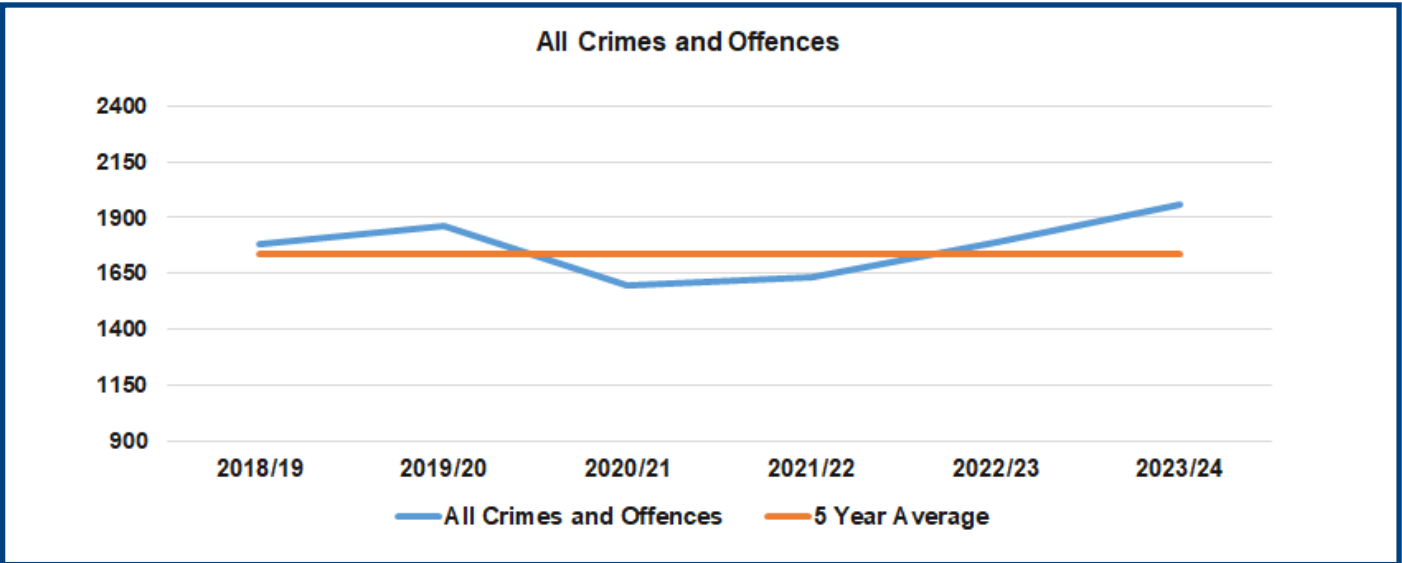
- 1 Acquisitive Crime
- 2 Public Protection
- 3 Road Safety & Road Crime
- 4 Serious & Organised Crime
5. Violence & Anti-social behaviour

PRIORITY AREA	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>Acquisitive Crime</p> 	<p>At the end of Qtr. 1 acquisitive crimes show a 17.6% increase compared to the same period last year (+35), while the current figure (234) is above the previous 5 year average (193.4). Cost of living will undoubtedly impact on acquisitive crime but we continue to engage with partners seeking opportunities to signpost and support our community. Where appropriate our officers are maximising the use of their powers in relation to alternative to prosecution options. The majority of recorded crimes appear to be both spontaneous and opportunistic. Analytical work is ongoing to support a renewed focus and governance around the issue to improve detection rates.</p> <p>We continue to target all forms of acquisitive crime by adopting both preventative and proactive policing styles</p>
<p>Public Protection</p> 	<p>Set against figures recorded at the end of Qtr. 1 last year, Group 2 sexual crimes have seen an increase of 16.9% with 69 crimes recorded compared to 59 last year (+10), which is also above the previous 5 year average (49.8). Rape crimes have increased from 11 to 18 (+7), while sexual assaults have also risen slightly from 25 to 28 (+3) year on year. Both crimes are currently above the previous 5 year average of (10) for rape crimes and (18) for sexual assaults. We continue to deliver a victim centred approach engaging with partners to ensure safety planning and the welfare of those vulnerable individuals is prioritised. We continue to invest in our people to upskill ensuring they can deliver the best possible service.</p>
<p>Road Safety & Road Crime</p> 	<p>There has been a slight reduction in the number of fatal road traffic collisions within Argyll and Bute with 4 recorded at the end of Qtr. 1 compared to 5 (-1) in the same period last year. Despite this both serious and slight injuries have increased from 15 to 17 (+2) and 17 to 29 (+12) respectively. Throughout the summer months, Police Scotland will continue prevention, education and enforcement activity in line with the national road safety activity calendar, working with partners through the road Safety governance group.</p>
<p>Serious & Organised Crime</p> 	<p>At the end of Qtr. 1, drugs supply charges have reduced marginally from 11 to 10 crimes, which is in line with the previous 5 year average (11.4). Drug possession charges have increased by 42.2% from 90 to 128, which is above the previous 5 year average (106.6). Across Argyll & West Dunbartonshire 11 persons linked to serious and organised crime (SAOC) have been arrested and £115,673 seized under POCA. Numerous other targeted drugs searches have taken place across our community resulting in significant seizures of drugs, property and money. Our specialist officers are utilising all available legislation and investigative opportunities to target SAOC.</p>
<p>Violence & Anti-social behaviour</p> 	<p>Figures recorded at the end of Qtr. 1 show a 14% reduction (-7) in Group 1 crimes of violence compared to the PYTD, albeit the current figure of 43 is above the previous 5 year average (28.2). ASB related crimes have seen an increase of 8.1% from 456 to 493 (+37) while the current figure is also above the previous 5 year average (456.8). We continue to target all forms of Violence and ASB by engaging with our partners and adopting both preventative and proactive policing styles.</p>

DEMAND ANALYSIS - *

PYTD - PREVIOUS YEAR TO DATE CYTD - CURRENT YEAR TO DATE

CRIME	PYTD *	CYTD *	INCIDENTS	PYTD	CYTD
Total Crimes & Offences	1787	1959	Total number of incidents	5088	5961

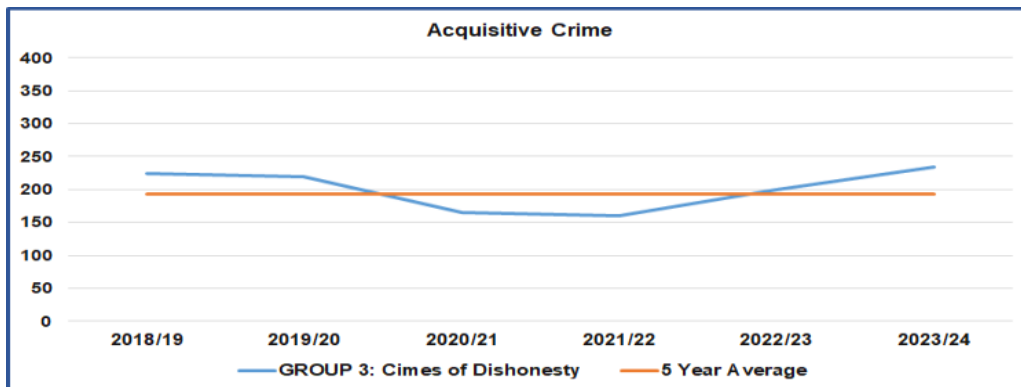


The total volume of crimes and offences recorded within Argyll and Bute has increased by 9.6% (n=172) from the previous year and is currently 13% above the previous 5 year average (1733.4). The overall rise in crime levels is largely due to notable increases in offences relating to motor vehicles (+12%) (n=81), miscellaneous offences (+8.1%) (n=37) and acquisitive crime (+17.6%) (n=35). Crimes relating to vandalism, fire-raising and malicious mischief (-24.2%) and Group 1 crimes of violence (-14%) have both seen a reduction compared to the position last year. With the exception of a 13.3% reduction in crimes vandalism, fire-raising and malicious mischief all crime groups have seen an increase on the previous 5 year average.

ACQUISITIVE CRIME DATA OVERVIEW



At the end of Qtr. 1 acquisitive crimes show a 17.6% increase compared to the same period last year (+35), while the current figure (234) is above the previous 5 year average (193.4). House-breaking crimes have increased slightly by 4 crimes due to a rise in domestic HB's from 7 to 14 (+7), while HB's at commercial properties have seen a marginal reduction. There has also been a notable increase in motor vehicle crimes with 14 recorded compared to 5 PYTD (+9). Thefts from motor vehicles including theft OLP have risen from 3 to 8 (+5) crimes and thefts of motor vehicles from 2 to 6 (+4) crimes. Six of the 14 crimes occurred in Dunoon, 4 of which were thefts from motor vehicles with the majority taking place on/around Victoria Road. Common thefts and fraud crimes have also seen an increase of 24.3% (+17) and 13.6% (+6) respectively with both figures currently above the previous 5 year average: (70)- common theft, (30.4) - Fraud. The increase in fraud crime is largely due to marginal increases in online market frauds (+3), social engineering frauds (+3) and frauds involving unpaid taxi fares (+2). Shoplifting's have seen a marginal reduction from 50 to 47 crimes but remain above the previous 5 year average (-3). The detection rate for acquisitive crime overall has reduced by 7.2% from 34.2% to 26.9%, which equates to a reduction of 5 crimes year on year. The current figure is also 6.8% below the previous 5 year rate (33.7%). Both the detection rates for housebreaking and motor vehicle crime have increased from 13.3% to 21.1% (+7.7%) and 20% to 35.7% (+15.7%) respectively, while shoplifting (-16.2%), fraud (-3.6%) and common theft (-7.9%) have all seen a reduction from the PYTD.



Forensic science continue to provide us with vital investigative opportunities. Our officers are trained to consider every opportunity available to utilise forensic opportunities to reduce the impact of acquisitive crime within our communities and identify those responsible. Through community and partnership engagement, our officers seek out and promote the importance of community intelligence. This helps us target and plan local robust policing plans targeting perpetrators of acquisitive crime.

Our officers have engaged with the local retailers group in Helensburgh. This has provided the opportunity to offer security advice and crime prevention surveys. We are working to expand this across Argyll. Work is also ongoing to create a Neighbourhood Watch Scotland alert group for retailers as a means of sharing information and advice.

Our Police Scotland Youth Volunteers have been actively engaging with members of the public within Argyll and Bute. Our PSYV will be involved in a variety of community based support projects including, delivering crime prevention leaflets within known hot sports areas.

Our Preventions team seek out vulnerable premises and individuals and offer bespoke crime prevention advice. We have also issued several Selecta DNA Forensic Marking kits to victims of rural crime. These kits will help protect agricultural property and assist in any future recovery should the property be stolen. We continue to utilise our social media channels by posting local crimes or risks pertinent to our communities to maximise prevention opportunities.

We have visited many local residents groups on islands and in towns across Argyll providing pertinent crime prevention advice.

PUBLIC PROTECTION



Set against figures recorded at the end of Qtr. 1 last year, Group 2 sexual crimes have seen an increase of 16.9% with 69 crimes recorded compared to 59 last year (+10), which is also above the previous 5 year average (49.8). Rape crimes have increased from 11 to 18 (+7), while sexual assaults have also risen slightly from 25 to 28 (+3) year on year. Both crimes are currently above the previous 5 year average of (10) for rape crimes and (18) for sexual assaults. Approx. 82% of rape crimes occurred within a private space setting and 71% were committed by persons known to the victim with 7 crimes being domestic related. Similarly around 73% of sexual assaults occurred within

private spaces and 73% were committed by persons known to the victim with 8 crimes being domestic related. Half of all sexual assaults recorded during Qtr. 1 related to non recent reports. Crimes relating to indecent images/communications have seen a slight reduction from 20 to 15 crimes (-5) year on year with almost half (n=7) being committed by persons known to the victim.

The overall detection rate Group 2 sexual crime has decreased by 29.4% from 52.5% to 23.2%, which equates to a reduction of 15 crimes year on year and is below the previous 5 year rate of (53.8%). The detection rates for both rape crimes and sexual assaults have reduced by 21.7% and 3.9% respectively and are currently at 5.6% for rape and 32.1% for sexual assault.

A total of 45 missing person reports have been recorded within A&B at end of Qtr. 1, which is a slight increase

Our dedicated officers within the Public Protection Unit continue to work closely with our partners at Rape Crisis Scotland to ensure that victims have the confidence to be able to come forward and report both recent and non-recent crimes of this nature. An increase in reported crimes of this nature is hopefully tantamount to that confidence to report.

Sexual Crime committed in a domestic setting is investigated by trained officers within the Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit who have knowledge of the wider specialisms in the investigation of domestic abuse. Our wider Public Protection Departments have Officers cross skilled in the investigation of domestic abuse, child protection and sexual crime and as such allows for us to flex resource to meet demand as seen in the increase of sexual crime reporting.

We continue to focus our efforts on prevention as well as detection. The Violence against Woman Group (VAWG) brings together a host of professional and third sector bodies to review and consider a response to violence against women and girls through collaborative working. Together, agencies can more effectively safeguard women and children, intervene with men who perpetrate violence and take action to prevent violence from occurring in the first place. It is recognised that different aspects of public protection are often inter-linked and that a coordinated and informed approach can have a positive impact in each of these areas.

Our Youth Engagement Officers are in the process of setting up a program with education which will support female school students who are showing low self confidence and would benefit from further guidance and support around positive messaging around issues that affect young women.

We have successfully applied to a National Missing Person charity who will provide support to policing and partners across west Dunbartonshire. The charity will review practice to ensure that we are working collaboratively and effectively to reduce vulnerabilities and maximise safeguarding opportunities.

ROAD SAFETY & ROAD CRIME - DATA OVERVIEW

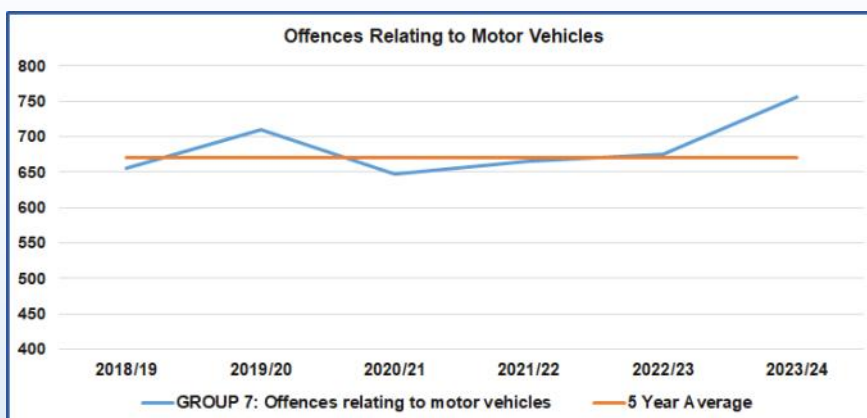
PRIORITY: REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PERSONS KILLED OR INJURED ON OUR ROADS

Road Traffic Casualties		2023/24	2022/23
	Number of persons killed on our roads	4	5
	Number of persons seriously injured	17	15
	Number of persons slightly injured	29	17
	Number of children seriously injured	0	1

Road Traffic Data from April—June 2023

Throughout Q1 there were 4 road deaths in Argyll and Bute, 1 less than the same period last year, 17 people were seriously injured in Argyll and Bute, 15 in the previous year.

There has been a marginal reduction in the number of fatal road traffic collisions within Argyll and Bute with 4 recorded at the end of Qtr. 1 compared to 5 (-1) in the same period last year. Despite this both serious and slight injuries have increased from 15 to 17 (+2) and 17 to 29 (+12) respectively. In the main these stats are attributed to non locals who are less familiar with the roads.



Our Roads policing team continue to proactively police our roads highlighting dangers and positively influencing driver behaviour and decision making.

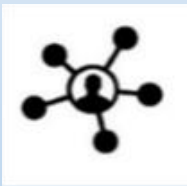
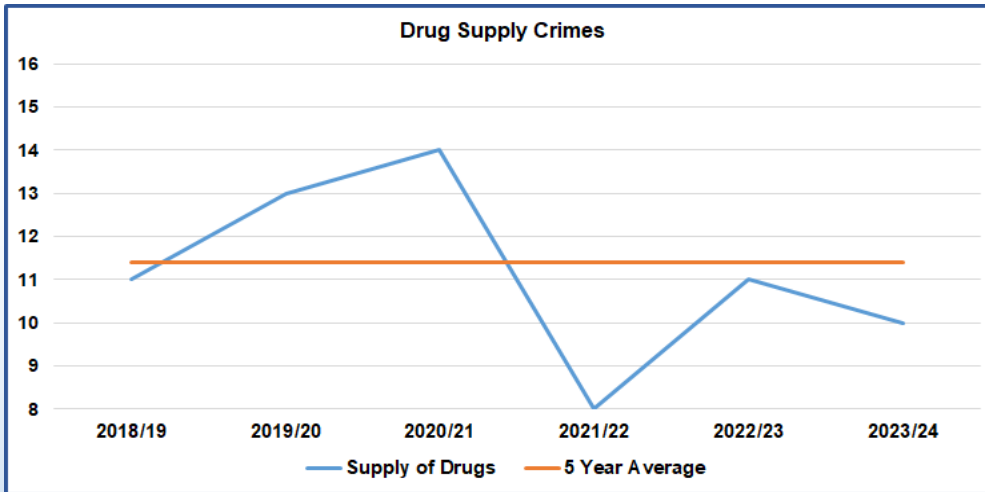
Throughout the summer months, Police Scotland will continue prevention, education and enforcement activity in line with the national road safety activity calendar. The seatbelt campaign commenced on 5 June and ran until 25 June, focusing on the importance of wearing a seatbelt.

Not wearing a seatbelt remains a significant factor in fatal and serious injury collisions, this campaign was designed to reinforce the safety message that seatbelts save lives. Roads Policing, also continue to focus activity on influencing motorcyclist behaviour, which is supported by our National Motorcycle Unit.

In the next quarter the focus of the unit remains on improving road safety within Argyll & Bute, continued visibility on the trunk roads will be a priority with speed detection and driver behaviour being the primary activities. There are also plans in place around Vulnerable Road Users such as the motorcycle campaign and Operation Close Pass for pedal cycle safety.

A Community Speed watch initiative is being set up in Dunoon. Our Police Scotland Youth Volunteers are assisting with a 30MPH sticker campaign. 30MPH stickers will be placed on wheelie bins on roads highlighted by our communities.

SERIOUS & ORGANISED CRIME - DATA OVERVIEW



Across Argyll & West Dunbartonshire 11 persons linked to serious and organised crime have been arrested and £115,673 seized under POCA.

At the end of Qtr. 1, drugs supply charges have reduced marginally from 11 to 10 crimes, which is in line with the previous 5 year average (11.4). Drug possession charges have increased by 42.2% from 90 to 128, which is above the previous 5 year average (106.6).

Numerous targeted drugs searches have taken place across our community resulting in significant seizures of drugs, property and money. Our specialist officers are utilising all available legislation and investigative opportunities to target SAOC.

Officers in Argyll and Bute have seized cocaine, with an estimated street value of £25,000, following the execution of warrants in Campbeltown. This operation underlines our commitment to the SAOC Taskforce and the national SAOC Strategy.

Numerous other targeted drugs searches have taken place across our community resulting in significant seizures of drugs, property and money. Our specialist officers are utilising all available legislation and investigative opportunities to target SAOC.

Community intelligence is key to our success and as such we are delivering a new Partners Intelligence Portal (PIP). This provides a platform where community intelligence can be directly uploaded by partners across Argyll where it would then be risk assessed and evaluated. This is a secure and confidential electronic system, developed by the Police Service to enable partner agencies to share important information they receive during the course of their work.

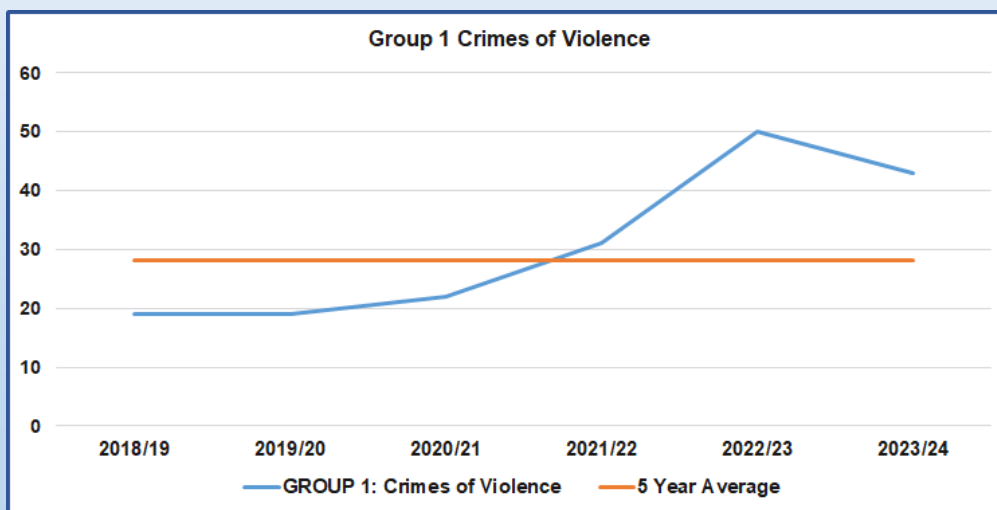
COUNTER TERRORISM & DOMESTIC EXTREMISM

The current threat to the UK from terrorism is **SUBSTANTIAL**—meaning that an attack is likely.

VIOLENCE

Figures recorded at the end of Qtr. 1 show a 14% reduction (-7) in Group 1 crimes of violence compared to the PYTD, albeit the current figure of 43 is above the previous 5 year average (28.2). Crimes were split 70/30 with the majority in a private setting. In approximately 58% of public space crime the offender was known to the victim.

With the exception of a notable increase in threats and extortion offences with 15 crimes compared to 4 PYTD (+11) most Group 1 crimes have recorded a reduction on last year. This is largely due to a rise in sextortion offences however with approximately 93% (n=14) of all crimes being committed online and involved threatening to post indecent images shared between victims and suspects following unsolicited friend requests on social media or matches on dating websites unless sums of money were paid. Robberies have also seen a marginal increase from 3 to 5 crimes with 4 of the 5 crimes occurring on a public street/footpath and 1 was within a residential premise. 3 of the 5 crimes occurred in Dunoon and 2 in Helensburgh with 2 being committed by persons known to the victim. To date 3 out of the 5 robberies have been detected giving a 60% detection rate.



During the course of Qt1 we have planned and delivered on several successful multi agency action plans targeting specific concerns of ASB.

In Helensburgh following a rise in ASB we implemented a robust policing place along with A&B ASB officer, Scotrail, BTP, and local businesses. As a result numerous offences were detected. This led to opportunities for diversion and engagement which will provide a sustainable improvement in the community. Call demand and reports of anti-social behaviour were positively impacted during this action plan and we have received feedback from the local community expressing their support.

Operation Ballaton is a multi-agency action plan carried out in conjunction with partners including A&B, WDC, SFRS, Loch Lomond National Parks, BTP and Scotrail to tackle ASB associated with an influx of visitors to the area during summer months. Currently partners come together every week to discuss the ongoing requirement and allocation of resources in order to provide an effective and coordinated response to manage large numbers of visitor numbers to the area. Across A&B we have introduced a parental support letter which is sent out by local policing to any young person who regularly comes to our attention in relation to ASB. The letter encourages parental support and engagement and is aimed at reducing ASB within the local community.

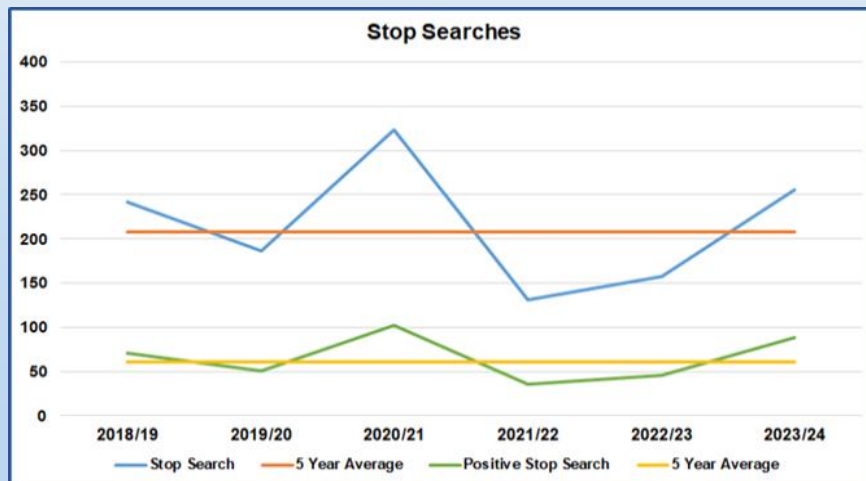
ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Complaints relating to disorder have increased by 7.2% (+39). ASB related crimes have seen an increase of 8.1% from 456 to 493 (+37) while the current figure is also above the previous 5 year average (456.8). Common assaults have increased by 10.9% from 156 to 173 (+17). This is largely due to a rise in domestic related assaults and fights involving youths which have risen from 41 to 52 crimes (+11) and 6 to 15 crimes (+9) respectively. Assaults on police and emergency workers have seen marginal change compared to PYTD with 22 compared to 21 crimes. The detection rate for common assaults overall has remained fairly consistent year on year and is currently at 72.8%, which is marginally below the previous 5 year rate (76.1%).

Local officers attended the reinvigorated Oban Pubwatch on 8th June and are looking forward to providing further support to licensed premises with preventing and tackling alcohol related anti-social behaviour going forwards.

Oban officers are starting to build relations with Royal Mail to move towards targeted work to manage the supply of drugs through organised crime coming into the area through this channel. We are also working with our airports and ferries, to improve proactivity and to continue to disrupt the flow of SAOC.

Proactive action is being taken to tackle an increase in youth related crime and ASB within Argyll. Ring leaders are being identified and robust tactics are being employed to influence behaviour. These tactics include lettering parents, directed patrols and using undertaking conditions if arrests are made.



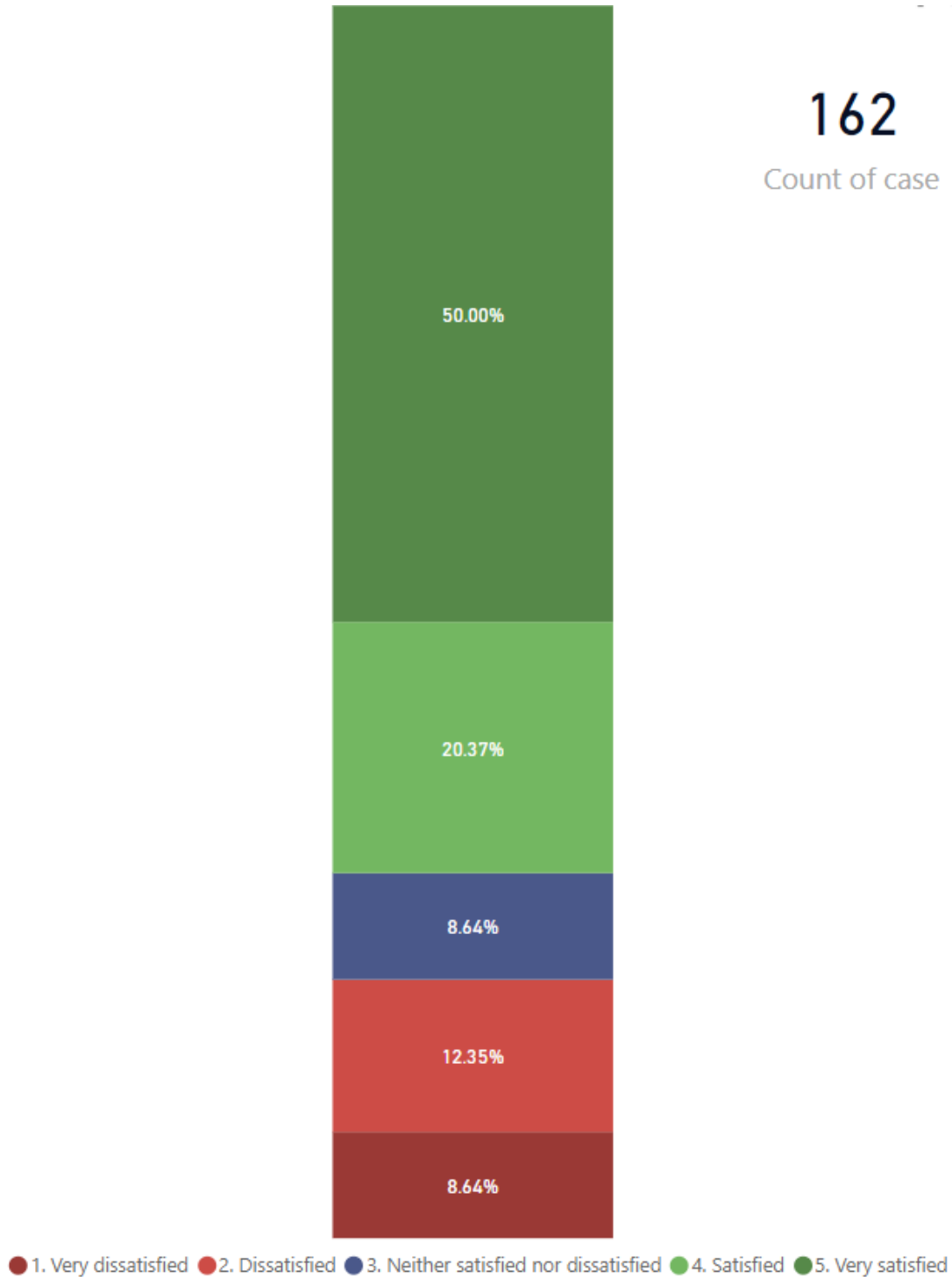
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PUBLIC CONFIDENCE: COMPLAINTS & USER SATISFACTION

Overall satisfaction with Police Scotland



User Satisfaction results show that in Argyll & West Dunbartonshire public confidence levels remain high with overall satisfaction levels at 70.4%, which is marginally below the position in 2022/23 (73.4%).

At the end of Qtr. 1, 19 complaints against the police had been recorded within Argyll and Bute which is a marginal reduction from 22 last year. The number of allegations against officers has also reduced year on year from 38 to 21.

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**Argyll & Bute Performance Report
Q1 - 1st April 2023- 30th June 2023**



**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**



Argyll & Bute Performance Report

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Local Fire and Rescue Service Plan Priorities

The Local Fire and Rescue Service Plan has been developed to set out the priorities and objectives within Argyll & Bute and allows our local authority partners to scrutinise the performance outcomes of these priorities.

We will continue to work closely with our partners in Argyll & Bute to ensure that through targetting risks at a local level we are all "Working Together for a Safer Scotland."

The plan has been developed to complement key partnership activity embedded across Argyll & Bute's Community Plan and associated Delivery and Thematic plans. Through partnership working we will seek to deliver continuous improvement in our performance and effective service delivery in our area of operations.

The Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Argyll & Bute identified six areas for demand reduction and is subject to regular monitoring and reporting through the Police & Fire and Rescue Committee. A summary of the priorities and current activity is detailed below with further detail and analysis contained within this performance report.

	Accidental Dwelling Fires	Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties	Unintentional Injury and Harm	Deliberate Fire Setting	Non-Domestic Fire Safety	Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals
Cowal Ward	0	0	3	1	0	7
Dunoon Ward	2	0	0	2	2	10
Helensburgh and Lomond South Ward	0	0	0	4	0	6
Helensburgh Central Ward	4	0	1	2	0	16
Isle of Bute Ward	1	0	0	2	0	12
Kintyre and the Islands Ward	0	0	4	1	3	9
Lomond North Ward	2	0	3	4	2	9
Mid Argyll Ward	2	0	0	0	0	20
Oban North and Lorn Ward	3	0	3	3	2	11
Oban South and the Isles Ward	6	0	2	2	3	27
South Kintyre Ward	2	0	1	0	0	7
Total Incidents	22	0	17	21	12	134







Year on Year Change	◆ 83%	● -100%	● -41%	● -48%	◆ 100%	● -6%
3 Year Average Change	◆ 8%	▲ 0%	◆ 16%	● -13%	◆ 7%	◆ 9%
5 Year Average Change	◆ 30%	▲ 0%	◆ 23%	◆ 11%	◆ 36%	◆ 26%

About the statistics within this report

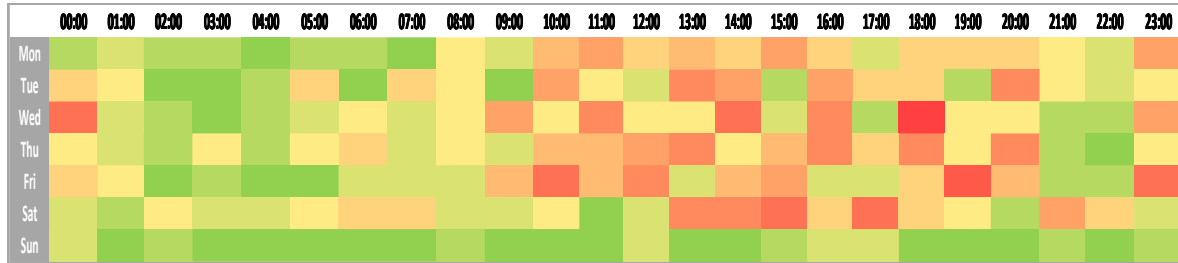
The activity totals and other statistics quoted within this report are published in the interests of transparency and openness. They are provisional in nature and subject to change as a result of ongoing quality assurance and review. Because all statistics quoted are provisional there may be a difference in the period totals quoted in our reports after local publication which result from revisions or additions to the data in our systems. The Scottish Government publishes official statistics each year which allow for comparisons to be made over longer periods of time.

- Activity levels have reduced by more than 5%
- ▲ Activity levels have reduced by up to 5%
- ◆ Activity levels have increased overall

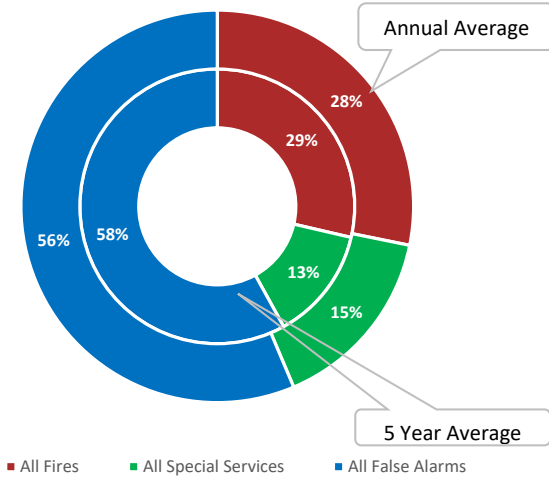
Argyll & Bute Activity Summary

 <p>124 fires primary & secondary</p> <p>25% (25)</p>	 <p>68 special services</p> <p>-7% (-5)</p>	 <p>248 false alarms</p> <p>-9% (-24)</p>
 <p>440 total number of incidents</p> <p>-1% (-4)</p>	 <p>20 fire & non-fire casualties</p> <p>-38% (-12)</p>	 <p>£263,980 economic cost of ufas incidents</p>

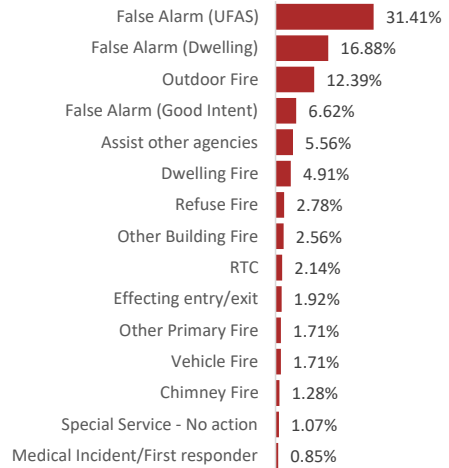
Activity by Time of Day



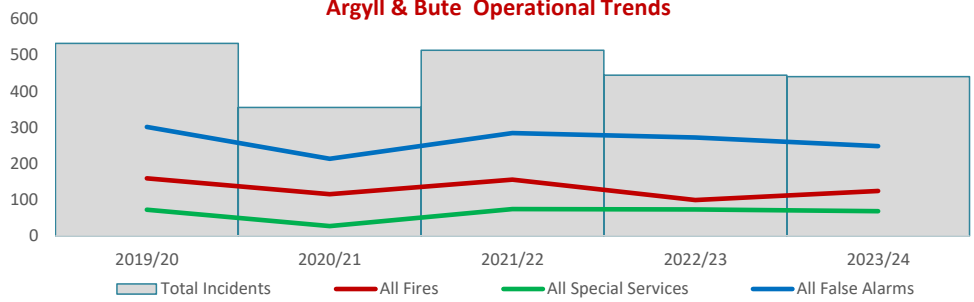
Incidents by Classification



Top 15 Incident Types by % of Total Incidents



Argyll & Bute Operational Trends



	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
All Fires	159	115	155	99	124
All Special Services	72	27	74	73	68
All False Alarms	301	213	284	272	248
Total Incidents	532	355	513	444	440

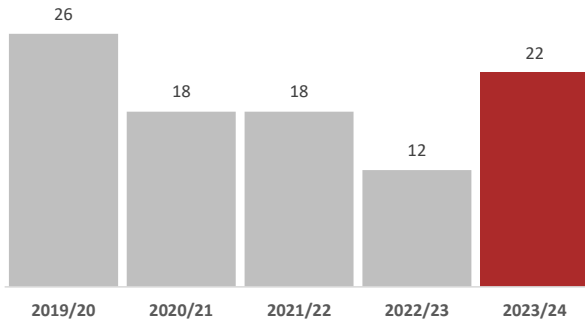
Domestic Safety - Accidental Dwelling Fires



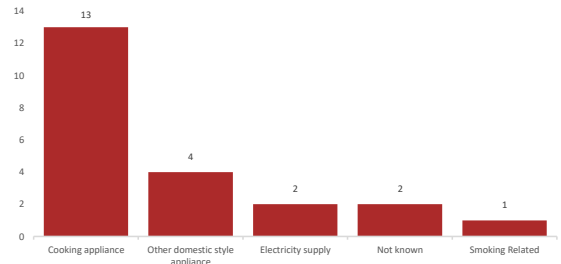
Performance Summary

Year on Year **83%** 3 Year Average **8%** 5 Year Average **30%**

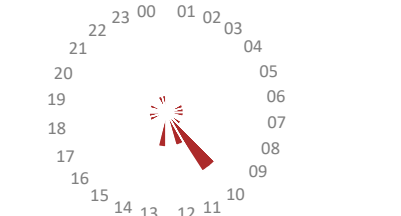
Accidental Dwelling Fires to Date



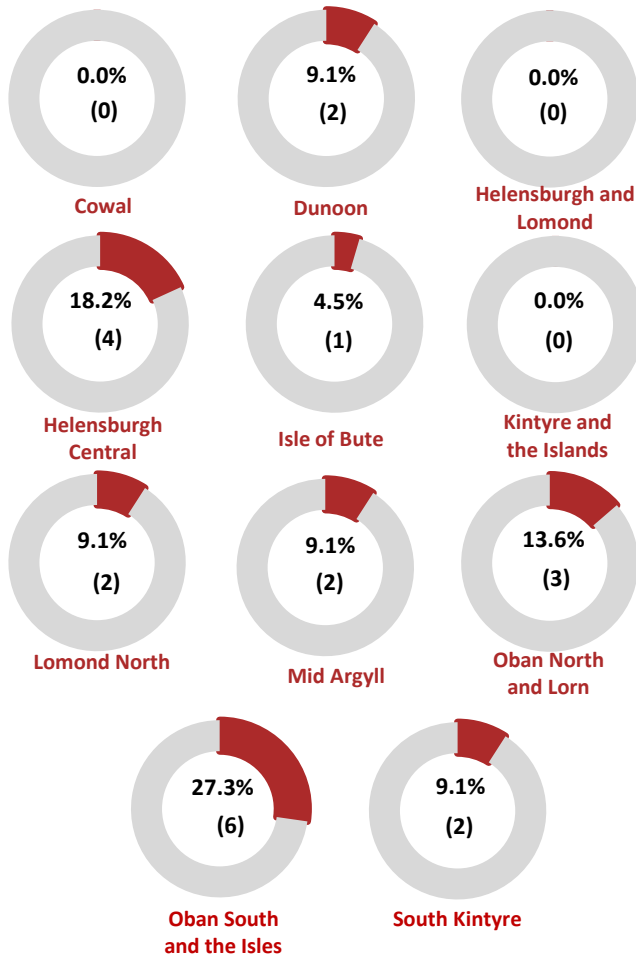
Main Source of Ignition



Accidental Dwelling Fires by Time of Day



Accidental Dwelling Fires Activity by Ward (% share)



Severity of Accidental Dwelling Fires



No Firefighting Action
31.8% (7)



Direct Firefighting
9.1% (2)



Heat/Smoke Damage Only
22.7% (5)



No fire Damage
0.0% (0)

Human Factors



Distraction
22.7% (5)



Alcohol/Drug Impairment
13.6% (3)

Automatic Detection & Actuation



Detection Present
81.8% (18)



Detection Actuated
94.4% (17)

Calls Made by Landline/Mobile
72.7% (16)

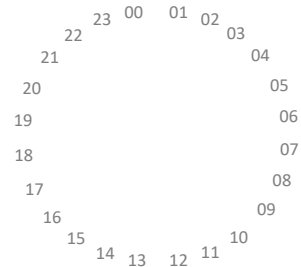
Domestic Safety - Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties



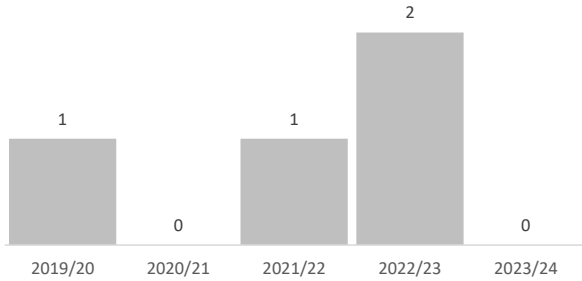
Performance Summary

Year on Year **-100%** 3 Year Average **0%** 5 Year Average **0%**

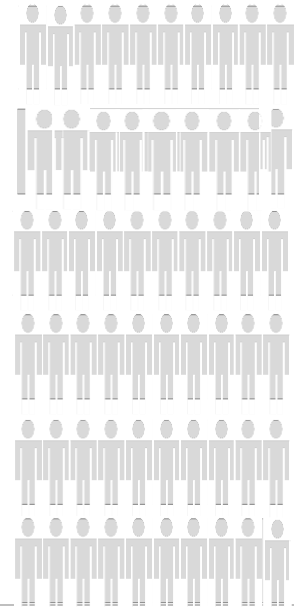
Fire Casualties by Time of Day



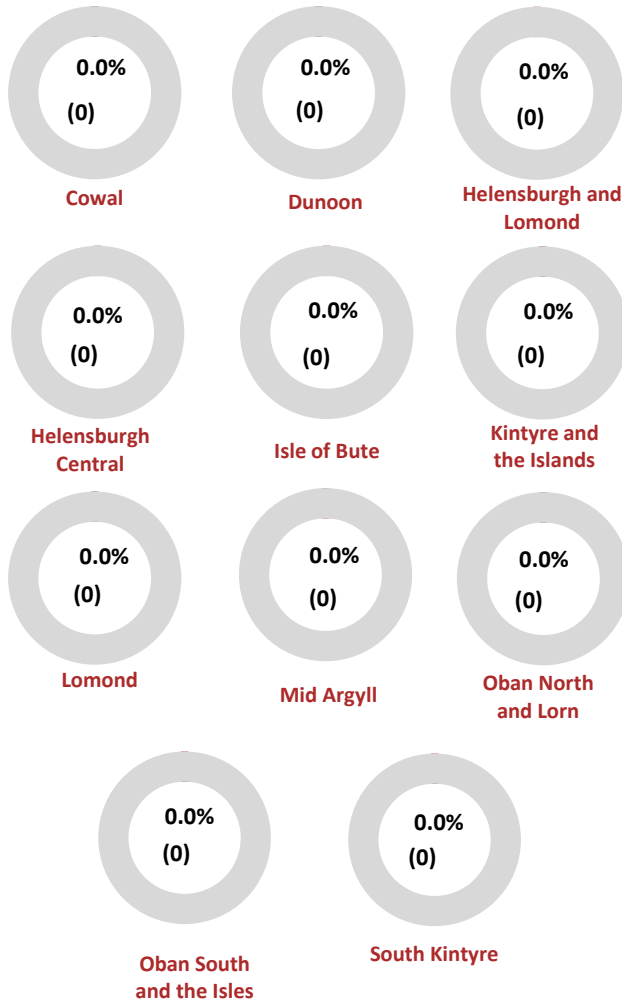
Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties Year to Date



Nature of Injury



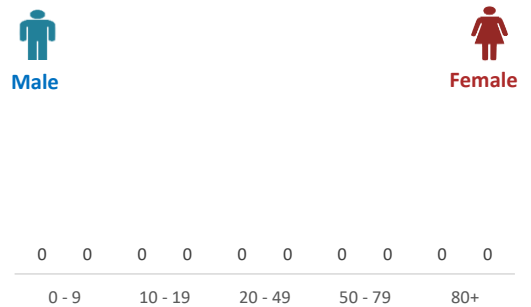
Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties by Ward (% share)



Extent of Harm



Age / Gender Profile



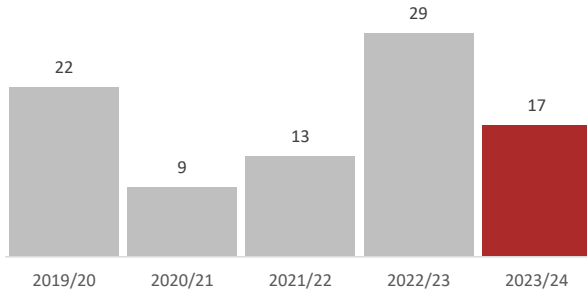
Unintentional Injury or Harm



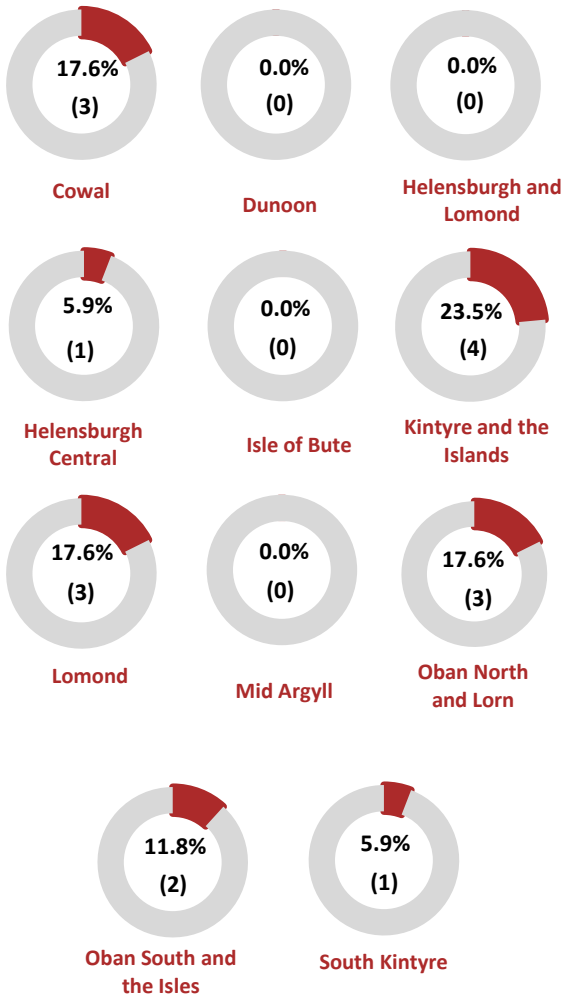
Performance Summary

Year on Year	3 Year Average	5 Year Average
-41%	16%	23%

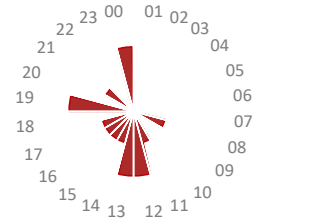
Non-Fire Casualties Year to Date



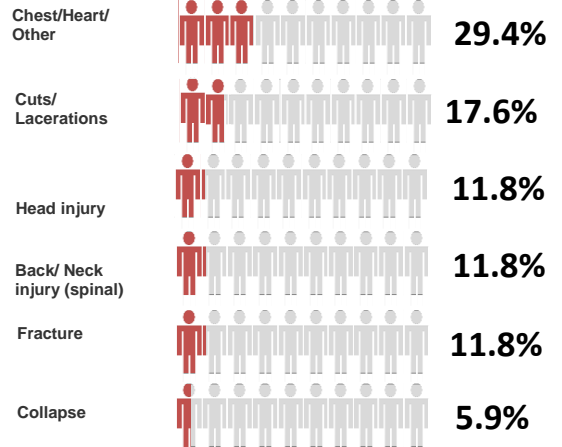
Non-Fire Casualties by Ward (% share)



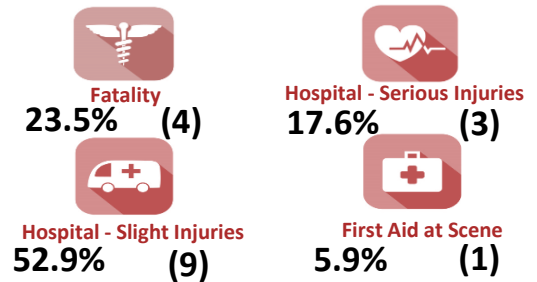
Non-Fire Casualties by Time of Day



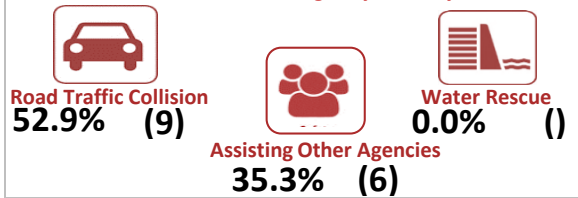
Nature of Injury



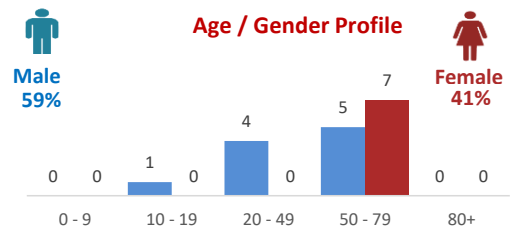
Extent of Harm



Non-Fire Emergency Activity



Age / Gender Profile



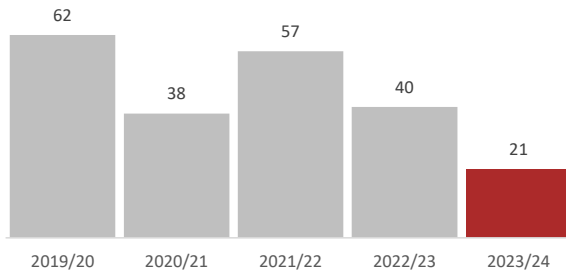
Deliberate Fire Setting



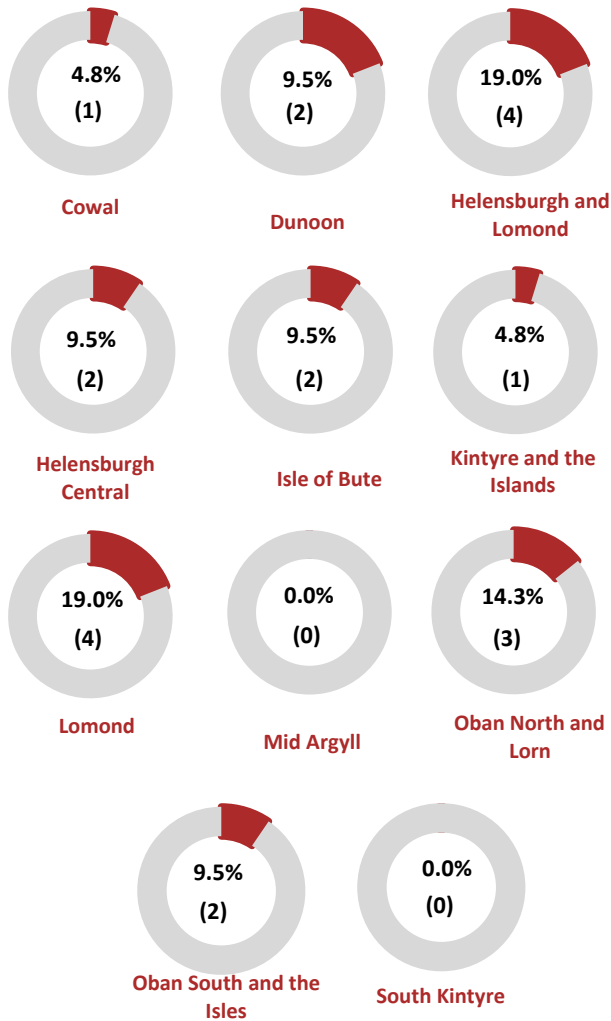
Performance Summary

Year on Year: -48%
 3 Year Average: -13%
 5 Year Average: 11%

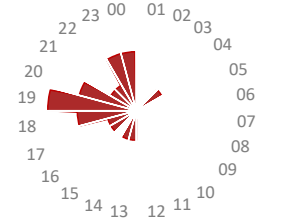
Deliberate Fires Year to Date



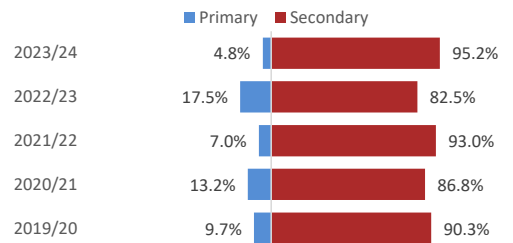
Deliberate Fires by Ward (% share)



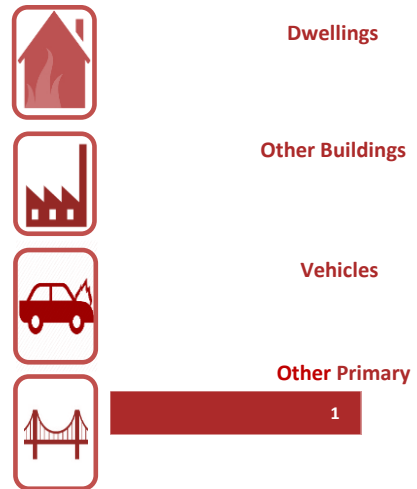
Deliberate Fires by Time of Day



Deliberate Fires by Classification



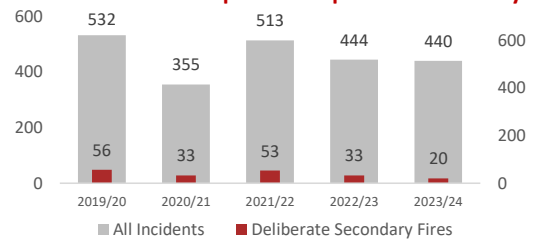
Primary Fire Ratio by Activity Type



Secondary Fire Ratio by Activity Type



Deliberate Fires Compared to Operational Activity



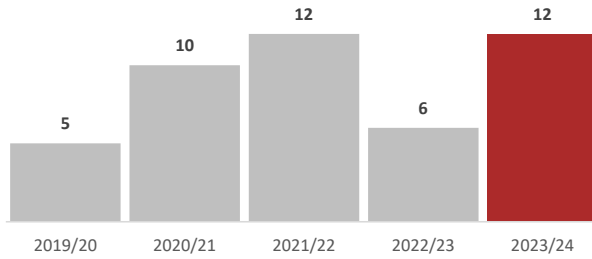
Non Domestic Fire Safety



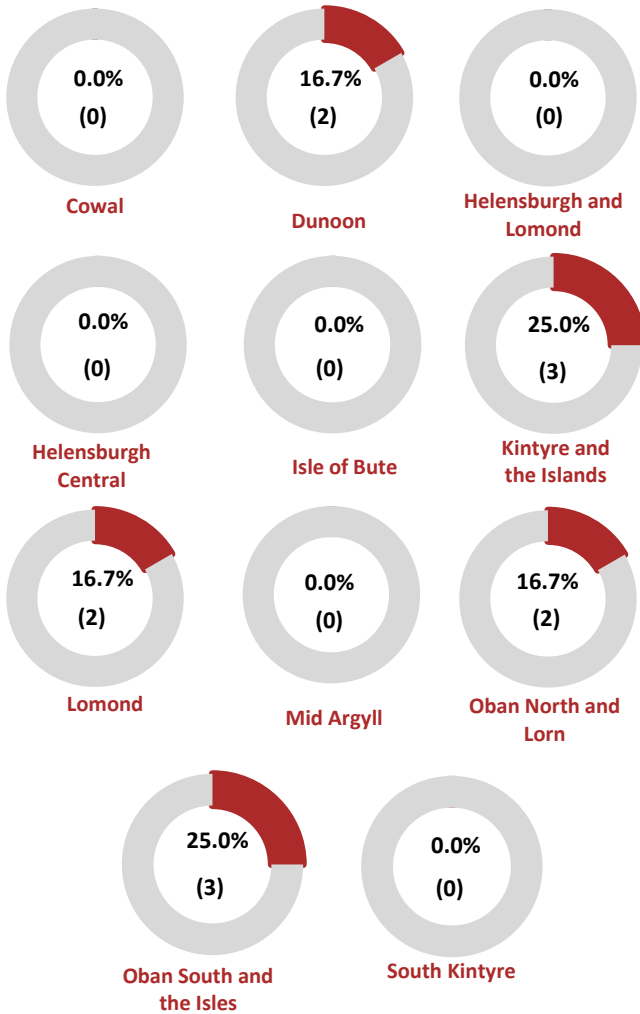
Performance Summary

Year on Year **100%** 3 Year Average **7%** 5 Year Average **36%**

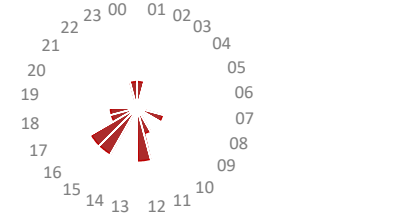
Non-Domestic Fires Year to Date



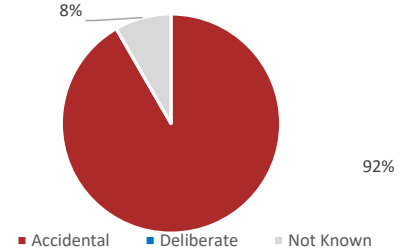
Non-Domestic Fires by Ward (% share)



Non-Domestic Fires by Time of Day



Non-Domestic Fires by Nature of Origin



Severity of Non-Domestic Fires



No Firefighting Action
33.3% (4)



Direct Firefighting
58.3% (7)

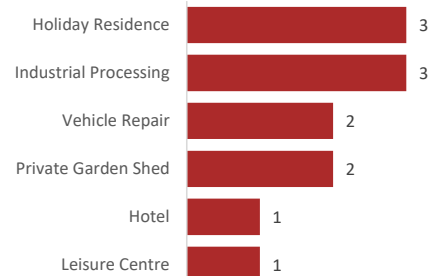


Heat/Smoke Damage
41.7% (5)



No Fire Damage
58.3% (7)

Non-Domestic Fires by Premises Type



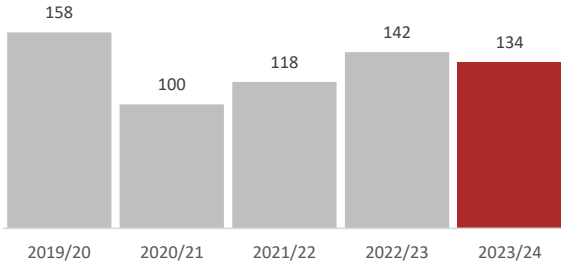
Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals



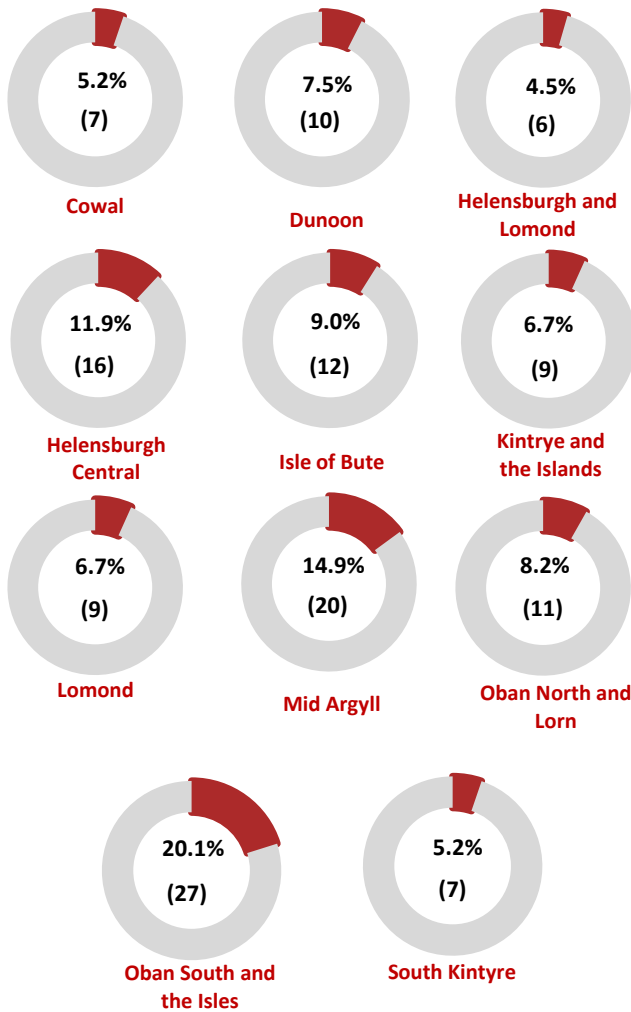
Performance Summary

Year on Year **-6%** 3 Year Average **9%** 5 Year Average **26%**

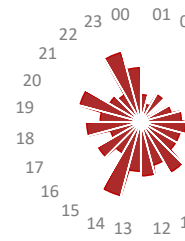
Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals Year to Date



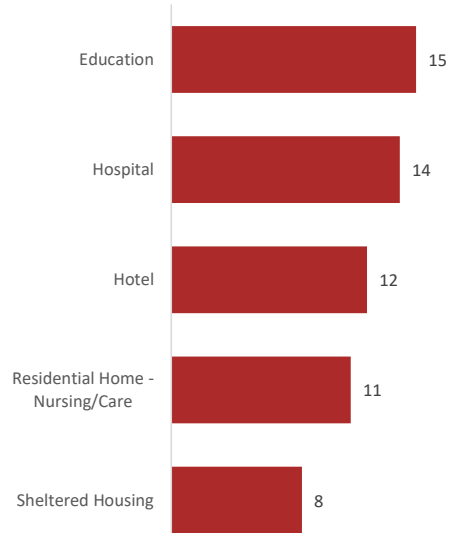
Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals by Ward (% share)



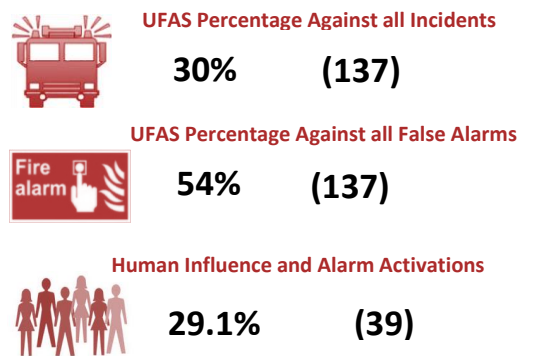
Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals by Time of Day



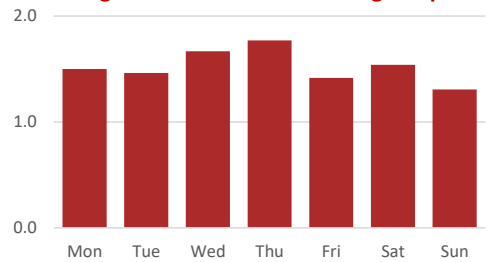
Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals - Top 5 Premises



Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals Activity Ratios



Average Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals per Day



ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****EDUCATION****24 AUGUST 2023**

ELECTION OF A TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE TO THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the appointment of one non-voting teaching representative to sit on the Community Services Committee to represent the teacher workforce.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Community Services Committee is asked to:
- a) Note the content of this report and endorse the appointment of Dan Semple as the representative nominated as a non-voting member of the Community Services Committee.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The constitution of the Council outlines that there should be two non-voting teachers elected by teaching staff employed in Local Authority schools in the Council's area to sit on the Committee where education matters are discussed.
- 3.2 Within Argyll and Bute Council the Community Services Committee has delegated authority to discharge the powers and duties as education authority.
- 3.3 A vacancy has arisen on the Committee due to the resignation of Alison Palmer who served as a non-voting teacher representative. In line with the required procedures requests were sent to schools asking for nominations to sit on the Community Services Committee. On completion of this exercise Dan Semple was appointed.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Dan Semple has been nominated by teaching staff to represent them as a non-voting member of the Community Services Committee for the duration of this Council, following the retirement of Alison Palmer.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – This is in keeping with the Councils Constitution.
- 5.2 Financial – This post is not remunerated.
- 5.3 Legal – None
- 5.4 HR – None.
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty – None.
- 5.6.1 Equalities – None.
- 5.6.2 Socio-economic Duty – None.
- 5.6.3 Islands – None.
- 5.6 Climate Change – None.
- 5.7 Risk – None.
- 5.8 Customer Service – None.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Policy Lead: Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

For further information contact: Fiona Ferguson, Director Support Officer 01546 604367

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****EDUCATION****24 AUGUST 2023**

**ARGYLL AND BUTE – EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-24 (2023-24 update)
AND EDUCATION SERVICE PROGRESS AND IMPACT REPORT 2022-23**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the progress made by the Education Service in achieving the priorities included in the Argyll and Bute Annual Education Plan for 2022-23 presented at Community Services Committee in August 2022 and outline priority actions for 2023-2024.

1.2 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- Note the progress made with respect to priority actions within the 2022-24 Education Strategic Plan outlined in the Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-23.
- Approve the Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-23 and Strategic Plan 2022-24 (2023-24 update) (Appendix 1)
- Approve the publishing of the Education Strategic Plan 2022-2024 (2023-24 update) and Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-23
- Approve the submission of the Education Strategic Plan 2022-2024 (2023-24 update) and Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-2023 to Scottish Government.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

EDUCATION

24 AUGUST 2023

**ARGYLL AND BUTE – EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-24 (2023-24 update)
AND EDUCATION SERVICE PROGRESS AND IMPACT REPORT 2022-23**

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Section 13 of the statutory guidance of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 ('the 2000 Act') as amended by section 4 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 ('The 2016 Act'), enables the Scottish Ministers to issue guidance to education authorities in relation to their functions under section 3 to 8 of the 2000 Act, and education authorities are required to have regard to this guidance in discharging these functions.

2.2 The guidance focuses in particular on education authority duties which are designed to enhance equity and support improvement within schools and across education authorities.

2.3 Sections 3F, 3H and 6 of the 2000 Act: impose duties on education authorities in relation to the annual planning and reporting; namely the publishing of an Annual Education Plan.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- Note the progress made with respect to priority actions within the 2022-24 Education Strategic Plan outlined in the Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-23.
- Approve the Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-23 and Strategic Plan 2022-24 (2023-24 update) (Appendix 1)
- Approve the publishing of the Education Strategic Plan 2022-2024 (2023-24 update) and Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-23
- Approve the submission of the Education Strategic Plan 2022-2024 (2023-24 update) and Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-2023 to Scottish Government.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 The Education Service must prepare and publish an annual plan setting out the steps we have taken, over the course of the planning period:

- to reduce inequalities of outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socioeconomic disadvantage, including the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)
- to comply with the duties imposed on it by section 3B(3) (to seek and have regard to the views of the persons listed in section 3B(4) and to provide any advice and support the authority thinks appropriate to those persons in relation to its consideration of decisions of a strategic nature about the carrying out of its functions relating to school education;
- in pursuance of the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education; and
- to set out any educational benefits for pupils that the Authority considers have resulted from taking these steps.

4.2 The Education Strategic Plan 2022-2024 (2023-24 update) and Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-23 has been prepared in compliance with the statutory guidance and contains the following sections:

- Progress towards achieving the priorities of the National Improvement Framework.
- Updated Education Service Strategic Plan 2023-24.

In light of the national reform agenda for education, our plan and report take into account the recommendations from recent national publications including:

- [It's Our Future- Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment](#),
- [All Learners in Scotland Matter: Findings from the National Discussion on Scottish Education](#),
- [Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education](#),
- [OECD Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence](#),
- [Support for Learning: All our children and All their potential](#),
- [Fit for the Future: developing a post-school learning system to fuel economic transformation](#),
- [Upper-secondary education student assessment in Scotland](#)

4.3 The Education Strategic Plan 2022-2024 (2023-24 update) and Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-2023 focus on

achieving excellence through equity for all children and young people across Argyll and Bute.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The planning and reporting processes at school, service and Education Authority levels are designed to produce robust, consistent and transparent data of the work of the Education Authority, to improve our understanding of what works and, ultimately, drive forward improvements that will improve outcomes for the children and young people of Argyll and Bute.

5.2 The Education Strategic Plan 2022-2024 (2023-24 update) and Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-23 presented to Community Services Committee has been prepared in compliance with the requirements set out in the Statutory Guidance accompanying the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 taking full account of the requirement to:

- Analyse the interim outcomes of the 2022-2024 Education Strategic Plan and prepare and publish the annual report of progress and impact as soon as possible after 31 August 2023;
- Enables us to respond to the national context for education and in particular the anticipated reform agenda and associated reviews and publications.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy – The development of the Education Strategic Plan 2022-24 and Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-23 supports the central purpose of the Scottish Government and the delivery of national outcomes. The framework supports delivery on the OCTF Key Objectives 1-6 and NIF priorities 1-5 and the Argyll and Bute Corporate Plan 2023-27.

6.2 Financial - None

6.3 Legal – Council is required to prepare and publish the Education Strategic Plan annually as directed within the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 200, set out within the supporting Statutory Guidance published March 2017.

6.4 HR - None

6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:

6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – The Education Strategic Plan sets out the Council's response, delivered by Education Services to section 3B of the 2000 Act which imposes duties on education authorities which are designed to promote a reduction in inequalities of

educational outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socioeconomic disadvantage.

6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None

6.5.3 Islands - None

6.6 Climate Change - None

6.7 Risk – There are potential reputational risks for the Council should they fail to deliver the legislative requirements set out within the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc. Act 2000 statutory guidance of March 2017

6.8 Customer Service – This report provides elected members with an overview of service performance for 2022-2023 and priorities for 2023-2024

Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly - Policy Lead for Education

21st July 2023

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Education Strategic Plan 2022-2024 (2023-24 update) and Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-23.

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Education Service

Progress and Impact Report 2022-2023 Strategic Plan 2022-2024 (2023-2024 update)



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SECTION1: Foreword and Introduction

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

Policy Lead for Education



As the Council's Policy Lead for Education it is my pleasure to present to you Argyll and Bute Council's Education Progress and Impact Report for 2022-2023 and updated Strategic Plan 2022-24. The report highlights the wide-ranging work of the Education Service to support our children and young people in realising their ambitions in learning, life and work. Our school staff are our greatest resource and I am always so impressed by the efforts of our schools and settings in preparing our children and young people for an ever-changing world; supporting the development of knowledge, skills, abilities and aptitudes. It is the strength of this work that will allow us to realise our aspiration to ensure that Argyll and Bute is the best place in Scotland for our children to grow and our vision that together we will realise equality, excellence and ambition for all. I am extremely proud of the many successes our schools and young people have had in session 2022-2023, a number of which have resulted in awards and accolades locally, nationally and internationally. Scottish education is undergoing a period of significant reform and whilst we will welcome and embrace the many changes that will be presented over the coming months and years, we recognise the need for the Education Service to think and plan strategically, engage in meaningful consultation and carefully manage developments in order to ensure that our children and young people continue to benefit and flourish. The improvement priorities are a key feature of our strategic planning and the updated plan for 2022-24 shares a high level summary of the ways and means by which our Education Service is striving for excellence through equity in order to deliver improved outcomes for all of our children, young people, their families and communities across Argyll and Bute.

Kind regards,

Yvonne McNeilly

Douglas Hendry

Executive Director



As Executive Director with responsibility for Education, I am pleased to add an officer perspective to the Policy Lead for Education's foreword to Argyll and Bute Council's Education Progress and Impact Report for 2022-2023 and updated Strategic Plan 2022-24. As you will see, the areas of focus align closely with the priorities of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, National Improvement Framework, Education Service Strategy and the Argyll and Bute Corporate Plan 2023-27. The preparation and publication of this Strategic Plan, is required by the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000. Education in Argyll and Bute recognises and anticipates the wide-ranging changes and reform planned for Scottish education as a result of key national reviews and subsequent reports and recommendations and we recognise these changes as drivers to deliver new and exciting opportunities and approaches. Our vision for Education in Argyll and Bute continues to be that, together, we will realise ambition, excellence and equality for all. The work which we have undertaken with our most vulnerable children and young people and their families in this context has been particularly focussed and it is the commitment to improvement of all Education Service staff which enables us to take forward our very high aspirations. Section 4 of this document highlights the key objectives and actions to be addressed by the Service and by schools and establishments as an integral aspect of their improvement planning processes for session 2023-2024. Our continued focus and the purpose of this plan, is to ensure that we provide the best possible learning experiences and opportunities for all our children and young people, which support and reaffirm our commitment to excellence through equity for all. We are determined to improve our services for everyone who uses them, and this Education Strategic Plan sits at the centre of that commitment. I hope you find it both informative and useful. The Education Service always strives to make improvements, and we welcome any suggestions you may have which will help Argyll and Bute Council's Education Service to make the greatest positive impact on outcomes for all of our children, young people and communities.

Douglas Hendry

SECTION 2: Background Information

Argyll and Bute, the second largest Local Authority by area, covers approximately 9% of the total land area of Scotland. Argyll and Bute has the third sparsest population density (0.12 persons per hectare). The population of around 86,000 is distributed across an area of just under 2,700 square miles. More than half of Argyll and Bute's population live in rural areas, as classified by the Scottish Government's Urban-Rural Classification (2016). A further 35% live in communities with populations between 3,000 and 10,000 people, designated as small towns. Less than a fifth of the population live in an urban area with a population of over 10,000 people. Argyll and Bute is an area of outstanding natural beauty with mountains, sea lochs, and 23 inhabited islands. The geography provides challenges for service delivery, particularly in communications and transport. The decline in population experienced to date, and that projected in the future, presents a significant challenge to the overall viability of the area. This challenge is made more difficult by the variation in population changes over the areas within our Local Authority. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) has been used to identify pockets of overall deprivation within Argyll and Bute. Based on the SIMD 2020, 10 data zones in Argyll and Bute are in the 15% most overall deprived data zones in Scotland. 8 data zones are in the 15% most employment deprived data zones. In 13 of Argyll and Bute's data zones, more than 10%, are in the 1% most access deprived data zones. The most access deprived data zone in Scotland covers the islands of Coll and Tiree. Due to the fact that SIMD identifies concentrations of deprivation, smaller pockets and instances of individual deprivation are not picked up by the index. In session 2022/23 we had approximately 5384 pupils in our primary schools, 4575 pupils in our secondary schools and 39 in our complex additional support needs school.

Overview of the Education Service

The vision for education in Scotland is excellence and equity - excellence through raising attainment and improving outcomes and equity ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed. Argyll and Bute's vision and strategy for Education, *Our Children, Their Future*, echoes this with the vision of making Argyll and Bute the best place to grow up. Our vision is that together we will realise ambition, excellence and equality for all. Our vision sends a signal about the importance we attach to education, is simple in message and is recognised by everyone. The Education vision is underpinned by our values: respect, openness and fairness. This vision is being delivered for all our children through the following 6 key objectives:

We will:

- Raise educational attainment and achievement for all;
- Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people;
- Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed;
- Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life;
- Ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement;
- Strengthen leadership at all levels.

The Education Service is currently responsible for:

- Sixty-five primary schools
- Five 2-18 schools
- Five secondary schools
- One school for pupils with complex additional needs
- Early Learning and Childcare spaces are currently available in 4 Council Nursery Centres, 49 ELC settings, 5 ELC Gaelic classes, 22 voluntary, privately managed ELC establishments, 3 outdoor nurseries (two voluntary and one Local Authority) and 29 funded partner childminders.

Gaelic Medium Education (GME) is available in five Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provisions: Bowmore in Islay, Rockfield in Oban, Salen in Mull, Sandbank in Dunoon and Tiree. GME is available in 7 primary schools: Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen, Bunessan, Strath of Appin, Sandbank and Tiree High School (primary department). The pupil roll in each Gaelic Medium (GM) provision is growing, with Salen Primary School and Tiree Primary School having more pupils learning through the medium of Gaelic than English. We currently have 11 Ukrainian children in our ELCs, 45 in our Primary Schools and 35 in our Secondary Schools.

Resourcing Our Plan: The Education Service Budget

Service Area	2023-24	2022-23
Additional Support for Learning	11,064,004	10,375,234
Central/Management Costs	1,708,953	2,072,175
Early Learning & Childcare	9,113,337	10,495,423
Primary Education	37,705,315	37,374,957
Pupil Support	2,323,832	2,570,285
Schools - Central Services	2,491,243	2,629,252
Secondary Education	37,252,847	36,509,920
	101,659,531	102,027,245

About this document

Evidence for the Progress and Impact Report is gathered annually through a range of activities designed to provide support and challenge to schools and ELC settings. Evidence for the 2022-23 report has been informed by the following sources:

Performance and questionnaire data, intelligence and review reports on schools and early learning and childcare settings from the Quality Improvement Team, thematic reviews, inspection reports and triannual reports by Education Scotland, reports on Early Learning and Childcare Settings by Care Inspectorate Scotland, school and service Improvement Plans and Standards and Quality Reports, focus groups with children and young people from a number of schools in different contexts across Argyll and Bute and feedback gathered through the Parental Advisory Group (PAG).

The report and updated plan are also informed by:

- [Scottish Government's GIRFEC wellbeing indicators](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Education Service Strategy and Vision 'Our Children, their Future'](#)
- [Argyll and Bute's Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Council Corporate Plan 2023-2027](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Children and Young People's Service Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan](#)
- The four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence
- Education service self-evaluation activities and evidence
- Recent national publications including [It's Our Future- Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment, All](#)

[Learners in Scotland Matter: Findings from the National Discussion on Scottish Education](#), [Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education](#), [OECD Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence](#), [Support for Learning: All our children and All their potential](#), [Fit for the Future: developing a post-school learning system to fuel economic transformation](#), [Upper-secondary education student assessment in Scotland](#)

The information contained within this report will also help to inform our Strategic Equity Fund plan for 2023-2026, the Education Service report on progress we are making towards addressing the National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities and our National Improvement Framework (NIF) Plan for 2023-24. The Education Plan has been prepared in compliance with the requirements set out in the Statutory Guidance, accompanying the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000.



SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2022-2023

NIF Priority 1: Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education.

Education Service Strategic Priority 1.1: We will protect and promote Children's Rights through the promotion of inclusion and celebration of diversity for all our learners. This will be achieved through high quality professional learning for school leaders and practitioners, policy development and partnership working.

Progress and Impact

Our commitment to the rights of children and young people continues to underpin our work as a service and the work of our schools and ELC settings. The Wellbeing, Rights and Relationships team in partnership with a number of other agencies and central team staff have continued to drive forward work in this area. During session 2022-23, this has included:

- Online sessions for parents/carers, schools based staff and community learning staff including our partners from the third sector. These provided an opportunity to find out more about the UNCRC and what this means for children, parents and families within the school community. These interactive and discursive sessions provided an opportunity to identify what is going well, and what could be improved. Feedback from sessions was positive and will be used to inform next steps.
- Improving parent /carer awareness, work has been undertaken in partnership with the Council's communications team in order to plan links to UNCRC articles into social media posts and raise the profile of UNCRC across the authority.
- This session, there has been increased engagement with the Rights Respecting School programme and this has impacted positively on the number of schools receiving RRS awards. Sessions for school RRS Coordinators have been positively received and as of April 2023, the number of schools who have registered and received awards was as follows: 13 schools have registered for the programme, 31 schools including 1 partner nursery have received bronze awards, 10 schools including 1 partner nursery have received silver awards and 4 schools have now achieved the Gold award. Children and young people in these schools have clear understanding of their rights and the importance of these in society.
- A variety of Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) sessions have been delivered for staff at all levels, areas of focus have included LGBTQ+ Youth Scotland programme, Purple Friday LGBTQ+ and equality and diversity for probationers. These have developed staff knowledge and understanding of issues relating to diversity.
- We continue to work with our partners in Community Learning and Development (CLD) to further develop a sustainable youth voice structure building on the success of the Youth Advisory Panel. Work is underway to establish a young person consultation policy to manage the impact of increased consultation on children and young people's teaching and learning experience. This has ensured that children and young people have influenced wider authority policy and practice.

We have continued to refine and refresh the support offered for children and young people with additional support needs and/or in minority groups. This has included focussed work to support children and young people from Gypsy Traveller backgrounds through raising awareness of staff and participation in TENET (Traveller Education Network) meetings enabling staff to access a wider support network and resources linked to supporting Gypsy Traveller families.

In our Early Years settings, as a result of our CLPL delivery and use of technology to share rights-based practice and pedagogy across all 4 localities, we are beginning to observe a growing understanding within some settings of how children's rights underpin all day to day aspects of service delivery. This is leading to changes in spaces, experiences and interactions which support children's understanding about rights and how they affect their lived experience, evidenced through interactions and parental feedback. CLPL on use of outdoor environments to promote wellbeing has increased practitioner confidence by 50%, amongst those undertaking the course. Observations show that children working with these practitioners access the outdoors more frequently and have access to a wider range of activities which promote enjoyment of nature as a wellbeing resource.

We have continued to ensure that diversity of languages and cultures is celebrated and promoted across the authority. This is particularly evident in the work that has been undertaken to promote the Gaelic language in order to ensure that it continues to be given a high profile. Progress in this area has included:

- Bespoke moderation site for Gaelic Medium was created and launched
- Highly successful pilot project in conjunction with Highland Council to deliver online Gaelic language lessons combined with professional learning for practitioners.
- Creation and dissemination of Gaelic L3 toolkit
- Increased staff engagement with GLPS programme, open university course and National 5 Gaelic learners course
- Full programme of activities has resumed at the Furan Gaelic Centre including: Weekly Gaelic 4 Parents sessions, weekly bookbug sessions and Parant's Paisde group
- Extended the support on offer to schools from the administrator of the Furan Centre.

All of these activities are helping to raise the profile of Gaelic across Argyll and Bute and are impacting positively on learners' experiences and Gaelic language skills.



What are we going to do now?

- Continue to support establishments on their journey to achieving 'Rights Respecting' accreditation through universal and targeted approaches.
- Further develop partnership working with a range of services including third sector organisations in order to ensure that the Children's Rights agenda underpins the work of our schools and services.
- Further develop approaches to promoting and celebrating diversity through partnership working and supporting schools to obtain national recognition for their work in this area.
- Support schools to ensure that their curriculum celebrates and promotes diversity, is de-colonised and inclusive.
- Further develop approaches to celebrate and promote diversity through languages and culture with a specific focus on Gaelic. Provide further support for schools in order to adopt Gaelic as their L2/L3.
- Ensure greater quality and consistency in children's experiences, attainment and achievement within Gaelic Medium Education across Argyll and Bute.

SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2022-23

NIF Priority 2: Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.

Education Service Strategic Priority 2.1: We will support improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing through the use of targeted approaches and understanding of learning and learners to enhance learning in different contexts, which will support attainment and achievement across the four capacities. This will be achieved by identifying professional learning, in school development and work with partner agencies, both centrally and through school improvement priorities, to provide a wide range of experiences and opportunities for children and young people to achieve success.

Progress and Impact

Equalities, Wellbeing, Rights and Relationships

We know that health and wellbeing is an important factor in children and young people's success. We have seen the impact that COVID-19 has had on children and young people. As part of the recovery and renewal agenda, there has been a focus on supporting children and young people in maintaining their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Progress and impact in this area includes:

- A successful pilot of a tool to measure health and wellbeing in schools was implemented and evaluated; feedback from this pilot will help to inform an agreed local authority approach. We will use the Planet Youth approach to increase parental and community collaboration in creating protective factors for young people. Engagement in this approach to date has provided us with strong baseline data that is beginning to be used to engage communities in improving wellbeing outcomes for young people. Partnership working within pilot schools has created local coalition groups with a shared focus. The HWB Secondary Leads Network is providing an opportunity to share learning across secondary schools. This has helped engage a further 3 schools in the roll out of the Planet Youth approach. Secondary leads also report that the network has approved communication and networks across the local authority in relation to Health and Wellbeing.
- Active engagement in the Violence Against Women & Girls Project Board to connect the MVP early intervention work with the broader safer together strategy being developed across the local authority. Engagement in the Violence Against Women and Girls Project is also providing staff with professional learning opportunities to identify and support those who may be experiencing domestic abuse.
- Successful launch of the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme. MVP is a peer mentoring programme that gives young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin all forms of gender-based violence in our society. We have a robust 3 year MVP development plan in place, this has helped to ensure strategic direction and focussed approach to implementation of MVP.
- 1 school in the local authority holds the Youth Scotland LGBTQ+ Award with a further 3 schools interested in pursuing this award. The external accreditation is helping to validate the work that schools have been developing to create a more inclusive environment. This, alongside the refreshed LGBTQ+ Network, is improving equality and inclusion for whole school communities in relation to LGBTQ+ issues. The LGBTQ+ Network has increased engagement from schools and partners in session 22-23, provided professional learning, an opportunity to share best practice, a network to help support improvements and brought partners together to support key developments such as Oban Pride and Ardrishaig Pride celebrations.

Our Children, Their Nurturing Education (OCTNE)

Work has continued, in collaboration with partners to progress with the implementation of our strategy for embedding effective nurture and relationship based approaches across all establishments. Progress includes:

- 28 schools are being supported on their OCTNE journey (24 x primary, 4 x secondary).

- 4 of these schools (2 x secondary, 2 x primary) have been accredited at silver level. These schools demonstrated to the accreditation panel that they are using improvement methodology to implement and effect change in their establishments and provided evidence of the impact of these changes on pupils, ethos and environment.
- 21 of these schools (2 x secondary, 19 x primary) have been accredited at bronze level, meaning they have demonstrated that they have carried out an audit of their current practice, completed an action plan, and informed their staff about the key changes they intend to make to learning provision, policy and practice.
- Examples of good practice within primary schools include: Teddy Bear Relationship Policy, Regulate; Relate, Reason lanyards for all staff; the introduction of PASS questionnaires and wellbeing groups; Pupil Nurture leadership group; and the effective use of PACE to support children's emotional regulation.
- 2 ELC settings have now engaged with the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) leadership training. This training prepares settings to embark on their journey of becoming nurture and relationship-based communities through engagement with a framework underpinned by self-evaluation and an accreditation pathway to recognise changes in practice. Good progress has been made to ensure that the model aimed at developing nurture rich environments within Early Years settings, where children can learn, develop emotionally and build effective relationships, is sustainable.
- Where our most distressed young people have been identified, nurture teachers have provided intensive, time-limited support through coaching and capacity building to ensure that staff are well equipped to adopt nurturing and trauma informed approaches in order to support young people who need this most. Qualitative feedback from staff in schools indicates the positive impact this work has on staff wellbeing and children and young people:

"Things have changed so much since attending the first training (Leadership Session 1). It was excellent. I am even trying to pass on the information to the parents. We aren't reacting with shame or anger, it stops things escalating so quickly". (Head Teacher)

"Your support is helping me feel so much more confident dealing with the situation. You help give me the strength to work through the many challenges we are facing." (Head Teacher)

"Individual support for pupils ensured needs were met, particularly for emotional regulation. This facilitated inclusion and wellbeing of individuals, peers and adults." (Head Teacher)

"Having this support available across schools is an essential resource! We would really benefit from regular input!" (Head Teacher)

"I would just like to express my gratitude to you both - I honestly could not have got through the past 6 months or so without your help and support and I am so grateful!" (ASNA)

- Bespoke training delivered to staff and parents/carers on areas including Lego therapy, Boxall profiles and trauma informed practice. This is helping ensure that children and young people are being supported in a consistent manner across home and school, targeted interventions in school are based on a robust assessment of children's needs, and a greater use of evidence based interventions in our schools.
- Further development of Seasons for Growth training and reconnector sessions, these have been very positively evaluated by participants and the impact of the programme is consistently evaluated positively by children/young people and parents and carers. This has resulted in children/young people feeling more confident in dealing with emotions and feelings relating to grief and loss.
- Implementation of new Counselling in Schools Service in order to improve outcomes for children and young people. Impact of the new service delivered by 'The Exchange' is being tracked and rigorously monitored on an ongoing basis. Data and evidence gathered is showing very positive impact for children and young people where they feel listened to and supported.
- Further development of trauma responsive approaches and services across the authority. There has been a significant increase in education staff at all levels participating in trauma training. All Educational Psychologists have completed level 1 Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP) training and feel well equipped to support children and young people to recover from trauma and disrupted attachments.

- In session 2022-23, two nurture teachers were centrally funded in order to assist with improvement work in this area. In order to measure the impact of this investment, we devised a 'Core Plus' stretch aim. This was a bespoke measure for schools engaged with Argyll and Bute's 'Our Children, Their Nurturing Education' programme. Pupils across nine schools at P1, P4, P7 and S3 formed the sample group. Five questions to measure pupils' perception of the wellbeing indicator for 'achieving' were developed using a Likert scale. The 'overall' measure was a cumulative measure of those responses at scale level 5 for all questions. Preliminary data shown below suggests that we have exceeded the stretch aim in this area.

Table 1: 'Core Plus' Stretch Aim- Our Children, their Nurturing Education

	Overall
Baseline Data (September 2022)	53.62%
Stretch Aim 2022/23	60%
Perceived Improvement	6.38pp
Data pick-up (June 2023)	61.05%
Met Stretch Aim? (June 2023)	+1.05



Addressing Non-Attendance (ANA)

Post –pandemic non-attendance continues to be a major issue both locally and nationally. Tables 2 and 3 illustrate attendance statistics as of May 2023 across Argyll and Bute Establishments, our stretch aims for 2022-23 and our progress against meeting the stretch aims at May 2023.

Tables 2 and 3: HWB – Attendance in Primary and Secondary - Free School Meal registered and Non Free School Meal Registered

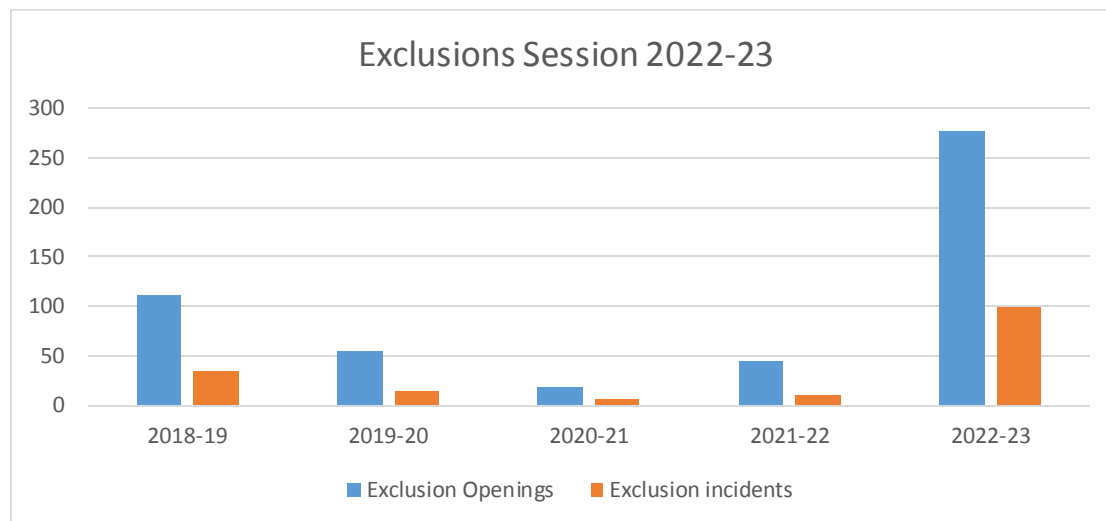
HWB – Attendance in Primary - Free School Meal registered and Non Free School Meal Registered				
	Overall	FSM registered	Non FSM registered	GAP (FSM/non FSM)
Baseline (June 2021)	95.54%	92.55%	96.06%	3.51pp
Stretch Aims 2022/23	96%	93%	96.06%	3.06%
Perceived Improvement	0.46pp	0.45pp	0pp	0.45pp
Data pick-up (May 2023)	92.71%	88.86%	93.43%	4.57%
Progress on Stretch Aim? (May 23)	-3.29pp	-4.14pp	-2.63pp	+1.51

HWB – Attendance in Secondary - Free School Meal registered and Non Free School Meal Registered				
	Overall	FSM registered	Non FSM registered	GAP (FSM/non FSM)
Baseline (June 2021)	92.1%	86.83%	92.83%	6pp
Stretch Aims 2022/23	93%	87%	93.00%	5.60pp
Perceived Improvement	0.9pp	0.17pp	0.17pp	0.4pp
Data pick-up (May 2023)	88.33%	81.24%	89.46%	8.23pp
Progress on Stretch Aim? (May 23)	-4.67pp	-5.76pp	-3.54pp	+2.63pp

A significant strategic project involving a wide range of stakeholders has taken place in order to implement a consistent approach to assessment, training and intervention for addressing non-attendance across Argyll and Bute establishments. The Addressing Non-Attendance (ANA) training package has been delivered and implemented in two of our secondary schools to school staff and colleagues from health and social work. Pre and Post training questionnaires demonstrated positive impact in terms of improved staff knowledge. Rollout to our remaining secondary schools is underway and will be concluded by December 2023. A major consultation activity was undertaken in order to gather the views of children/young people, parents/carers and school staff. Findings and emerging themes were shared with colleagues in Argyll and Bute Health and Social

Care Partnership (HSCP) in order to highlight gaps across service provision and in order to promote a more effective strategic response to service planning and delivery. The consultation findings have emphasised the scale and impact of current non-attendance and has helped to promote a shared understanding and responsibility to all services in order to ensure that change is sustainable and to highlight the fact that it can only be addressed through authentic multi-agency working. New guidance and associated training will be launched early in session 2023-24.

Exclusions



In 2022-23, there were 100 exclusion incidents across Argyll and Bute, a significant increase from previous years. Of these incidents, 3 took place in 2 Primary schools and the remaining 97 across 6 secondary schools. This increase is primarily due to an increase in dysregulated behaviour and is reflective of the national picture. As a result, a national task force has been established in order to examine and attempt to understand the underlying reasons; we are represented on this group by one of our Head Teachers. We have identified this as an area requiring further attention and will provide targeted support for specific schools where exclusion rates are highest and continued universal guidance and support for all schools around alternatives to exclusion. We are confident that our ongoing work around nurture and trauma informed practice will ensure a significant reduction in these figures next session.

Additional Support Needs and Inclusion

A wide range of other activities have been undertaken across our central teams in order to support improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing. These have included:

- Continuing to develop multi-agency approaches to the delivery of the SCERTS (Social, communication, emotional, regulation and transactional support) programme. This has strengthened our support for children and young people with severe and complex needs and has ensures that an effective tracking and monitoring framework is implemented across the authority.

- A successful pilot of a the project Enhancing Literacy Skills for those with Additional Support needs using Technology - ELSAT has shown that this has helped to reduce and remove barriers for children in literacy. The work during the pilot project was shown to increase engagement in education outcomes, improve wellbeing and raise attainment levels in literacy. Children involved in the pilot are now using a range of assistive technology more confidently and independently.
- To ensure appropriate support is in place for all our learners, including those with the most complex needs, we have been working closely with CALM organisation to access training that helps staff understand more complex dysregulated behaviours and how to reduce and prevent those behaviours over time. The training focusses on prevention and a reduction of restrictive responses. A section of the course examines best practice and trauma informed positive behaviour support. Staff who have completed this have provided positive feedback regarding the positive impact that learning from the training is already having on their practice.
- Working to ensure awareness of our sensory service across the authority we have developed a downloadable leaflet outlining the service role to children, parents, staff and agencies. This has defined clear areas of responsibility and reinforced our commitment to ensuring the needs of all children and young people are met.
- Additional tracking and monitoring of attendance and attainment has led to targeted support and interventions for Care Experienced Children and young people. As a result, close analysis of the data has shown positive outcomes from this including an increase in positive destinations to 94%, which is above our target of 85%. A sustained low number of exclusions for care experienced children and young people which continues to remain below 5. Interventions to support this sustained level of low number of exclusions this include individual work with children by Health and Wellbeing Liaison Officers, School based personalised support, Ed Psychology support, health discussions and wider partnership working.
- Working to reduce stigma for the gypsy traveller community we worked with Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project (MECOPP) and Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP) to raise awareness of Gypsy Traveller culture in Argyll and Bute through events in 2 clusters involving primary and secondary pupils as part of the P7 to S1 transition activities programmes.

Early Years

We have been continuing to develop educators' understanding around the importance of high quality, progressive play experiences for children and a growing number of Early Level P1 teachers are successfully implementing play based approaches. Currently, 39% of primary schools are engaged with the play pedagogy network, with 22% of these having play well embedded within their classrooms at P1, 37% are implementing play regularly within P1, 22% are beginning to implement play-based learning and 18% have just joined the network. This work will continue to be supported by RIC collaboration to increase networking and sharing practice.

Funding to support nurturing environments has provided each setting with more flexibility in how they use their environment to support self-regulation for children. 3 training sessions this year have supported 143 practitioners from all localities to engage in dialogue around infant behaviour and how to apply nurture principles to their understanding of this. An increased number of settings are reporting feeling empowered by their growing knowledge around nurture to better understand and thus support dysregulated behaviour in children. Bespoke training to support practitioners to increase skill and confidence in delivering play and learning outdoors, was delivered in situ, enabling more effective understanding of how specific outdoor environments can deliver for children. Participants reported that all felt more confident to risk assess, engage new skills and deliver learning outdoors which engages and extends children's thinking and supports their connection to the natural environment.

What are we going to do now?

- Continue to support and challenge establishments to review and reflect on embedding nurturing approaches. Provide support to ensure an increased number of establishments pursue their 'Our Children, Their Nurturing Education' (OCTNE) journey. 50% of schools will be actively engaging with the OCTNE framework. 30 establishments will have achieved bronze level accreditation, including 2 ELCs, and 10 will have achieved silver.
- Continue to support establishments to embed trauma informed practices in order to ensure that the needs of all of our children and young people are supported effectively and appropriately.
- Continue to support establishments to increase engagement across the authority in the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP Programme).

- Continue to support an increased number of establishments to pursue recognition through the Youth Scotland LGBTQ+ Award.
- Revised Addressing Non-Attendance (ANA) policy document/circular and training package for all establishments will be launched early in session 2023-24. All schools will negotiate an attendance target for session 2023-24 with their link Education Manager and attendance will continue to be a standing item during Head Teacher meetings and Quality Improvement Team visits to schools.
- In partnership with our Attainment Advisor and through analysis of data from this session, we have devised provisional stretch aims (Appendix 1) focussing on attendance outlined in the tables below. We will finalise these in August 2023 following further consultation with Head Teachers.
- Continue to work on the implementation of the national Additional Support for Learning implementation plan.
- Further develop specialist staff training to ensure our staff have the skills and knowledge required to support all our learners.
- Build on current approaches to ensure effective transitions for all learners with additional support needs.
- Further staff knowledge of appropriate strategies and resources to use to ensure progression and achievement for all our learners.
- Continue to work with our corporate parenting partners on the actions outlined in The Promise.
- Continue to use the national Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) data to compare the progress of our care experienced pupils at P1,4,7 and S3 with the national picture, working with designated managers to target support, where appropriate.
- Build on links with local organisation Live Argyll Active Schools to explore accessibility for pupils with Visual impairment and other additional support needs.
- Continue to provide key information on the roll out of multi-agency training as part of the implementation of the national revised Child Protection Guidance (2021).
- Provide targeted and universal support in order to reduce the rate of exclusions across the authority.
- Education service has engaged with Motivation, Commitment and Resilience (MCR) Pathways to introduce their mentoring programme to three pilot secondary schools in 2023-24. Intervention will take the form of weekly meetings with an adult mentor, and taster sessions in the workplace and further/higher education, as well as group sessions and enhanced transition experiences for younger pupils. As a result, Care-Experienced young people, and others facing disadvantage will engage with a proven means of enhancing their life chances.



SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2022-23

NIF Priority 3: Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

Education Service Strategic Priority 3.1: We will address disadvantage and deprivation to close the attainment gap by analysing data to inform a strategic overview of attainment for disadvantaged groups across the Local Authority and allow effective, targeted interventions. This will be achieved through the development and tracking of stretch aims and targeted use of Pupil Equity Funding and Scottish Attainment Challenge funding.

Education Service Strategic Priority 3.2: We will use a data and research informed approach to provide targeted support to establishments across the Authority. This will be achieved by working collaboratively to develop a range of effective approaches, which have a positive impact on closing the attainment gap. This will be further supported by a focus on effective moderation of standards to ensure consistency across establishments.

Progress and Impact

Scottish Attainment Challenge

The Scottish Attainment Challenge' mission (SAC) is to achieve equity of educational outcomes, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The Scottish Attainment Challenge aims to raise the attainment of children and young people living in deprived areas, in order to close the equity gap. In April 2023, an Education Officer took up post in order to play a key role in leading our work in this area, supporting and challenging our schools to ensure a relentless focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap whilst raising the bar for all. In addition, our lead teacher (recovery and renewal) for literacy and numeracy has continued to play a pivotal role in providing both universal and targeted support for schools as they work towards closing the poverty related attainment gap. Both of these posts are funded through Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) which forms part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge and impact is closely monitored.

Attainment Advisors work with authorities to identify core attainment measures and specific aims (Stretch Aims) which, informed by local evidence and data, are identified as local priority areas for improvement. The stretch aims are intended to be both ambitious and achievable within local contexts and targets are specific to individual authorities. Progress towards achieving the current stretch aims will be reported on later in 2023.

The Stretch Aims are intended to support recovery from the pandemic and accelerate progress in closing the attainment gap and include:

- Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (**literacy P1/4/7 combined** and **numeracy P1/4/7 combined**)
- School Leavers with 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 5
- School Leavers with 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6
- Participation Measure - 16-19 year olds in Education, Training and Employment
- Attendance

The stretch aims for literacy and numeracy identify the percentage of young people who achieve their expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level:

- An overall attainment target, which includes all young people
- An attainment target for young people who live in the most deprived areas (SIMD quintile 1)
- An attainment target for young people who live in the least deprived areas (SIMD quintile 5)
- A target to reduce the attainment gap between the most and least deprived young people

Following school submissions on Progress and Achievement in October 2022 and February 2023, data was analysed against the stretch aims. Education Managers then conducted follow up conversations about the projected data with Head Teachers and Senior Leaders. This ensured a more rigorous and consistent approach with a clear focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

The Argyll & Bute literacy and numeracy tables 4 and 5 illustrate the progress from the 2021 'post pandemic' ACEL collection, through the most recent ACEL collection in 2022 (published December 2022), to the Stretch Aim targets in place for 2023.

The year-on-year trend in ACEL data has been positive; in the two-year period between 2021 and 2022 the overall proportions of primary school pupils achieving the expected levels in literacy had increased by 3 percentage points, while in numeracy there had been an increase of 4 percentage points.

The percentage of Quintile 1 (most deprived) young people who achieved their expected CfE level has increased by 5% in literacy and 10% in numeracy between 2021 and 2022.

In literacy, the attainment gap between young people from the most and least deprived areas of Argyll & Bute was 33 percentage points in 2021, and by 2022 this narrowed to 27 percentage points. Argyll & Bute's target is to reduce the attainment gap to 21.5 percentage points by 2023. Provisional data indicates that we are making very good progress towards achieving our overall stretch aim of 68.4% for literacy and in significantly reducing the attainment gap between pupils residing in quintile 1 and those in quintile 5. Of particular note is the increased attainment in literacy at P1,4,7 combined for pupils residing in quintile 1 as evidenced through provisional data at June 2023.

Table 4: Literacy (P1,4,7 Combined) Stretch Aim 2022-23

	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Baseline(ACEL June 2021)	59%	48%	81%	33pp
Confirmed ACEL Data (Dec 2022)	62%	53%	80%	27pp
Stretch Aims 2022/23	68.4%	60%	81.5%	21.5pp
Perceived Improvement	9.4pp	12pp	0.5pp	11.5pp

Table 5: Numeracy (P1, 4, 7 Combined) Stretch Aim

	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Current Level (ACEL June 2021)	69%	58%	87%	29pp
Confirmed ACEL (Dec 2022)	73%	68%	86%	18pp
Stretch Aims 2022/23	75%	74%	87.5%	13.5pp
Perceived Improvement	6pp	16pp	0.5pp	15.5pp

In numeracy, the attainment gap between young people from the most and least deprived areas of Argyll & Bute was 29 percentage points in 2021, and by 2022 this narrowed to 18 percentage points. Argyll & Bute's target is to reduce the attainment gap to 13.5 percentage points by 2023. Provisional data indicates that we are on track to exceed our overall stretch aim of 75% and are making good progress towards closing the attainment gap between pupils residing in quintile 1 and those in quintile 5.

Argyll and Bute Stretch Aims for 1@SCQF 5, 1@SCQF 6 and Participation have been agreed and shared with secondary HTs. The newly introduced Secondary Attainment Meetings have ensured Head Teachers reflect with accountability on areas for improvement in attainment, on consistency in moderation and understanding standards and on

ensuring an aspirational presentation policy which enables all pupils to achieve their potential. Attainment Meetings for all secondary schools have been successfully completed, and the template has proven an effective basis for improving reporting to members on individual school attainment at Area Committee.

Table 6: School Leavers with 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 5

	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Current Level (June 2021) Baseline	87.91%	85.06%	96.77%	11.71pp
Stretch Aims 2022/23	88.91%	86.06%	97%	10.94pp
Perceived Improvement	1pp	1pp	.23pp	.77pp
Confirmed Data for 2021/22 (Feb 2023)	89.26 %	80.33 %	98.04 %	17.71pp
Progress on Stretch Aim? (As of Feb 2023)	- 0.35pp	- 5.73pp	+ 1.04pp	+ 6.77pp

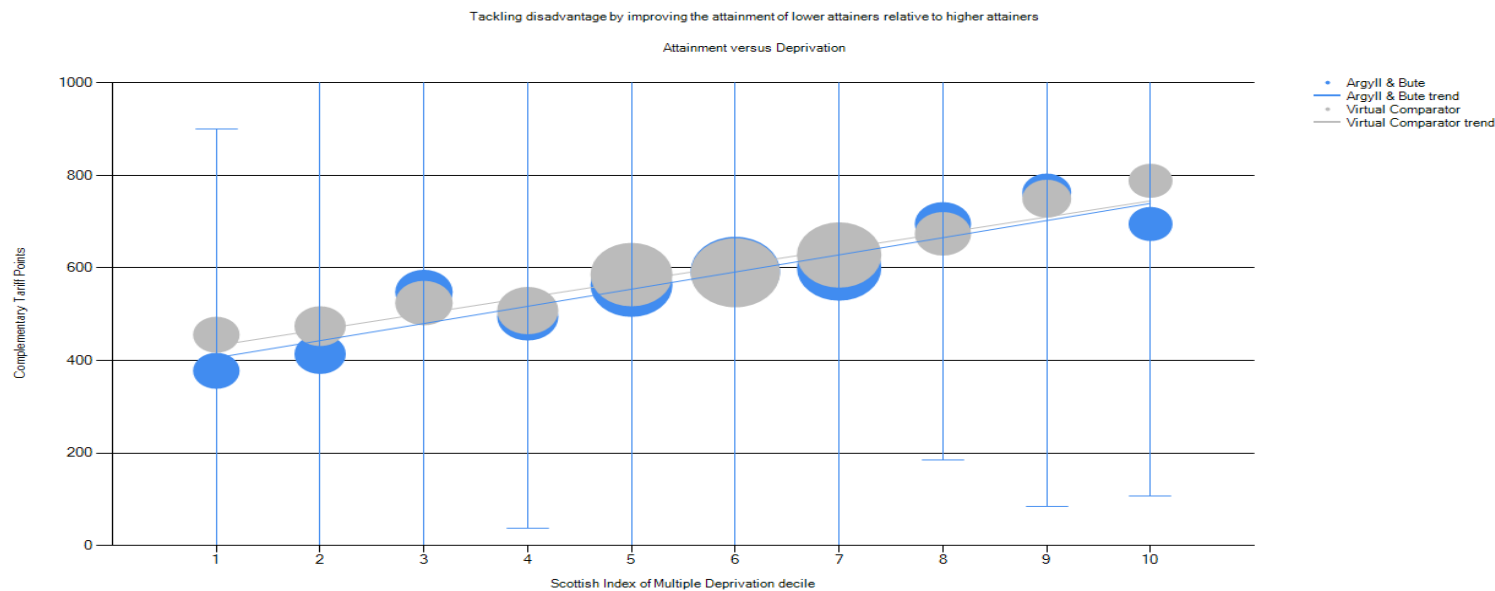
Table 7: School Leavers with 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6

	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Current Level (June 2021) Baseline	67.71%	62.07 %	90.32%	28.25pp
Stretch Aims 2022/23	68.5%	62.72%	90.49%	27.77pp
Perceived Improvement	0.79pp	0.65pp	0.17pp	0.48pp
Confirmed Data for 2021/22 (Feb 2023)	62.41%	54.10%	80.39%	26.29pp
Progress on Stretch Aim? (As of Feb 2023)	-6.09pp	-8.62pp	-10.1pp	-1.48pp

Table 8: Participation Measure - 16-19 year olds in Education, Training and Employment

	Overall	Q1	Q5	Gap (Q1 –Q5)
Baseline (Aug 2021) SDS Data	93.5%	90.6%	96.7%	6.1pp
Stretch Aims 2022/23	95%	91%	96.7%	5.7pp
Improvement between 2021 and the 2023 stretch aim	1.5pp	0.4pp	0pp	0.4pp
Confirmed SDS Data Aug 2022	93.9%	89.1%	95.5%	6.4pp
SDS Snapshot Data May 2023	92.7%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Progress on Stretch Aim (using snapshot May 23 or Aug 22 Data)	-2.3pp (snapshot May 23)	-1.9pp (Aug 22)	-1.2pp (Aug 22)	+0.7pp (Aug 22)
Confirmed SDS Data (Aug 2023)	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

Average attainment in Tariff points by SIMD decile compared with Virtual Comparator Data (at the end of S6, based on original S4 roll) – after appeals and Wider Achievement accreditation



From the above graph, it can be seen that in Argyll and Bute, pupils in SIMD centiles 1 and 2 – the least advantaged young people in the authority – are performing slightly below the VC. However, in both centiles the gap between Argyll and Bute pupils and the VC has reduced since October as a result of the inclusion of wider attainment accreditation and successful appeals. The rest of the deciles are broadly in line with the VC, apart from decile 10 – the most advantaged young people – which is below the VC. The small number in this cohort means it is difficult to draw statistical conclusions, as the performance of one or two pupils can make a significant difference to the data.

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)

Support and challenge for schools around planning and use of PEF has been ongoing. Our Attainment Advisor has worked across a number of primary and secondary schools in order to support at the planning and evaluation stages. We issued our refreshed PEF guidance in May 2023 and our Education Officer (SAC) has engaged with all schools in order to provide support and challenge as they evaluate progress and identify interventions and areas of focus for session 2023-24. Use of data and evidence has been central to these conversations and schools report now feeling increasingly confident as a result of this engagement. We have identified the need for an increased level of budget monitoring throughout the year in order to avoid any under or overspends. At school level, PEF has been used to target a number of areas including: targeted support for literacy and numeracy learning and teaching initiatives to promote digital inclusion, support for pupil health and wellbeing, collaboration with third sector partners to support pupils and families facing specific barriers to school attendance and participation and initiatives to reduce the cost of the school day.

Using Data for improvement

Training and has been provided for all Primary Head Teachers to support them to analyse and review the progress and achievement data submitted in February 2023 with a focus on projected ACEL attainment in June 2023. Each Head Teacher was supported to produce an attainment paper which formed the basis of a data review meeting with

their link Education Manager in April/May 2023. This ensured that the meeting was focussed and that Head Teachers were able to confidently discuss attainment trends, projections, interventions and next steps. All Head Teachers who attended the support session and subsequent data meeting reported this to be a beneficial and impactful process. In addition, training was provided for schools on the Broad General Education (BGE) toolkit to enable schools to benchmark their attainment against national comparators. The Education Service has reviewed and improved the process for analysis and evaluation of attainment data. Attainment Meetings with individual secondary Head Teachers take place in October/November, at which all aspects of attainment from S1-S6 are analysed and key improvement strategies to raise attainment are discussed and agreed.

Early Years

Based on the most recent Inspection carried out by the Care Inspectorate, 92% of all Argyll and Bute settings (including LA, PVI and Partner Childminders) are meeting the National Standard or higher. Of the 8% falling below the national standard; 5% are Local Authority settings and 3% are Private, Voluntary or Independently managed. Intensive support has been provided by the Early Years Education Officer and Support Officer to ensure that these establishments continue to improve and meet the required standard at the next inspection. Work is ongoing to develop tracking and monitoring capacity of practitioners to ensure that all children are supported and challenged accordingly in developing early literacy and numeracy skills, with Excellence and equity leads building capacity in settings where our lowest SIMD quintile pupils are in attendance.

Assessment and Moderation

Quality assurance and moderation remained a key focus throughout 2022-23. The central team worked in partnership with schools to adapt approaches to sharing standards in order to continue to support establishments and practitioners with learning, teaching and assessment. A significant focus on developing a shared understanding of standards through a range of moderation activity and professional learning opportunities across all sector has been essential in supporting schools in identifying appropriate interventions which have the biggest impact on improving attainment in literacy and numeracy. A range of professional learning opportunities were developed and delivered to staff across sectors, these were evaluated positively. CLPL will reflect the RIC Draft plan, with a focus on high quality assessments and writing. Presently, the training is applicable to both mainstream and Gaelic. Subscription to the various online moderation sites and attendance at professional learning courses have increased. We now have over 400 members from across the authority. 30 Primary Schools and 7 Secondary Schools have actively engaged with moderation activities on the site this session, 2 of which have Gaelic medium provision. A digital planning template for planning for high quality assessment for all schools is housed on each site and provides a standardised template to support all schools.

An overview for the November Inset has been offered through two twilights in June to all Moderation Leads and QAMSOs. 42 of our primary schools attended the overview sessions held. Four out of seven schools with Gaelic medium provision attended the sessions. The data and feedback is collected on a continual basis to ensure maximum impact going forward. HTs have been asked for their evaluation of moderation, digital sites and training. A high level report indicated that training and engagement with the moderation site was reported to have improved staff knowledge and skill in moderation generally and specifically within the areas of Improvement in planning High Quality Assessments, monitoring and reporting on progress of achievement and strengthened teacher professional judgement.

A recent Argyll and Bute primary school HMle report, highlighted the moderation practice within an 'excellent grading' for 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment;

'Teachers engage regularly in collaborative, high-quality moderation activity with their partner school, other local schools and local authority moderation processes. Staff are regularly moderating their innovative approaches to planning and assessment as well as agreeing standards across a range of curricular areas. Staff have a deep understanding of the process and apply this highly successfully. The principal teacher is an experienced Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer, sharing expertise and supporting practice in other schools. Teachers' robust moderation focused on listening and talking is being shared beyond the school to support system-wide improvement.

Good progress has been made this session, however we require to increase, at pace, the engagement of a number of schools.

What are we going to do now?

- From session 23/24 all primary schools will submit progress and achievement data 3 times per year for all pupils across all stages from P1-P7.
- Increased intensive support from the central team for schools identified as having low attainment and/or a significant gap between pupils residing in quintile 1 and quintile 5.
- An Education Support Officer (ESO) for Literacy has been appointed and will provide universal and targeted support for schools with a specific focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap. A range of data will be utilised and analysed in order to identify distinct areas of focus. The ESO will play a lead role in refreshing the Argyll and Bute Literacy Strategy.
- All primary schools will engage in authority led moderation activity on the November 2023 Inset day.
- An existing Head Teacher with significant experience in leading strategic change within mathematics and numeracy will work with a target group of schools based on their numeracy attainment, in order to improve pedagogical approaches.
- Continue to develop capacity and support schools with assessment and moderation. All primary schools will undertake moderation training (provided by Authority) in the November inset. We will continue to engage with moderation opportunities through the Northern Alliance.
- Upscale the Early Years delivery model trialled this session to ensure all Excellence and Equity leads support training attainment in literacy and numeracy for our lowest band SIMD children, whilst building capacity of practitioners to support and continue this work in setting.
- Consult on and publish our Strategic Equity Funding Plan 2023-26.
- Support and challenge schools to raise attainment for all pupils and close the poverty related attainment gap, through analysis of data, improved learning, teaching and assessment and effective use of resources (including Pupil Equity and Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding).
- Implement robust PEF framework in order to ensure a more rigorous approach to tracking and monitoring the use and impact of PEF. This will include peer moderation of PEF plans and progress.
- Target literacy, numeracy and wellbeing support towards schools where attainment, particularly of those residing in quintile 1, is low.
- Adopt a more rigorous approach to tracking and monitoring the attainment of pupils within Gaelic Medium Provision.
- Continue to evolve the role of the 'Virtual Head Teacher' in order to ensure that our care experienced children and young people are well supported and are attaining and achieving.



SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2022-23

NIF Priority 4: Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

Education Service Strategic Priority 4.1: Through partnership working we will promote the development of skills, knowledge and understanding of learners to widen learning opportunities and career pathways for learners. This will be achieved through a focus on acquisition of skills and access to personalised learning pathways to support learners to develop all four capacities and become global citizens.

Education Service Strategic Priority 4.2: We will further enhance our partnership with Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) to ensure all young people have the opportunity and successfully develop the skills for life and work required to attain sustained, positive destinations post-school. We will achieve this through improved tracking of young people's pathways within school and in the period after leaving school to ensure appropriate support, guidance and opportunities are in place to gain and sustain positive destinations. We will also achieve this by broadening and improving work-based vocational learning opportunities for young people, improving vocational educational provision in schools and developing strong partnerships with employers and agencies who can contribute to the development of young people's skills and prospects.

Progress and Impact

In the senior phase (S4-S6) we have continued to develop approaches to ensuring personalisation and choice in learning for all pupils, and that there is a wide choice of planned pathways for learners which allow them to attain their chosen positive destinations in the adult world. Effective communication and partnership working with Argyll College is supporting the development of a wider choice of pathways for Senior Phase learners. Twenty networked college courses feature in Senior Phase course choices and are available virtually to all Senior Phase learners. Work is ongoing to extend the Senior Phase curriculum offer to include further Foundation Apprenticeships and HNCs delivered both in schools and via partnerships. Five Foundation Apprenticeships have been undertaken in 2022-23 by a total of 52 young people through Argyll and Bute Council, and through partnerships with Argyll College and Skills Development Scotland. In 2023-24, the offer of Foundation Apprenticeships will increase to seven, with a total of 91 young people engaging with Foundation Apprenticeships across schools, an increase of 39 on the number for 2022-23. In partnership with Argyll College, an HNC in Computing Science and an HNC in Admin and IT have been added to the senior phase curriculum offer for 2024-25. As a result of these initiatives, the senior phase offer in Argyll and Bute has greater flexibility and personalisation.

The shared senior phase timetable across all 10 secondary schools is in place and functioning effectively. For example, Higher Applications of Maths has been offered virtually between two schools, with agreed shared responsibility for delivery. Bespoke, personalised curriculum pathways are in place across almost all secondary schools in the form of Flexible Learning Plans (FLPs). FLPs are allowing disengaged and vulnerable pupils, and those with clear vocational aspirations, to blend attainment and achievement in school with the development of key skills for life and work through well-planned work-based vocational learning. In 2022-23, a total of 37 FLPs were in place for targeted young people across secondary schools. Evaluation of all FLPs has been completed, demonstrating positive impact on the lives of young people. Four FLPs have led to full time employment, and three Foundation Apprenticeships have also resulted. FLPs have supported the development of confidence, resilience and skills for life and work in participating young people.

Post-Covid, both the number and level of engagement of schools' employer partners has increased through the work of DYW Co-ordinators. In 2022-23, 145 employers engaged in 179 activities with over 1000 young people across secondary schools. Work Placements are recorded and tracked via the introduction of an authority-wide Work Placement Database. In 2022-23 there were over 180 work placements for secondary pupils across Argyll and Bute. All secondary schools have completed Education Scotland's Work Placement Standard Benchmarking Exercise, each identifying priorities for improvement in their provision of work-based vocational learning.

Self-evaluation by all secondary schools of Work-Based Vocational Learning and Work Placements has indicated clear improvement priorities for 2023-24, particularly relating to the role of parents/carers and employers in evaluating the impact of work placements, and the tailoring of work placements to individual needs, particularly those of young people with identified protected characteristics which lead to obstacles in accessing employment.

In 2022-23, 40 young people identified as having ASN, other protected characteristics or as being otherwise vulnerable, engaged in work placements. As of December 2022, the authority's Work-Based Vocational Learning Guidance has been updated and streamlined to ensure it is a central guiding factor in the development of excellent practice in this area. The finalised version of the authority's updated Work-Based Vocational Learning Guidance has been issued to all schools following substantial consultation. As a result, work placements across the authority are informed by consistency of practice and standards.

School Leaver Initial Destinations 90% of CEYP school leavers progressed to a positive post-school destination in 2022. This is in line with the VC, and above both the Northern Alliance authorities and national figures.

A factor in the positive post-school destinations for care-experienced young people is the personalised curriculum pathways which are in place for some CEYP pupils. These have involved a mixture of in-school learning and work-placements, during which skills for life and work are developed. Such activities have the added benefit of re-engaging with educational provision some CEYP whose attendance at school had fallen away.

In May 2023, the inaugural Argyll and Bute Developing the Young Workforce and Employability Conference was held. Over 130 delegates, representing a wide range of the authority's partners in developing employability skills and ensuring positive post-school destinations for young people, were addressed by key speakers, listened to the experiences and views of young people and engaged in workshops, Feedback from delegates confirmed the success of the event in developing partnership and best practice in employability education and work-based vocational learning.

We have broadened and improved work-based vocational learning opportunities for young people, improving vocational educational provision in schools, and developing strong partnerships with employers and agencies who can contribute to the development of young people's skills and prospects. DYW Co-ordinators have instigated and developed partnership agreements between schools and employers, resulting in an increased number and range of work placement opportunities for young people. Post-Covid, the number and level of engagement of schools' employer partners has increased through the work of DYW Co-ordinators. The number of School-Employer partnerships designated as "Influencing" has increased.

DYW Co-ordinators have worked with schools to extend the number and scope of vocational learning events in schools, in collaboration with partner employers and other partners. A total of 13 careers and skill-focussed events, co-ordinated by DYW Co-ordinators, have taken place across secondary schools in 2022-23. Events have had a key focus on local Labour Market information, and have successfully directed the thinking of young people and their families to opportunities within locally significant industries, such as construction, aquaculture, agriculture renewables, hospitality and catering.

We have improved our tracking of young people's pathways within school and in the period after leaving school, to ensure appropriate support, guidance and opportunities are in place to gain and sustain positive destinations. This has been achieved through the implementation of regular and consistently structured 16+ Meetings in all secondary schools, with input from education, DYW and Skills Development Scotland. As a result of being an element of the standardised agenda of twice-termly DYW School Links Meetings, 16+ Meetings in schools are more consistent in terms of frequency and focus. An agreed template agenda and record of outcomes for 16+ meetings are in place, and an audit of impact has been planned for autumn 2023. As a result, young people are being tracked beyond their school leaving date, and interventions are being put in place should positive destinations fail to be sustained.

Timetabled monthly meetings between SDS and Education Manager are in place, and have identified areas of need in specific areas and schools, leading to further improvements to the 16+ framework described above.

In Early Years, we continue to 'Grow our Own' with the recruitment of 3 MA students this session and a further 4 being recruited to start in session 2023-24.

Wider Achievement

Alongside National Qualifications, Argyll and Bute's secondary schools offer an ever-increasing range of opportunities for wider achievement. Such opportunities develop skills for life and work, broaden young people's range of experience, and are recognised by employers and further and higher education establishments as valuable indicators of young people's attributes and capabilities.

The report by Professor Ken Muir on the next steps for Scottish education, and the associated review of secondary assessment in Scottish education, being led by Professor Louise Hayward, both emphasise the importance of wider achievement for young people, and stress the importance of parity of esteem between such qualifications and more traditionally academic range of qualifications.

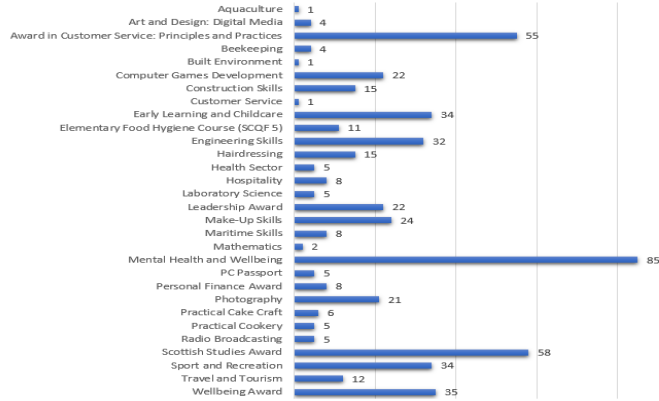
The table below summarises Wider Achievement across the authority's secondary schools, which is broken down in more detail by the subsequent graphs.

Wider Achievement level	# Entries	# Passes	% Pass
Level 3 or unlevelled	26	26	100.0%
Totals at SCQF 3 or other	26	26	100.0%
N4	144	141	97.9%
SCQF 4	146	135	92.5%
Totals at SCQF 4 or Nat 4	290	276	95.2%
SCQF 5	499	376	75.4%
Nat 5	188	168	89.4%
Totals at SCQF 5 or Nat 5	687	544	79.2%
SCQF 6	346	230	66.5%
Higher	50	38	76.0%
Totals at SCQF 6 or Higher	396	268	67.7%
SCQF 7	37	37	100.0%
Total at SCQF 7	37	37	100.0%

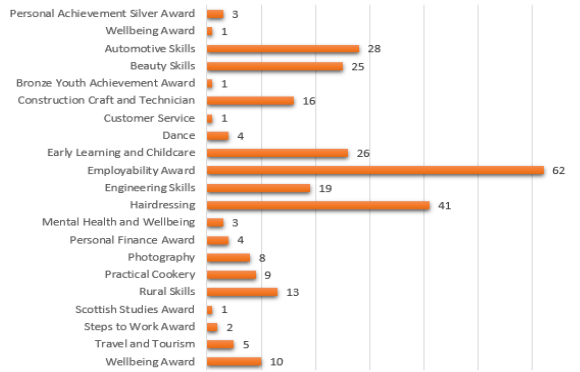
Wider Achievement awards were gained at SCQF levels 3-7.

- 88% of all entries in Wider Achievement gained an award.
- A total of 1151 young people across Argyll and Bute gained a Wider Achievement Award in 2021-22.
- The types of Wider Achievement awards gained and their levels are illustrated below.

Number of Wider Achievement Awards at SCQF 5



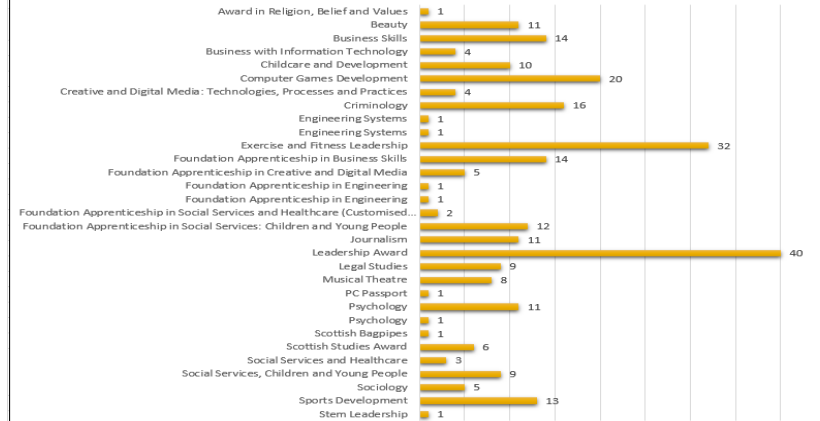
Number of Wider Achievement Awards at SCQF 4



Number of Wider Achievement Awards at SCQF 7



Numer of Wider Achievement Awards at SCQF 6



Positive Destinations

Leavers' Positive Destinations	Argyll & Bute	Virtual Comparator	Northern Alliance	National
2021-22	96.42	96.15	95.41	95.74
2020-21	95.01	96.03	95.32	95.48
2019-20	92.45	94.39	92.99	93.36

In 2022, for the first time, we were ahead of all comparators for Leavers' Positive Destinations. This was a significant achievement and one which we hope to sustain or build on this session.

What are we going to do now?

- Increased focus on acquisition of skills and access to personalised learning pathways to support learners to develop all four capacities and become global citizens.
- We will continue our support for schools in their collation and analysis of, and response to, rich and relevant sources of data, to allow the identification of attainment issues for groups and individuals, and the implementation of positive interventions to increase attainment. This will be achieved through consultation around and implementation of attainment of poverty-related stretch aims, the provision of further high-quality professional learning opportunities in the analysis and response to attainment data and support for schools in the effective use of Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) funding including Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).
- Refine approaches to tracking of young people's pathways within school and in the period after leaving school to ensure appropriate support, guidance and opportunities are in place to gain and sustain positive destinations.
- Support and challenge schools and settings to design a curriculum which is meaningful, relevant and meets the needs of all learners.
- Extend Commonality of Timetable by increasing the digitally delivered subject offer between schools.
- Broaden and improve work-based vocational learning opportunities for young people, improving vocational educational provision in schools and developing strong partnerships with employers and agencies who can contribute to the development of young people's skills and prospects.
- Continue to support schools to further develop approaches to tracking wider achievement and ensure all young people have high quality opportunities for achievement that are recognised and celebrated in school.
- Further develop range and reach of digital CLPL opportunities for staff.
- Launch Argyll and Bute Digital Planning Framework.
- Primary STEM Development Officer (PSDO) will deliver targeted and universal support across the authority in order to develop STEM skills in our children and young people.
- We have secured funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and will use this to ensure that each young person in a secondary school has access to a wider achievement opportunity/award in each year of their secondary school career.
- Introduce the Motivation, Commitment and Resilience (MCR) Pathways Programme in three pilot secondary schools in 2023/24. Intervention will take the form of weekly meetings with an adult mentor, and taster sessions in the workplace and further/higher education, as well as group sessions and enhanced transition experiences for younger pupils. This programme will help to improve outcomes and life chances for targeted young people and support them to reach a positive sustained destination.
- Provide opportunities for S6 students to attend the Foundation Academy in partnership with the University of the West of Scotland. This offers a range of courses at SCQF 7 in order to help young people prepare for university and embark on learning to prepare for a degree programme.

SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2022-23

NIF Priority 5: Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

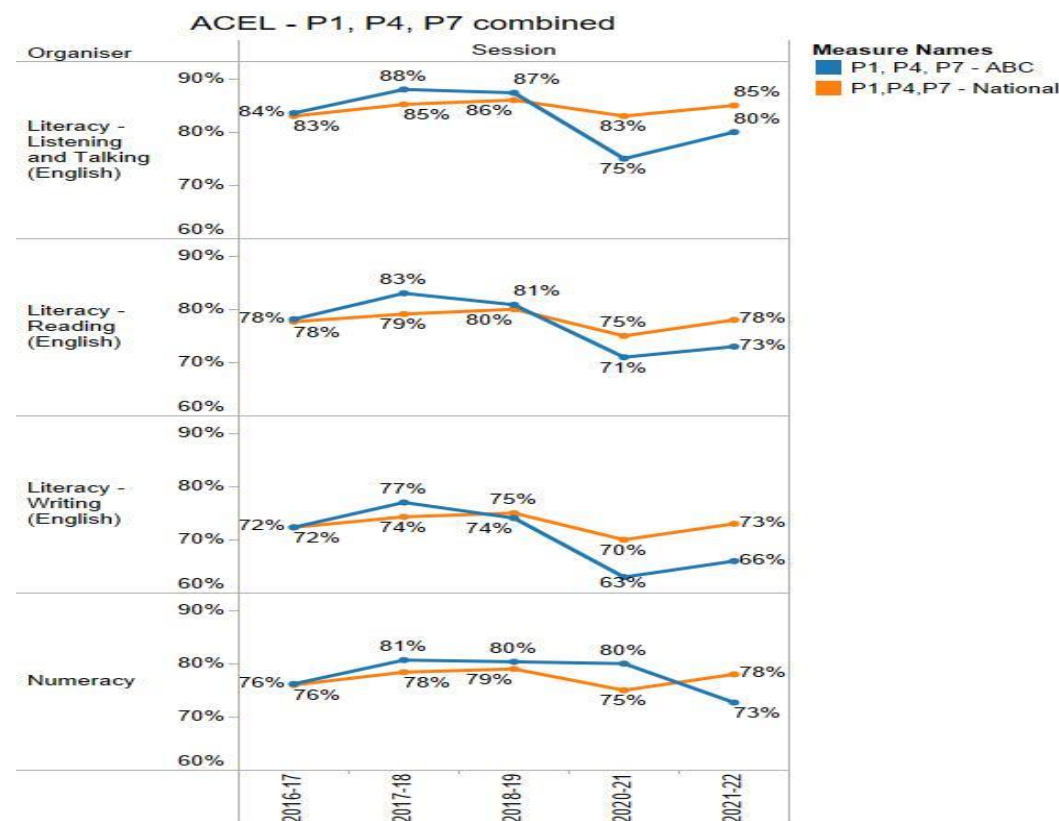
Education Service Strategic Priority 5.1: We will provide targeted support to schools to improve learning and teaching in order to improve outcomes for children and young people and develop systematic evaluation and sharing of high-quality materials and resources to support continuing professional development to support practitioners in addressing barriers and raising attainment in Literacy and Numeracy for our children and young people. This will be achieved through establishments and the Central Team working in partnership to engage in strategic planning, implementation and evaluation which promotes a culture of continuous school improvement, the continued support in schools use of the BGE moderation platform as well as moderation through the senior phase and through the development of an Argyll and Bute Teaching and Learning policy.

Education Service Strategic Priority 5.2: We will track and monitor children and young people's Literacy and Numeracy attainment, support the data analysis skills of practitioners and increase the use of data to improve outcomes for children and young people. This will be achieved through a programme of universal and targeted professional learning based on the needs of establishments.

Progress and Impact

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels

Chart and tables below indicate attainment of Curriculum for Excellence levels at June 2022 for children and young people in P1,4,7. This data was submitted to Scottish Government in September 2022 and published in December 2022. Whilst attainment for each of the literacy organisers increased overall, we were still sitting under the national average. Targeted work has taken place this year in order to further develop capacity at school level in the analysis and use of data for improvement. The lead teacher for Literacy and Numeracy has also undertaken a variety of universal and targeted work as detailed under NIF priority 5. Attainment in numeracy has dipped and was sitting below the national average. Education Managers and members of the central team have been working with in order to establish areas of concern and next steps. We are confident that the actions and follow up work that has taken place this session, has had a positive impact on attainment in both literacy and numeracy for session 2022/23.



Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils achieving expected CfE Levels						
Argyll & Bute P1/4/7 Combined	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Literacy	69	74	72	[x]	59	62
Numeracy	76	80	80	[x]	69	73

- 3% improvement on P1/4/7 **Literacy** between 2021 and 2022.
- 4% improvement in P1/4/7 **Numeracy** between 2021 and 2022.

Nationally, the percentage of primary pupils achieving the expected CfE levels in 2021/22 was higher than in 2020/21, with increases generally in the range of two to four percentage points

Nationally, the percentage of primary school pupils achieving the expected CfE levels in 2021/22 was lower than in 2018/19 typically by between less than one percentage point and three percentage points.

Nationally, 71% of P1/4/7 pupils achieved their expected CfE levels in Literacy and in 78% in Numeracy.

S3 Achievement of Literacy and Numeracy Levels

Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better						
Argyll & Bute S3 3rd level or better	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Literacy	88	90	84	[x]	[x]	84
Numeracy	95	95	94	[x]	[x]	89

For S3 pupils, comparisons cannot be made to 2020/21 as the data was not collected.

Compared to 2018/19:

- S3 Literacy (Third level or better) has remained the same when **compared to 2019 ACEL**.
- S3 Numeracy (Third level or better) has declined by 5% when **compared to 2019 ACEL**.

Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Fourth Level						
Argyll & Bute S3 Fourth Level	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Literacy	33	48	48	[x]	[x]	46
Numeracy	72	54	62	[x]	[x]	58

Compared to 2018/19:

- S3 Literacy (Fourth level) has dipped by 2% when **compared to 2019 ACEL**.
- S3 Numeracy (Fourth level) has reduced by 4% when **compared to 2019 ACEL**.

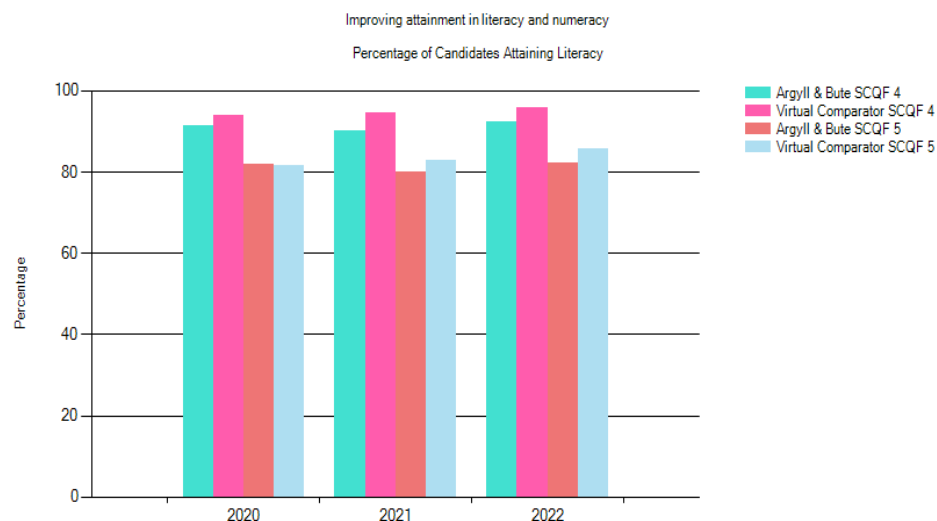
Nationally, compared to 2018/19, the percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in 2021/22 was lower by between one and two percentage points across all organisers.

Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy at Levels 4, 5 and 6

SCQF levels 4 and 5 Literacy and Numeracy are achieved via the passing of National 4 or 5 English or Maths, or through the completion of separate Literacy and Numeracy units at levels 4 and 5 which do not require an examination.

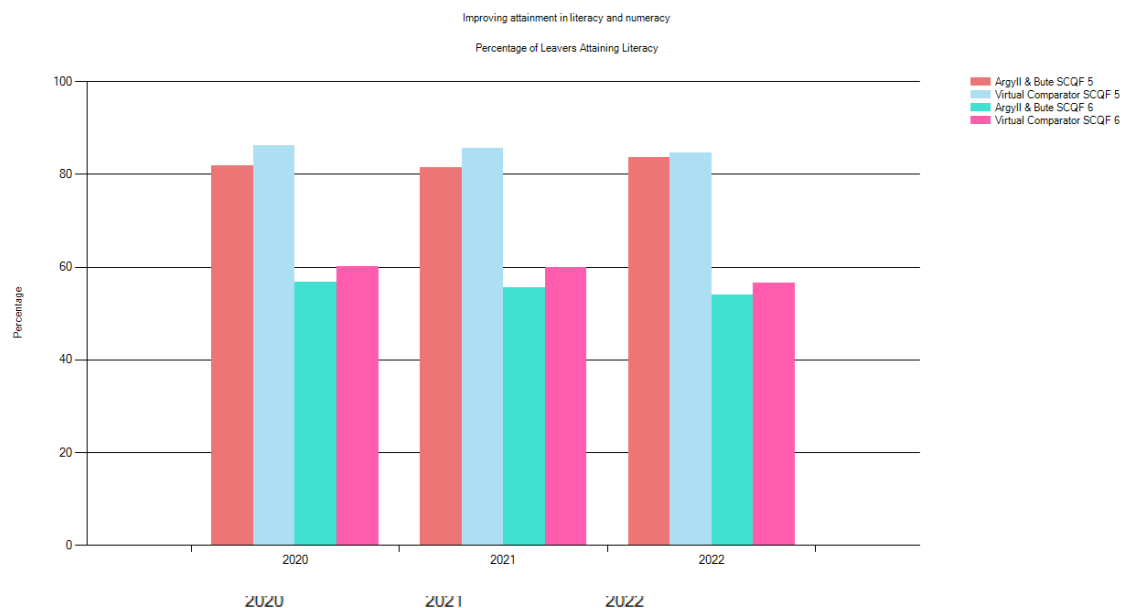
Literacy (cumulative attainment by the end of S6, based on original S4 roll)

Although attainment in Literacy at both SCQF levels 4 and 5 increased slightly in 2022, they are below Virtual Comparator levels. As part of Attainment Meetings with individual secondary Head Teachers, key steps are being discussed to improve literacy attainment in all secondary schools. Considerations relate to four key principles of raising attainment: a culture of high expectations underpinning aspirational presentation policies within schools; rigorous tracking and monitoring of pupils attainment in literacy at frequent, regular intervals; frameworks of supportive intervention for pupils achieving below their potential in literacy; and high-quality, learner-centred learning and assessment experiences in literacy across the curriculum continuing into the Senior Phase. Of school leavers in 2022, 94.8% achieved Level 4 in Literacy, continuing the upward trend since 2020. The gap with the VC has reduced from 4.2% in 2020 to 0.6% in 2022. 83.7% of leavers achieved Literacy at Level 5, again continuing an increasing trend in attainment. The 1.0% gap to the VC has reduced from 4.3% in 2020.



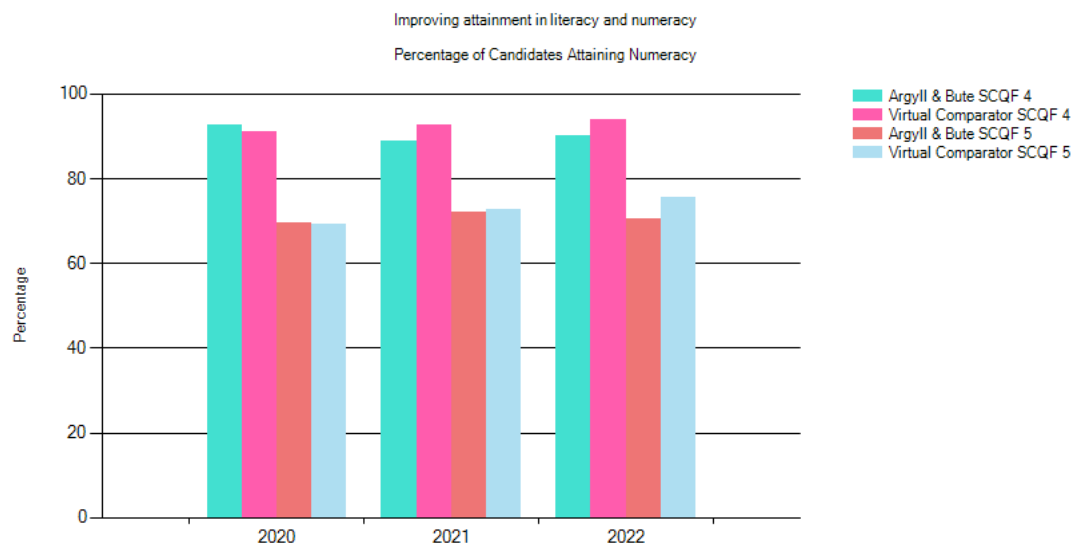
Literacy SCQF Levels 5 and 6 – school leavers

53.9% of school leavers achieved Level 6 Literacy in 2022. The VC figure was 56.6%. The 2.7% gap to the VC figure represents a 1.7% reduction of the difference from 2021.



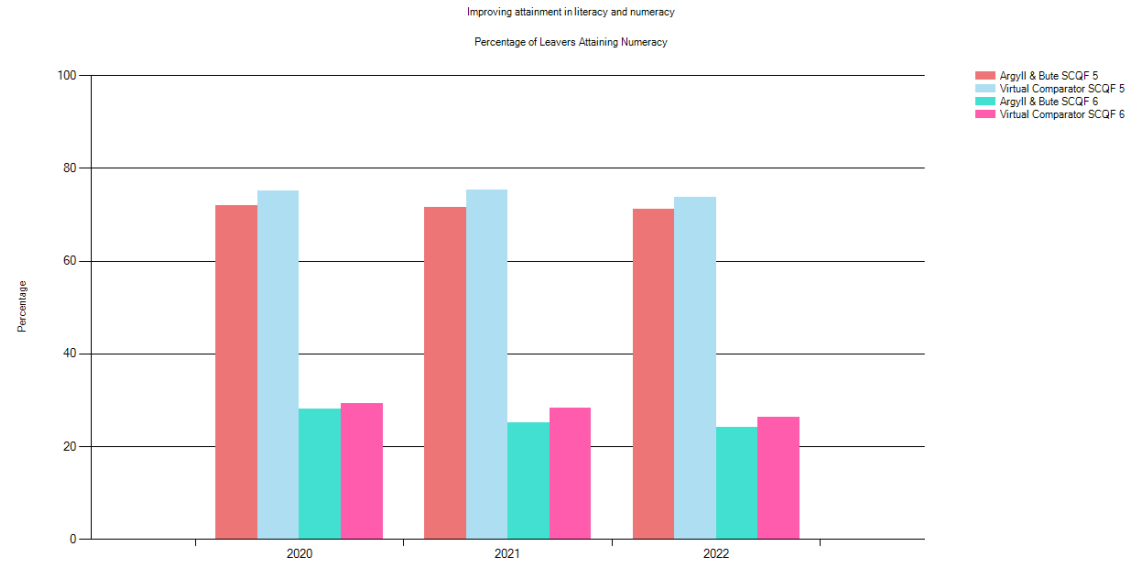
Numeracy (cumulative attainment by the end of S6, based on original S4 roll)

Attainment in Numeracy at both SCQF levels 4 and 5 has remained consistent over the last three years, although it is below the attainment of Virtual Comparator. As with Literacy above, as part of Attainment Meetings with individual secondary Head Teachers, key steps are being discussed to improve numeracy attainment in all secondary schools. Considerations relate to four key principles of raising attainment: a culture of high expectations underpinning aspirational presentation policies within schools; rigorous tracking and monitoring of pupils attainment in numeracy at frequent, regular intervals; frameworks of supportive intervention for pupils achieving below their potential in numeracy; and high-quality, learner-centred numeracy learning and assessment experiences across the curriculum continuing into the Senior Phase.



Numeracy SCQF Levels 5 and 6 – school leavers

24.2% of school leavers in 2022 achieved Level 6 in Numeracy, in comparison to the VC figure of 26.3%. The gap to the VC has reduced by 1.3% since 2021.



Attainment of Care-Experienced Young People

Care-Experienced young people are supported to achieve to their maximum potential in Literacy and Numeracy, which often involves the overcoming of significant barriers. Targeted one-to-one support for CEYP is provided both within schools and, when necessary, in the settings outwith schools which best suits the young people's needs. The attainment of CEYP is closely tracked to identify those most in danger of not attaining in literacy and numeracy, and personalised interventions follow to support the achievement of awards. As a result, the attainment in Literacy and Numeracy of CEYP is maximised in terms of what they are capable of at this time in their lives.

The February Insight update supplied data relating to CEYP who left school in 2022:

Literacy

70% of CEYP school leavers achieved Level 4 Literacy.

50% of CEYP school leavers achieved Level 5 Literacy.

20% of CEYP school leavers achieved level 6 Literacy.

Numeracy

70% of CEYP school leavers attained Level 4 Numeracy.

20% of CEYP school leavers attained level 5 Numeracy

In terms of their attainment across all subjects, Care Experienced young people in Argyll and Bute who left school in 2022 showed relatively strong attainment. The highest achieving 20% of CEYP school leavers attained more highly than CEYP across the Northern Alliance authorities and the rest of Scotland. The same pattern was evident for the middle and lowest attaining groups among CEYP.

As presented to the Committee in August 2022, the SQA attainment results for pupils in academic year 2021-2022 are outlined in the following table:

	2022		2022	2022
	A&B Attainment A-C%	Difference from A&B 2019 %	National A-C %	Difference A&B to National A-C%
Nat 4	100%	0%	86.1%	+13.9%
Nat 5	78.62%	-0.81%	80.8%	-2.18%
Higher	79.51%	+6.32%	78.9%	+0.61%
Adv H	83.72%	+8.04%	81.3%	+2.42%

- National 4 results are above the national attainment average by 13.9%.
- National 5 results are below the national attainment average by 2.18%.
- Higher results are above the national attainment average by 0.61%.
- Advanced Higher results are above the national attainment average by 2.42%.
- At National 5 level in Argyll and Bute, attainment at both grades A-C and grades A-D fell in line with the national trend, a consequence of the return to examinations for each subject. As detailed above, Argyll and Bute performance for both A-C and A-D is slightly below the national average.
- As with National 5, at Higher level in Argyll and Bute, attainment at both grades A-C and grades A-D fell in line with the national trend, again a consequence of the return to examinations for each subject. Argyll and Bute performance for both A-C and A-D remains above the national average.
- As with National 5 and Higher levels, in Argyll and Bute, Advanced Higher attainment at both grades A-C and grades A-D fell in line with the national trend, once again a consequence of the return to examinations for each subject. Argyll and Bute performance for both A-C and A-D remains above the national average.

Literacy support for schools

- 4 schools are undertaking training provided by Talk for Writing to support the development of sound pedagogical approaches to writing across their settings. The schools have set clear stretch aims for each class, against which attainment will be evaluated as implementation of the approach continues.
- Bespoke support has been offered to schools, covering aspects of literacy such as approaches to reading comprehension, writing pedagogy, emerging literacy and 1 to 1 reading interventions. This has resulted in increased teacher skill and confidence and has impacted directly on learners through the provision of differentiated and engaging experiences. Schools have been targeted based on their literacy attainment, with a specific focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- 21 schools have signed up to obtain Reading Accreditation from the Scottish Book Trust. 13 schools have now submitted plans centred on how they will improve 'reading for pleasure'. Taynuilt Primary School has become the first school in Argyll and Bute to gain this award.

Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC): Improving Writing Programme

8 schools have undertaken training in using a Quality Improvement approach to support writing attainment at 1st level. Schools were invited to participate following analysis of their literacy attainment data with a specific focus on children residing in quintile 1. The training was originally offered by CYPIC and is now being delivered within the authority, supported by allied health professionals and our Attainment Advisor. Data shows that attainment at 1st level within the first set of schools to undertake the training has increased from an average of 56.2% in 2022 to an average of 72.8% based on Feb 23 predictions. Delivery of the programme to schools in cohort 2 has now commenced, with cohort 3 due to commence in September 2023.

Early Years Support

The initial phase of a project delivered through the deployment of our excellence and equity leads with a focus upon listening skills shows has been successful in improving the listening and talking skills of the targeted cohort and also improved practitioner capacity to share a story and explicitly focus upon teaching listening through play. Family Bookbug and stay and play sessions were attended well in most areas and a more rigorous approach to measuring impact will be applied next session to measure parental involvement with their child's learning and development.

Numeracy Support for Schools

- Schools within HALCO and Mull clusters have worked with Dr Lio Moscardini to develop cognitively guided instruction, an approach to problem solving within schools. As of March 2023, 73.3% of staff were confident that CGI was having or would have a positive effect on pupils, 13.3% were extremely confident. Evidence from Head Teachers and practitioners shows that this approach has had a particular impact on lower ability pupils: by giving pupils different opportunities to approach their work, practitioners report that it has levelled the playing field in classrooms.
- Authority-wide, numeracy based CLPL has been delivered to a total of 78 practitioners representing all cluster areas, focusing primarily on the development of SEAL (stages of early arithmetical learning) to support foundation skills in mathematical thinking. Support has also been offered to ASN departments in 2 secondary schools. Numeracy ACEL attainment data has risen from 69% across P1,4 & 7 in 2021 to a projected 70.95% as of Feb 23.
- Based on numeracy attainment of pupils in Primary 4 residing in quintile 1, 12 schools were targeted to undertake a 'small test of change' using training and materials from 'Count on Us' focusing on improving mental agility. Data demonstrated that almost all pupils who took part in the project improved their scores as evidenced through Pre and Post intervention assessment. The schools involved now plan to use the materials at other stages across their setting.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning, teaching and assessment has been a key focus during the 3 formal school reviews carried out this year. Outwith our school review programme, members of the extended central team have undertaken learning and teaching observations across a third of the schools in each locality. The key themes and findings were fed back to Head Teachers, Education Managers and Officers. This evidence has then helped to inform follow up targeted support and CLPL.



What are we going to do now?

- Further development of activities and support to ensure effective moderation of standards in literacy and numeracy to ensure consistency across establishments. All primary schools will undertake literacy moderation training and activities (provided by Authority) in the November inset. We will continue to engage with moderation opportunities through the Northern Alliance.
- Continue to build capability and capacity of senior leaders and teachers in schools in the use of tracking and monitoring tools including Insight, NSA data and the BGE Benchmarking Tool and the ability to interpret data and identify areas of need for individuals and groups of learners.
- Review, update and implement Numeracy and Mathematics and Literacy Strategies and associated guidance.
- Education Support Officer (ESO) for Literacy will provide universal and targeted support for schools with a specific focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap in literacy. A range of data will be utilised and analysed in order to identify distinct areas of focus.
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment framework will be launched, this will inform the refreshed Guided Approaches to Pedagogical Enquiry (GAPE) programme. Schools and settings will be supported to develop staff knowledge and skill in utilising a range of pedagogical approaches to ensure consistently high quality literacy and numeracy experiences for all learners.
- Schools and settings will be support to develop meaningful approaches to outdoor learning with a focus on literacy and numeracy.
- Numeracy lead will deliver targeted and universal support for planning, delivery and assessment of aspects of numeracy and mathematics.
- Support quality, coherence and progression across early level learning and teaching.
- Upscale the Early Years delivery model trialled this session to ensure all Excellence and Equity leads support training attainment in literacy and numeracy for our lowest band SIMD children, whilst building capacity of practitioners to support and continue this work in setting.
- Further develop staff skill, knowledge and confidence across all establishments in using assistive technologies to remove barriers to learning
- All primary schools will submit literacy and numeracy data 3 times per year for all pupils across all stages from P1-P7
- Support schools and services to provide opportunities for parents and carers to develop their own knowledge and skills in aspects of literacy and numeracy concepts and current pedagogical approaches so that they are able to support their children confidently.

SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2022-23

NIF Priority 5: Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

Education Service Strategic Priority 5.3: We will respond to the report from Ken Muir - Putting Learners at the Centre - and the subsequent Scottish Government response to take account of and embrace educational reform in relation to approaches to inspection, curriculum development and qualifications. This will be achieved by working collaboratively with colleagues at national, Northern Alliance and local level to ensure our establishments are supported to take account of and adapt to resulting change.

Education Service Strategic Priority 5.4: We will further enhance leadership opportunities for staff across the Authority in line with the recommendations from the Scottish Government's Additional Support for Learning Review 2020.

Progress and Impact

National Reform

The national reform agenda has been a focus during all Head Teacher meetings and conferences this year. Key messages from each publication have been distilled and shared with schools in order to ensure that all staff have a firm understanding of the proposed changes to a number of aspects of Scottish education and have an opportunity to be consulted, discuss and reflect on what the forthcoming changes mean for them and their learners. All schools are planning to spend time with staff teams before October 2023 in order to explore key themes and messages in more depth. A number of Head Teachers and Central Team staff are currently participating in national working groups linked to aspects of educational reform. This is ensuring that the voice of learners and practitioners in Argyll and Bute is heard and that we are fully aware of developments and discussions taking place at national level.

Curriculum Design

Education Scotland Curriculum Innovation Team delivered an input at our April Head Teachers' Conference focussing on curriculum rationale. From evaluation data, it was evident that almost all Head Teachers' believed that the session was relevant and useful and that this would impact positively on practice within their own settings. This has led to school requests for further support and planning is underway with the ES team and other organisations in order to build capacity of senior leaders and practitioners to be 'curriculum makers' within their own settings. There will be ongoing targeted and universal CLPL and support offered during session 23/24. 5 schools will take part in the Education Pilot Professional Learning Programme on Curriculum in session 2023/24. This will increase capacity and further develop the knowledge and skills of senior leaders. A working group has been convened to begin work on curriculum guidance for all sectors. This work will gather pace during session 2023/24.

Additional Support Needs and Inclusion

8 Lead ASN Assistants (Literacy Enhancement) currently working in 11 schools with targeted children/young people, developed effective support mechanisms using assistive technology for children/young people and staff to remove literacy barriers.

Through an audit of assistive technology use in 8 schools in May 2022 and follow-up completed in December 2023 it was evident that approximately 80% more assistive technology is now being used to support learning.

By April 2023, Support Staff and teachers in 11 education establishments have now been trained in the use of assistive technology. Training has also been given to Lead ASNs (Care Experienced) in Campbeltown and Helensburgh. This has removed barriers to participation and learning for specific learners who are benefitting from these technologies.

What are we going to do now?

- Provide universal and targeted professional learning opportunities based on the needs of establishments. This will be achieved by working collaboratively with colleagues at national, Northern Alliance and local level to ensure our establishments are supported to take account of and adapt to resulting change.
- Continue to provide opportunities for school staff, children and young people, parents and carers to meaningfully engage in dialogue and consultation relating to the national reform agenda.
- Further develop staff skill, knowledge and confidence across all establishments in using assistive technologies to remove barriers to learning. Training and support will be rolled out during session 2023/24.
- Build capacity at all levels of the system to enable learners and school staff to become 'curriculum makers' in order that they are confidently able to design and deliver curricula which are engaging, relevant to the context of the school and lead to improved outcomes for all learners.



SECTION 4: Education Service Plan 2022-24: updated strategic overview 2023-2024

The plan lists the expected outcomes and impact under the National Improvement Framework priorities and demonstrates links to the Argyll and Bute Corporate Plan 2023-2027 and the Education Service Vision and Strategy, 'Our Children, Their Future', which will be refreshed during session 2023-24. It builds on progress made during session 2022-23 and contains an updated list of high level areas for improvement and outlines the actions we will take during session 2023-24 to achieve the expected impact and outcomes. The purpose of the strategic plan is to support and guide individual settings, schools and services in planning for improvement, not to prescribe what those improvements should be or how they should be taken forward. Full details of improvement activity and expected impact for each team within the Education Service will be contained within each internal team plan.

NIF PRIORITY 1: Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

Education Service Strategic Priority 1.1: We will protect and promote Children's Rights through the promotion of inclusion and celebration of diversity for all of our learners.

NIF Driver	A&B Education Service Vision and Strategy	Corporate Plan 2023-27 Priorities	Expected Outcome/Impact	Improvement Activity
<p>Teacher and practitioner professionalism</p> <p>Parent/carer involvement and engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed Raise educational attainment and achievement for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working to improve and secure equity of specialist provision across Argyll and Bute by addressing gaps where they exist across the education estate. Maintaining the current staffing complement who support this work, in line with our nurture stretch aim agreed with Scottish Government. Continuing to promote the teaching and use of Gaelic as set out in the council's emerging Gaelic Plan for 2023. Developing a broader curriculum offer to augment current opportunities with a range of wider achievement awards and accreditations. This will have a positive impact on leaver destinations through inclusive, skills-based programmes in each secondary school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A positive culture in all services, settings and schools with UNCRC front and centre. A workforce who are committed to the rights of children and young people. An inclusive culture where diversity is celebrated. A curriculum which is rights - focussed and which highlights diversity and social justice. Increased number of schools and settings achieving Rights Respecting status. Increased number of schools and settings receiving national recognition for work on diversity including LGBTQ+ Enhanced partnership working that is centred around the rights of the child Consistently high quality experiences for all children and young people in Gaelic medium provision. Children and young people who are empowered and feel that their voices and opinions are listened to and acted upon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide high quality professional learning opportunities for school leaders and practitioners to encourage policy development and partnership working. Continue to support schools on their journey to becoming a 'Rights Respecting School' Further develop partnership working with a range of services including third sector organisations in order to ensure that the Children's Rights agenda underpins the work of our schools and services. Support schools to ensure that their curriculum celebrates and promotes diversity, is de-colonised and inclusive. Further develop approaches to promoting and celebrating diversity through partnership working and supporting schools to obtain national recognition for their work in this area. Further develop approaches to celebrate and promote diversity through languages and culture with a specific focus on Gaelic. Provide further support for schools in order to adopt Gaelic as their L2/L3. Ensure greater quality and consistency in children's experiences, attainment and achievement within Gaelic Medium Education across Argyll and Bute

NIF Priority 2: Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing.
Education Service Strategic Priority 2.1: We will support improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing through the use of targeted approaches and understanding of learning and learners to enhance experiences in different contexts, which will support attainment and achievement across the four capacities.

NIF Driver	A&B Education Service Vision and Strategy	Corporate Plan 2023-27 Priorities	Expected Outcome/Impact	Improvement Activity
<p>Teacher and practitioner professionalism</p> <p>Parent/carer involvement and engagement</p> <p>Curriculum and assessment</p> <p>School and ELC improvement</p> <p>Performance information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed. Ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement. Raise educational attainment and achievement for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the number of children and young people who have to travel outwith the area to access services by enhancing provision where gaps currently exist. Working to improve and secure equity of specialist provision across Argyll and Bute by addressing gaps where they exist across the education estate. Maintaining the current staffing complement who support this work, in line with our nurture stretch aim agreed with Scottish Government. We will improve outcomes for our children and young people by: Improving educational attainment, achievement and outcomes for young people within Argyll and Bute to Scotland’s upper-quartile. Develop the next generation of capital investment plan and priorities for our school estate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An inclusive culture with health and wellbeing at the core. A curriculum which empowers and enables all children and young people to be successful, confident, responsible and effective in school, their work, their community and in the wider world. An increase in the percentage of schools evaluated as ‘good’ or better for Q.I 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion. Learners’ experiences support them to develop their personalities, talents, mental, spiritual and physical abilities to their potential. An increase in opportunities for young people to develop knowledge, understanding and the skills for life and active participation in a global multicultural society and Scotland’s place in it. Partnership arrangements which ensure that all pupils experience a smooth transition from nursery to primary, primary to secondary and from secondary school to a positive and sustained destination. Practices and experiences which ensure that the needs of children and young people are identified and addressed. Maintain and where possible improve upon the already low exclusions and improve attendance rates in our schools, especially 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support and challenge establishments to review and reflect on embedding nurturing approaches and embed trauma informed practices. Identify professional learning and work with partner agencies, to provide a wider range of experiences and opportunities for children and young people to achieve success. Continue to seek investment to improve learning environments and expand provision as required. Increase engagement across the authority in the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP Programme). Support an increased number of establishments to pursue recognition through the Youth Scotland LGBTQ+ Award or similar. Launch Revised Addressing Non-Attendance (ANA) policy document/circular and training package for all establishments. Continue to work on the implementation of the national Additional Support for Learning implementation plan. Support schools to ensure effective transitions for all learners with additional support needs. In partnership with other corporate parents, continue to take forward the actions outlined in ‘The Promise’ and GIRFEC refresh. Continue to roll out multi-agency training as part of the implementation of the national revised Child Protection Guidance (2021).

			<p>for care-experienced children and young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and where possible reduce the number of children and young people reporting they experience bullying and/or racist behaviour • A positive culture in health and wellbeing in every school and service • Resources which lead to improvements for learners and service users. • Trauma informed practices are embedded in order to ensure that the needs of all of our children and young people are supported effectively and appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use ACEL data to track our care experienced pupils against the national picture. • Build on links with Live Argyll Active Schools to explore accessibility for pupils with Visual impairment and other additional support needs. • Support schools and settings to embed Learning for Sustainability as a key theme within their curriculum. • Support schools and the Instrumental Music Service to develop more flexible approaches to delivery of instrumental music tuition.
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NIF Priority 3: Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
Education Service Strategic Priority 3.1: We will address disadvantage and deprivation to close the attainment gap by analysing data to inform a strategic overview of attainment for disadvantaged groups across the Local Authority and allow effective, targeted interventions.
Education Service Strategic Priority 3.2 - We will use a data and research informed approach to provide targeted support to establishments across the Authority.

NIF Driver	A&B Education Service Vision and Strategy	Corporate Plan 2023-27 Priorities	Expected Outcome/Impact	Improvement Activity
<p>Curriculum and assessment</p> <p>School and ELC improvement</p> <p>Performance information</p> <p>School and ELC leadership</p> <p>Teacher and practitioner professionalism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed. Raise educational attainment and achievement for all. Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people. Strengthen leadership at all levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will improve outcomes for our children and young people by: Improving educational attainment, achievement and outcomes for young people within Argyll and Bute to Scotland's upper-quartile. Continuing to promote the teaching and use of Gaelic as set out in the council's emerging Gaelic Plan for 2023. Educational Attainment and Wider Achievement – Developing the use of all the available data and intelligence on each of our educational establishments to focus on and drive improvement, achieving our stretch aims (goals to improve opportunities and outcomes for young people) as agreed with the Scottish Government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved attainment in the senior phase. Improved literacy and numeracy attainment throughout the broad general education (BGE). An improvement in the attainment of disadvantaged children and young people. An increase in the percentage of schools evaluated as 'good' or better for Q.I 3.1 raising attainment and achievement. An increase in activities which support prevention and early intervention, improve outcomes and reduce inequalities. An improvement in the percentage of children reaching all of the expected developmental milestones on entry to primary school. Increased capacity of senior leaders and teaching staff to analyse data and use a range of data to inform improvement at school/classroom level. Primary school Progress and Achievement data submitted 3 times per year for all pupils across all stages from P1-P7. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rigorous tracking of progress against stretch aims and targeted use of Pupil Equity Funding and Scottish Attainment Challenge funding. Publish our Strategic Equity Funding Plan 2023-26 Increased targeted support for schools identified as having low attainment and/or a significant gap between pupils residing in quintile 1 and quintile 5. Collaborative working to develop and disseminate a range of effective approaches, which have a positive impact on closing the attainment gap. Further development of activities and support to ensure effective moderation of standards to ensure consistency across establishments. Support and challenge schools to raise attainment through analysis of data, improved professional judgements, the target-setting process and improved learning and teaching, particularly for key equity groups. Continue to build capacity of senior leaders and teachers in schools in the use of tracking and monitoring tools including Insight, NSA and the BGE Benchmarking Tool and the ability to interpret data and identify areas of need for individuals and groups Support and challenge schools to improve outcomes for identified groups through effective use of resources (inc SAC) with a focus on equity.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support quality, coherence and progression across early level learning and teaching.• Upscale the Early Years delivery model trialled this session to ensure all systematic tracking of attainment in literacy and numeracy for our lowest band SIMD children, whilst building capacity of practitioners.• Further develop staff skill, knowledge and confidence across all establishments in using assistive technologies to remove barriers to learning.
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NIF Priority 4: Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

Education Service Strategic Priority 4.1: Through partnership working we will promote the development of skills, knowledge and understanding of learners to widen learning opportunities and career pathways for learners.

Education Service Strategic Priority 4.2: We will further enhance our partnership with Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) to ensure all young people have the opportunity and successfully develop the skills for life and work required to attain sustained, positive destinations post-school.

NIF Driver	A&B Education Service Vision and Strategy	Corporate Plan 2023-27 Priorities	Expected Outcome/Impact	Improvement Activity
<p>School and ELC leadership</p> <p>School and ELC improvement</p> <p>Performance information</p> <p>Curriculum and assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life. Ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement. Raise educational attainment and achievement for all. Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a broader curriculum offer to augment current opportunities with a range of wider achievement awards and accreditations. This will have a positive impact on leaver destinations through inclusive, skills-based programmes in each secondary school. We will improve outcomes for our children and young people by: Improving educational attainment, achievement and outcomes for young people within Argyll and Bute to Scotland's upper-quartile. Educational Attainment and Wider Achievement – Developing the use of all the available data and intelligence on each of our educational establishments to focus on and drive improvement, achieving our stretch aims (goals to improve opportunities and outcomes for young people) as agreed with the Scottish Government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A further improvement in school leaver destinations. Increased number of partnerships with local businesses and community organisations. An ethos of high expectations and achievement in every school and service. A skilled and confident workforce. An increase in the number of pupils, school leavers and adults with well-developed employability skills. Increased opportunities for children and young people to celebrate personal achievements. An increase in the confidence and ability of children and young people to discuss skills and career pathways Increased vocational opportunities and pathways for learners within our secondary schools. Increased capacity of staff and children/young people to employ digital approaches which are current and enhance learning and to deliver high quality STEM experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased focus on acquisition of skills and access to personalised learning pathways to support learners to develop all four capacities and become global citizens. Refine approaches tracking of young people's pathways within school and in the period after leaving school to ensure appropriate support, guidance and opportunities are in place to gain and sustain positive destinations. Broaden and improve work-based vocational learning opportunities for young people, improving vocational educational provision in schools and developing strong partnerships with employers and agencies. Support and challenge schools to design a curriculum which is relevant, engaging and meets the needs of all learners. Continue to support schools to further develop approaches to tracking wider achievement. Further develop range and reach of digital CLPL opportunities for staff/launch Argyll and Bute Digital Planning Framework. Deliver targeted and universal support on aspects of STEM curriculum. Further develop our vision for DYW, including an increase in the different curriculum pathways and opportunities available.

NIF Priority 5: Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

Education Service Strategic Priority 5.1: We will provide targeted support to schools to improve learning and teaching in order to improve outcomes for children and young people and develop systematic evaluation and sharing of high-quality materials and resources to support continuing professional development to support practitioners in addressing barriers and raising attainment in Literacy and Numeracy for our children and young people.

Education Service Strategic Priority 5.2: We will track and monitor children and young people’s Literacy and Numeracy attainment, build capacity of senior leaders and practitioners in order to further develop their skills in data analysis to inform improvement. We will increase the use and range of data to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

Education Service Strategic Priority 5.3: We will respond to and embrace educational reform in relation to approaches to inspection, curriculum development and qualifications.

NIF Driver	A&B Education Service Vision and Strategy	Corporate Plan 2023-27 Priorities	Expected Outcome/Impact	Improvement Activity
<p>School and ELC leadership</p> <p>Teacher and practitioner professionalism</p> <p>Parent/carer involvement and engagement</p> <p>Curriculum and assessment</p> <p>School and ELC improvement</p> <p>Performance information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise educational attainment and achievement for all. Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people. Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed. Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life. Ensure high quality partnership working and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will improve outcomes for our children and young people by: Improving educational attainment, achievement and outcomes for young people within Argyll and Bute to Scotland’s upper-quartile. Educational Attainment and Wider Achievement – Developing the use of all the available data and intelligence on each of our educational establishments to focus on and drive improvement, achieving our stretch aims (goals to improve opportunities and outcomes for young people) as agreed with the Scottish Government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved attainment in the senior phase particularly in literacy and numeracy. Improvement in the percentage of school leavers achieving level 5 and level 6 literacy and numeracy. Improved literacy and numeracy attainment throughout the broad general education (BGE). Increased capacity of senior leaders and teaching staff to analyse data and use a range of data to inform improvement at school/classroom level. Learners develop core literacy and numeracy skills and are able to apply these in other areas of the curriculum. An increase in the number of schools being graded as ‘good’ or better for Q.I 2.3 Learning Teaching and Assessment Staff are skilled in the planning, delivery and assessment of high quality learning experiences in literacy and numeracy which are differentiated and ensure equity. All children and young people are provided with engaging literacy and numeracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishments and the Central Team work to engage in strategic planning, implementation and evaluation which promotes a culture of continuous school improvement. Further development of activities and support to ensure effective moderation of standards in literacy and numeracy to ensure consistency across establishments. Review, update and implement Numeracy and Mathematics and Literacy Strategies and associated guidance. Education Support Officer (ESO) for Literacy will provide universal and targeted support for schools with a specific focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap in literacy. Schools and settings will be supported to develop staff knowledge and skill in utilising a range of pedagogical approaches to ensure consistently high quality literacy and numeracy experiences for all learners. Schools and settings will be supported to develop meaningful approaches to outdoor learning with a focus on literacy and numeracy. Deliver targeted and universal support for planning, delivery and assessment of aspects of numeracy and

	<p>community engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen leadership at all levels. 		<p>experiences which address the principles of curriculum design from CfE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A curriculum which ensures that literacy and numeracy skills are developed through other curricular areas. Staff are skilled in planning and delivering IDL opportunities which provide opportunities for children and young people to develop and apply literacy and numeracy skills in new and unfamiliar contexts. All children and young people are provided with meaningful outdoor learning opportunities in order to develop and apply literacy and numeracy skills. Parents and carers will feel confident and able to fully support their children with aspects of literacy and numeracy learning. 	<p>mathematics with focus on closing poverty related attainment gap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support quality, coherence and progression across early level learning and teaching. Further develop staff skill, knowledge and confidence across all establishments in using assistive technologies to remove barriers to learning. Support schools and services to provide opportunities for parents and carers to develop their own knowledge and skills in aspects of literacy and numeracy so that they are able to support their children confidently.
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APPENDIX 1: Provisional 3 Year Stretch aims 2023-2026

In partnership with our Attainment Advisor, we have devised provisional stretch aims as detailed below. These will be subject to change following consultation with Head Teachers and finalisation of our ACEL, attendance and leavers' data for session 2022-23. We will build on progress made this year by ensuring a relentless focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap whilst raising the bar for all. This will include universal and targeted support for schools based on their attainment data with the aim of building staff capacity at all levels.

Literacy (P 1/4/7 Combined) Stretch Aim				
	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Confirmed ACEL Data 2022 (DEC)	62.4%	53%	80%	27.4pp
Interim Stretch Aim 2023/24	71%	70%	81%	11pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025-26	76%	75%	85%	10pp

Numeracy (P 1/4/7 Combined) Stretch Aim				
	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Confirmed ACEL Data 2022 (DEC)	72.7%	68.1%	85.9%	17.8pp
Interim Stretch Aim 2023/24	78%	73%	89.5%	16.5pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025-26	83%	78%	91%	13pp

School Leavers with 1 or more pass at <u>ALL</u> SCQF Level 5				
	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Confirmed Data 2021-22 (Feb 2023)	90.93% (VC 91.32%)	83.61% (VC 86.23%)	98.04% (VC 98.43%)	14.43pp
Stretch Aims 2023/24	91.5%	85%	98.5%	13.5pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	0.57pp	1.39pp	0.46pp	0.93pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	93%	89%	100%	11pp

School Leavers with 1 or more pass at <u>ALL</u> SCQF Level 6				
	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Confirmed Data 2021-22 (Feb 2023)	65.99% (VC 69.37%)	54.10% (VC 59.05%)	82.35% (VC 92.75%)	28.25pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	67%	57%	84%	27pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	0.51pp	2.9pp	1.65pp	1.25pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	72%	64%	89%	25pp

Participation Measure - 16-19 year olds in Education, Training and Employment				
	Overall	Q1	Q5	Gap (Q1 –Q5)
Confirmed SDS Data 2021-22 (Aug 2022)	93.9%	89.1%	95.5%	6.4pp
Snapshot Data SDS May 2023	92.7%	87.1%	94.2%	7.1pp
Confirmed SDS Data 2022-23 (Aug 2023)	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	93.5%	89.5%	96%	6.5pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	0.8pp	2.4pp	1.8pp	0.6pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	95%	92.5%	97%	4.5pp

HWB – Attendance in Primary - Free School Meal registered and Non Free School Meal Registered				
	Overall	FSM registered	Non FSM registered	GAP (FSM/non FSM)
Confirmed Data May 2023	92.71%	88.86%	93.43%	4.57pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	93.5%	89.5%	93.5%	4pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	0.79pp	0.64pp	0.07pp	0.57pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	94.5%	92%	96%	4pp

HWB – Attendance in Secondary - Free School Meal registered and Non Free School Meal Registered				
	Overall	FSM registered	Non FSM registered	GAP (FSM/non FSM)
Confirmed Data May 2023	88.33%	81.24%	89.46%	8.23pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	90%	82%	89.5%	7.5pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	1.67pp	0.76pp	0.04pp	0.72pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	92%	87%	94%	7pp

APPENDIX 2: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

ASL	Additional Support for Learning	HMIE	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
ASN	Additional Support Needs	LAC	Looked After Children and Young People
Aifl	Assessment is for Learning	NIF	National Improvement Framework
BGE	Broad General Education	NPF	National Performance Framework
BWG	Education Service Budget Working	NSA	National Standardised Assessments
CEYP	Care Experienced Young People	OCTNE	Our Children, Their Nurturing Education
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence	PATHS	Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies
CLD	Community Learning and Development	PEF	Pupil Equity Funding
CLPL	Career Long Professional Learning	PSE	Personal and Social Education
COSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities	SAC	Scottish Attainment Challenge
DSM	Devolved School Management	SCQF	Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework
ELCC	Early Learning and Childcare Centre	SEF	Strategic Equity Funding
EPS	Educational Psychology Service	SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages	SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
FE	Further Education	SRA	Shared Risk Assessment
FTE	Full Time Equivalent	SSSC	Scottish Social Services Council
GIRFEC	Getting it Right for Every Child	SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
GTCS	General Teaching Council (for Scotland)	UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admission Service
HE	Higher Education	UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
HGIOS4	How Good is Our School 4?	VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
HGIOELC	How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare?	VSE	Validated Self Evaluation

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****EDUCATION****24 AUGUST 2023**

EDUCATION REFRESH STRATEGY

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the paper is to advise Elected Members of the proposed refresh of the Education Vision and Strategy – *Our Children, Their Future*. This document has been prepared by Education to allow the Service to effectively respond to the changing national and local policy contexts and, in doing so, ensure that the proposed refresh of the Education Vision and Strategy reflects the future delivery of an Education Service which supports our children, young people and communities to achieve the best possible outcomes and educate all of our learners. For strategy to support our learners, teachers and other stakeholders ‘for an uncertain and unpredictable future’ it is essential ‘to enable children and young people to build their own future with confidence, meaning and kindness’. The current strategy sets out:

- The policy context;
- The key ambitions for our children, young people and communities;
- The Education vision;
- An overview of the Education Services Strategy;
- Cross cutting themes;
- Our 6 Key objectives;
- How we will report on outcomes, and
- The proposed approach to monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Education Strategy.

This current document was prepared by Education, supported by an initial reference group and consultation with stakeholders.

1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- 2.1 Note the proposal to refresh the Education Vision and Strategy to align with the changing national and local policy contexts;
- 2.2 Note the proposed consultation and timescales to gather all stakeholder views, and
- 2.3 Agree that a further report is presented to the Committee following consultation.

EDUCATION REFRESH STRATEGY

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the paper is to advise Elected Members of the proposed refresh of the Education Vision and Strategy – *Our Children, Their Future*. This document has been prepared by Education to allow the Service to effectively respond to the changing national and local policy contexts and, in doing so, ensure that the proposed refresh of the Education Vision and Strategy reflects the future delivery of an Education Service which supports our children, young people and communities to achieve the best possible outcomes and educate all of our learners. For strategy to support our learners, teachers and other stakeholders ‘for an uncertain and unpredictable future’ it is essential ‘to enable children and young people to build their own future with confidence, meaning and kindness’. The current strategy sets out:

- The policy context;
- The key ambitions for our children, young people and communities;
- The Education vision;
- An overview of the Education Services Strategy;
- Cross cutting themes;
- Our 6 Key objectives;
- How we will report on outcomes, and
- The proposed approach to monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Education Strategy.

This current document was prepared by Education, supported by an initial reference group and consultation with stakeholders.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- 3.1 Note the proposal to refresh the Education Vision and Strategy to align with the changing national and local policy contexts;
- 3.2 Note the proposed consultation and timescales to gather all stakeholder views, and

3.3 Agree that a further report is presented to the Committee following consultation.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 Since the launch of the Education Vision and Strategy – *Our Children, Their Future* – we have seen many changes in the Education landscape, both locally and nationally. We have been through a global pandemic and consultations, and reviews of Education have been held, including the National Discussion on Scottish Education which involved all stakeholders being asked the question ‘What kind of education will be needed by children and young people in Scotland in the future and how do we make that a reality?’

We continue to develop and make improvements for a truly excellent Education system to reach the national ambition of making Scotland the best place in the world for a child to grow up, and the message is even clearer in Argyll and Bute. These are *Our Children* and this is *Their Future* and **we want Argyll and Bute to be the best place in Scotland to grow up** and for young people and families to remain in this area.

With the many changes and recommendations for Education, it is important that we reflect and act on these within Argyll and Bute to ensure our policies work effectively as a single system that delivers an equality of educational opportunity and improves attainment for all. This starts from the work we do with families before a child is born all the way through to securing positive destinations for our young people at the end of their school careers.

The refreshed strategy will clearly identify the Education vision, which is embedded throughout the current *Our Children, Their Future*, taking into account the changes within Education and recommendations from the recently published reports, along with the high-level objectives to deliver this vision with associated priority actions.

The refreshed strategy will include objectives and priorities and will be supported by a plan that sets out the specific actions we will take to deliver our vision. We will report on our progress annually.

4.2 Policy Context:

The National Outcomes for Scotland include:

- Our children have the **best start in life** and are ready to succeed.
- Young people are equipped through their education to become **successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens**.
- We have tackled the **significant inequalities** in Scottish society.
- We have **improved the life chances** for children, young people and families at risk.

4.2.1 The National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education and the underpinning Education (Scotland) Act 2016 seek to draw a number of these areas together at a national level and helpfully clarifies the vision as delivering excellence through attainment and achieving equity.

4.2.2 The key priorities of the National Improvement Framework:

- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education.
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people.
- Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.
- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

The national vision and priorities and the policy documents and reports will support in the refresh of the Education Vision and Strategy – *Our Children, Their Future*.

With the recent publication of *All Learners in Scotland Matter: Our National Discussion* and the *Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment*, it is an important time to review Argyll and Bute's current Education Vision and Strategy in order that we ensure the best possible outcomes for our children and young people now and in the future.

The **National Discussion** gathered views and opinions to establish a renewed vision for Scottish Education and a call to action to realise this vision.

- The vision statement has children and young people at the heart of Scottish Education placing importance on collaboration, all learners supported in inclusive environments and high quality learning and teaching experiences with the key values of an ambitious, inclusive and supportive Education system.
- The call to action focuses on 4 key areas: Learners, a learning system, digital futures and human-centred educational improvement.

It's Our Future: *Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment* again has children and young people at the heart of Education. The report recognises that in the future we will need to ensure 'that every learner leaves education with a sense of achievement, linked to a positive future pathway.'

This continues to be a time of significant change for Education and Children's Services. The pace of change, the drive to improve services, recent and on-going global events and the impact on the financial context combine to place increasing demands on the delivery of Education. Despite these challenges, it is important that we remain ambitious to ensure the best outcomes for our children and young people.

The national vision and key priorities support us in improving outcomes for children in Argyll and Bute and help us to deliver on the Argyll and Bute Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) with the Scottish Government through our Community Planning Partnership.

4.3 Local context:

Education is delivered in a range of settings, including

- Child minding;
- Early Learning and Child Care;
- Primary and Secondary schools including the delivery of Gaelic Medium Education;
- One special school;
- Youth learning services, and
- Partnerships with local colleges.

4.4 The Education Vision, Values and Key Objectives:

The refreshed strategy will set out how Education will deliver the aspiration to ensure that Argyll and Bute is the best place in Scotland for our children to grow up, now and in the future, with a vision that reflects the national and local context and ensures that the importance we attach to Education in Argyll and Bute is simple in message and recognised by everyone.

Our current vision is underpinned by a core set of values: **respect, openness and fairness**. This vision is delivered for all of our children, young people and communities through 6 key objectives. It states, we will:

- **Raise educational attainment and achievement for all;**
- **Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people;**
- **Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed;**
- **Equip young people to sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life;**
- **Strengthen partnership working and community engagement, and**
- **Strengthen leadership at all levels.**

Each of the key objectives has a range of priority actions, to assist in the delivery of the objective. **See Appendix 1.**

5.0 OUTLINE OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 5.1 To support the refresh, a letter to all Education stakeholders will be issued in September advising them of the intention to review and refresh the current Education Vision and Strategy, noting that appropriate opportunities will be

provided to ensure that their views, comments and suggestions are taken into consideration when compiling the refreshed document.

To support this commitment, a full consultation is planned to take place in November with a focus on the refresh of the current Education Vision and Strategy with children and young people, staff, parents, Education partners and communities.

Through September and October, a range of stakeholders will support in the design of the consultation. This will include Head Teachers, practitioners, members of the Parents Advisory Group (PAG), members of the Pupil Voice Group (PVG) and other identified relevant partners. At the September PAG meeting, members will support in the construction of the parental consultation. In September, views will be gathered from the PVG for the design of a wider pupil survey. During November, Heads of establishments will lead in gathering the views of stakeholders, including through their Parent and Pupil Councils and through their links with their communities. Guidance and resources required for establishments will be distributed to support the gathering of stakeholder views.

Following the conclusion of the consultation, a final refresh of the strategy will be presented to Community Services Committee for consideration and approval.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The refreshed Strategy presents an opportunity for Education to effectively respond to the changing national and local policy contexts to ensure the future delivery of an Education Service which supports our children, young people and communities to achieve the best possible outcomes.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Policy – The refreshed strategy will present an opportunity for Education to effectively respond to the changing policy context at both national and local levels. The strategy makes an effective contribution to SOA outcomes 3 and 4.
- 7.2 Financial – None
- 7.3 Legal – None
- 7.4 HR – None
- 7.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
- 7.5.1 Equalities – The strategy takes account of the statutory duties on local authorities to plan reducing educational inequalities of outcome.

7.5.2 Socio-economic - None

7.5.3 Islands - None

7.6 Climate Change – None

7.7 Risk – None

7.8 Customer Service – None

Douglas Hendry – Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly – Policy Lead for Education

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12 July 2023

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Current Education Vision and Strategy, Our Children Their Future

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Our Children, Their Future Education Vision and Strategy



Community Services:
Education

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Policy Context
3. Our Children, Their Future: The Vision
4. Local Context
5. Education Service Strategy Overview
6. Cross Cutting Themes
7. Our 6 Objectives
8. Planning to Deliver Improved Outcomes
9. Reporting on Outcomes
10. Monitoring and review of Our Children, Their Future





INTRODUCTION

The period 2016-19 is an exciting time for Scottish Education. Our children and young people's futures are at the forefront of national and local policy. Nationally, the key building blocks for a truly excellent education system are being assembled to reach the national ambition of making Scotland the best place in the world for a child to grow up. In Argyll and Bute, the message is even clearer. These are *Our Children, Their Future* and we want Argyll and Bute to be the best place to grow up. We want young people and families to remain in this area, and be attracted to live here.

To realise that ambition we need to take these important national building blocks and embed them within Argyll and Bute. This will allow us to produce a coherent set of policies that deliver an equality of educational opportunity and improve attainment for all. This starts from work we do with families before a child is born all the way through to making sure our young people move on to training, work or further education at the end of their school career.

This strategy will clearly identify the Education Service vision and embed this throughout *Our Children, Their Future*. High level objectives will deliver this vision, with associated priority actions. It is the responsibility of everyone within the Education Service to contribute to the delivery of these priority actions. While plans at all levels require to be linked to our high level objectives, there will continue to be flexibility to allow schools and services to respond to the needs of their own communities.

This strategy includes objectives and priorities and will be supported by a plan that sets out the specific actions we will take to deliver our vision. We will report on our progress annually.

2 POLICY CONTEXT

This is a time of significant change for Education and Children's Services. The pace of change, the drive to improve services and the financial context combine to place increasing demands on the delivery of education. Despite these challenges, it is important that we remain ambitious to ensure the best outcomes for our children and young people.

The National Outcomes for Scotland include:

- Our children have the **best start in life** and are ready to succeed
- Young people are equipped through their education to become **successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens**
- We have tackled the **significant inequalities** in Scottish society
- We have **improved the life chances** for children, young people and families at risk

These are inarguably the driving forces behind the work we do and are reflected in national strategies such as the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education and in our local strategies for delivering services in Argyll and Bute.

The **National Improvement Framework** (NIF) for Scottish Education and the underpinning Education (Scotland) Act 2016 seek to draw a number of these areas together at a national level and helpfully clarify the vision as delivering **excellence through attainment** and **achieving equity**.



The NIF is supported by four national priorities:

- *Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy*
- *Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children*
- *Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing*
- *Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people*

The development of a framework that is focused on outcomes and able to represent the full range of a child's educational experience is strongly welcomed. The national vision and key priorities will support us in improving outcomes for children in Argyll and Bute and help us deliver on the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) with the Scottish Government. SOAs are the way in which Community Planning Partnerships deliver improved outcomes for their communities. They are based on a clear understanding of local needs and reflect agreed local priorities, as well as the NIF described above.

Locally, we work in partnership with others to identify and deliver on clear shared objectives through the Integrated Children's Service Plan (ICSP), which will be reviewed regularly. The ICSP outlines how services work together to improve outcomes for children and young people. The Scottish Government, Education Scotland and local authorities have a strong commitment to raising attainment for all and addressing barriers to learning. There is a clear focus on overcoming disadvantage and reducing the significant gap in educational attainment between the most and least deprived children and young people. The term *disadvantage* is used to describe children and young people who are experiencing barriers to learning caused by factors including

- deprivation
- rural isolation
- additional support needs
- Looked After status



3 OUR CHILDREN, THEIR FUTURE: THE VISION

Our aspiration is to ensure that Argyll and Bute is the best place in Scotland for our children to grow up. Our vision is that **together we will realise ambition, excellence and equality for all**. Our vision sends a signal about the importance we attach to education, is simple in message and is recognised by everyone. This is best captured as:



Our vision is underpinned by our values: **respect, openness** and **fairness**.

This vision will be delivered for all our children through the following 6 key objectives.

We will:

- **Raise educational attainment and achievement for all**
- **Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people**
- **Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed**
- **Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life**
- **Ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement**
- **Strengthen leadership at all levels**

Our strategy for realising this vision is best explained by showing how our six objectives link to priority actions. Further explanation around each objective is provided within the section *Our 6 Objectives* beginning on page 12. It is the responsibility of all stakeholders to deliver the key actions. This will be achieved through improvement planning in schools, establishments and services, ensuring our values are reflected in all that we do.



LOCAL CONTEXT

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

- Childminding
- Early Learning and Childcare
- Primary and secondary schools including the delivery of Gaelic Medium Education
- One special school
- Youth Services
- Partnerships with local colleges

The size of schools varies significantly across the authority with primary school rolls ranging from under 5 to around 400, and secondary school rolls ranging from around 25 to over 1300. There are currently 25 primary schools with a roll of under 20 pupils. The needs of most pupils, even those with significant and complex needs, are met within mainstream classes or in learning centres situated within mainstream schools. A very small, and reducing, number of children and young people are educated in day and residential schools outwith Argyll and Bute.

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.





EDUCATION STRATEGY SERVICE OVERVIEW

SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT (SOA)

Outcome 3: Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all

Outcome 4: Children and young people have the best possible start

Cross cutting themes	Education Service Key Objectives and associated Priority Actions
<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>a. Legislative compliance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>b. Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) practice model</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>c. Prevention and early intervention</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>d. Evidence based practice</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will raise educational attainment and achievement for all, by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the overall quality of learning experiences • Tackling disadvantage and deprivation to close the attainment gap • Improving literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing outcomes for children and young people • Continually improving curriculum design and development 2. We will use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people, by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively assessing, tracking and monitoring the progress of our children and young people • Implementing strong self-evaluation, quality assurance and improvement planning • Clear reporting of outcomes 3. We will ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed, by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing high quality Early Learning and Childcare • Working with parents, families and partners 4. We will equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life, by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipping children and young people with knowledge and skills for learning, life and work • Promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship • Supporting lifelong learning 5. We will ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement, by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and strengthening parental engagement and participation • Improving curriculum links between schools and colleges • Developing and strengthening partnerships with business, the community and other agencies • Working together to secure improvement 6. We will strengthen leadership at all levels, by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on effective educational leadership • Promoting career long professional development for all staff • Providing professional learning opportunities for front line services • Maximising the use of resources



CROSS CUTTING THEMES

As shown above, 4 themes have been identified that cut across and influence all 6 objectives. These are:

- a. Legislative compliance
- b. Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)
- c. Prevention and early intervention
- d. Evidence based practice

a. Legislative compliance

It is critically important that all policy, guidance and practice complies with the legislation that determines how education should be delivered to meet the needs of all children and young people. The key legislation that guides our delivery of services includes

Education (Scotland) Act 1980

Standards in Scotland's School etc. Act 2000

Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006

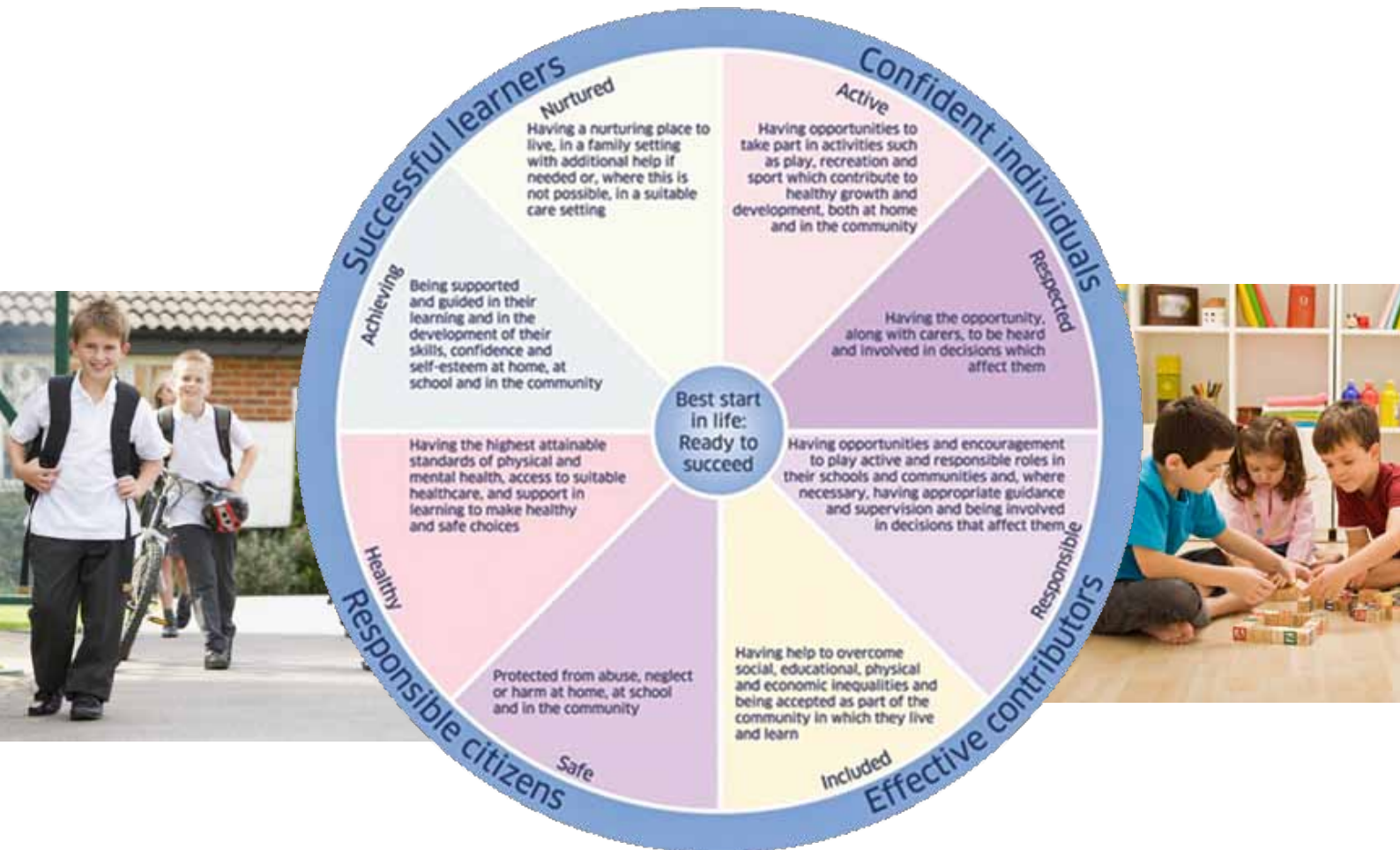
Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Acts 2004 and 2009

Equality Act 2010

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

Education (Scotland) Act 2016

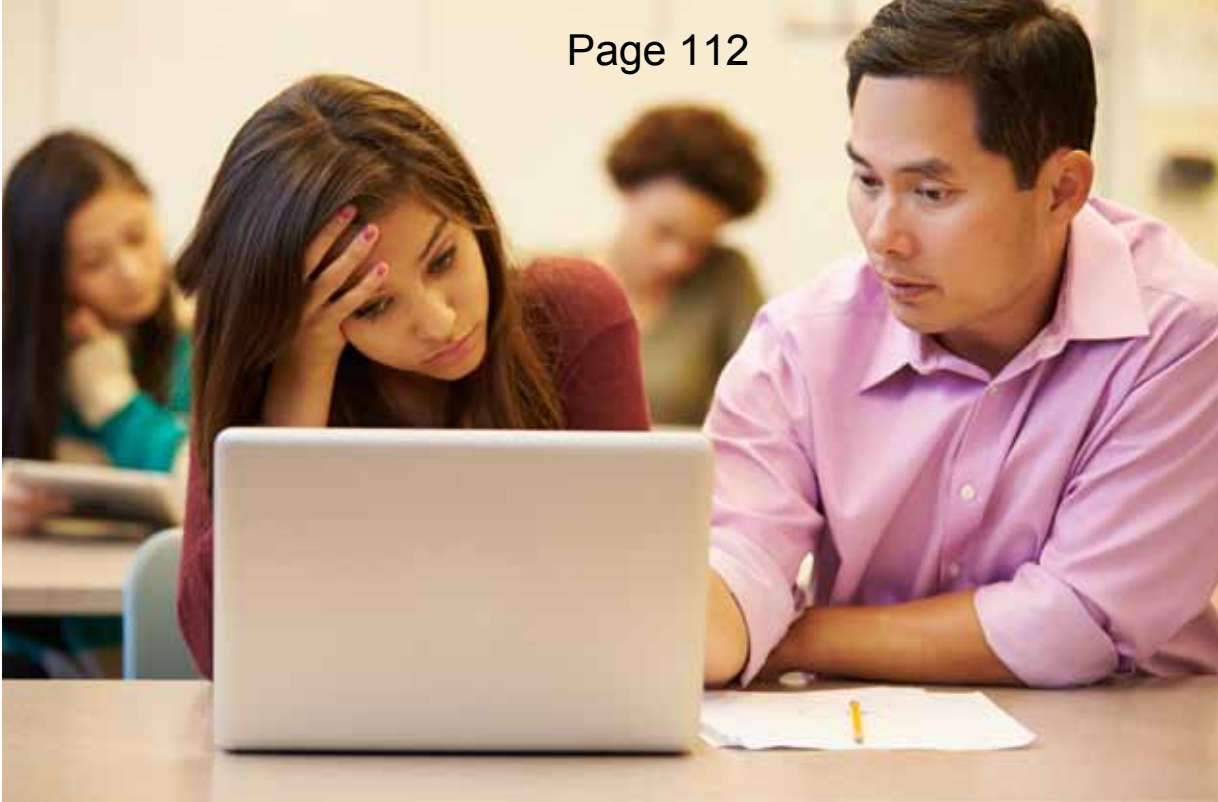




b. Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)

Getting it right for every child is the approach used across Scotland for working with children and their families to ensure that all agencies work in partnership. Children and their families should receive the support they need to be safe, be cared for and reach their full potential. The approach uses the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators which stand for Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. These indicators help those who work with our children assess their progress and ensure that the support offered is appropriate, proportionate and timely.

Every child has a named person, usually a health visitor for a preschool child and a member of staff from Education Services from school age onwards. The named person will be available to listen, advise and help a child or young person and their family, be able to offer direct support or help them access support from others. Where necessary, this can be taken forward through the development of a child's plan. We always involve the child and their family in these discussions to reach agreement around the planning process.



c. Prevention, staged intervention and early intervention

Staged intervention is used as a means of identification, assessment, planning, recording and review to meet the learning needs of children and young people. It provides a solution-focused approach to meeting needs at the earliest opportunity and with the least intrusive level of intervention. The process involves the child, parents/carers, school staff and, at some levels, other professionals working in partnership to get it right for every child.

Wherever possible we will look to address issues before they become difficulties through preventative approaches. For example, we can provide primary age children with strategies to talk about and understand emotions and behaviours to reduce the likelihood of future anxiety or depression. Early intervention involves identifying children and families that may be at risk of running into difficulties and providing effective support at the right time. Working with partners we will identify these issues at the earliest possible point and agree what supports should be provided to improve the life chances for children and young people.

d. Evidence based practice

To have the greatest impact and to improve outcomes for children and young people it is important that we make the most of 'what works'. To do this we need to consider the type of programmes and services that we use and to be clear and rigorous about the way in which we use them. The most effective programmes are clear about who they should be used with, for example toddlers or teenagers, and the way in which they should be used for maximum effect. Across all 6 objectives, it is important that we consider what we are doing, how we are doing it and identify the difference that this is making. Interventions need to be effective at improving outcomes for children and young people and provide best value for money.



7 OUR SIX OBJECTIVES

1. Raise educational attainment and achievement for all

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.

Research and evidence consistently demonstrates the direct link between poverty and deprivation and lower attainment and achievement. We also accept the direct link between underachievement in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and sustaining positive post school destinations. In order to address this, our vision is founded on a high level of ambition for all children and young people. The three pillars of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing underpin the entire 3 to 18 curriculum across all subject areas, and will be a key focus for Education Services in implementing *Our Children, Their Future*.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Improve the overall quality of learning experiences
- Tackle disadvantage and deprivation to close the attainment gap
- Improve literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing outcomes for children and young people
- Continually improve curriculum design and development



2. Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people

Education services gather, analyse and report on a wide range of performance information which allow us to deliver services effectively and demonstrate that we are continually improving outcomes for children and young people. For example, we use information about the progress of our children and young people to inform the approaches to learning and teaching in the classroom.

The National Improvement Framework will collect national data on the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels for literacy and numeracy at the end of P1, P4, P7 and S3, based on teacher judgement and informed by standardised testing. Nationally produced standardised assessments for literacy and numeracy will be available for use from 2017, and will contribute to the much wider range of data that teachers use to assess, track and monitor the progress of children.

Other performance information routinely gathered and analysed includes:

- Participation in sport and leisure activities
- Youth achievement awards
- Attendance and exclusion rates
- Audit and inspection outcomes
- Leaver destinations

It is everyone's responsibility to gather and use performance information to intervene to secure improvement for both individual children and groups. We will actively engage parents and young people in this process.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Effectively assess, track and monitor the progress of our children and young people
- Implement strong self-evaluation, quality assurance and improvement planning
- Clearly report outcomes

3. Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed

In Argyll and Bute, we work together to ensure children and young people experience a positive start that supports and nurtures as well as builds firm foundations for later life. These steps begin before our children are born. We know that children develop faster in the first few years of life than at any other time so, to make an impact and ensure we tackle potential disadvantage, this is a priority area for us.

We will continue to improve the way we work together with partners and families. A number of key initiatives have been developed under the Argyll and Bute Early Years Collaborative (EYC) to help us with this. The EYC is a national approach targeting how we improve the life chances of our children by:

- testing changes to how we do things
- measuring these changes to see if they lead to improvements, and
- spreading the approaches that work.

In Argyll and Bute, key developments that will lead to the achievement of the stretch aims include *The Argyll and Bute Family Pathway* and *The Developmental Milestone Toolkit*.

The Education Service provides Early Learning and Childcare services (ELC) either directly or through commissioning arrangements with private and voluntary providers or through registered childminders. Children over 3 years of age, and some 2 years olds, have an entitlement to up to 600 hours of free early learning or childcare each year.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Provide high quality Early Learning and Child Care
- Work with parents, families and partners



4. Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life

The overarching aim for the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership is to grow the population through economic development. Argyll and Bute offers outstanding opportunities for business growth and features many outstanding employers with globally recognised branding and cutting edge technologies. For that growth to be realised, our industries need a workforce with the right skills, attitudes and capacities. This is consistent with the findings of the Commission on Developing Scotland's Young Workforce.

We will:

- ensure our young people fully understand the employment training and academic pathways and opportunities that are available to them locally in Argyll and Bute
- nurture a spirit of entrepreneurship and enterprise and raise the ambition of our young people that they can develop and succeed in new business opportunities
- expand our engagement with local businesses to increase opportunities for work experience and business mentoring for young people at all academic levels
- work with other partners including Skills Development Scotland and Job Centre

Plus to ensure our young people receive appropriate careers advice

- support young people to secure sustained positive destinations in employment training or further/ higher education.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Equip children and young people with skills for learning, life and work
- Promote enterprise and entrepreneurship
- Support lifelong learning



5. Strengthen high quality partnership working and community engagement

We recognise that most of a child's development takes place outwith our schools and ELC settings therefore the role of families and carers is critical to ensuring our children and young people succeed. We want to support families to engage meaningfully in their child's education and to be part of leading improvements with schools. We believe it is time to establish a different relationship with parents and carers that reflects this central role for them in the development of education services in Argyll and Bute at a school and an authority level.

We will empower parents and carers to be part of the decisions that are taken in respect of their children's education and development, and to work along with the staff in each school on improvement planning. We will engage parents and carers in dialogue around the new duties on education authorities, new approaches to learning and ultimately their role in their children's education.

Consulting with children and young people and encouraging meaningful participation is not simply a preferred approach, but is a requirement placed upon professionals. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to consult with children and young people and highlights the importance of adopting appropriate consultation methods to ensure young people are able to participate effectively in decisions that affect their lives. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 strengthens children's voices in matters



that affect them and also extends the rights of children with additional support needs. Careful consideration needs to be given to the ways in which we consult with children and young people to allow them to participate effectively. This will include young children and those with additional support needs. We also need to be clear about what happens in response to the views that are shared.

We will ensure that strong partnerships are created and maintained with local bodies including businesses, third sector organisations and community groups. This will broaden and deepen the curricular experiences offered to children and young people by our educational establishments. We will work in partnership and consult appropriately with Parent Councils and relevant community bodies or groups when considering the quality of provision delivered in our educational establishments in accordance with the principles of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

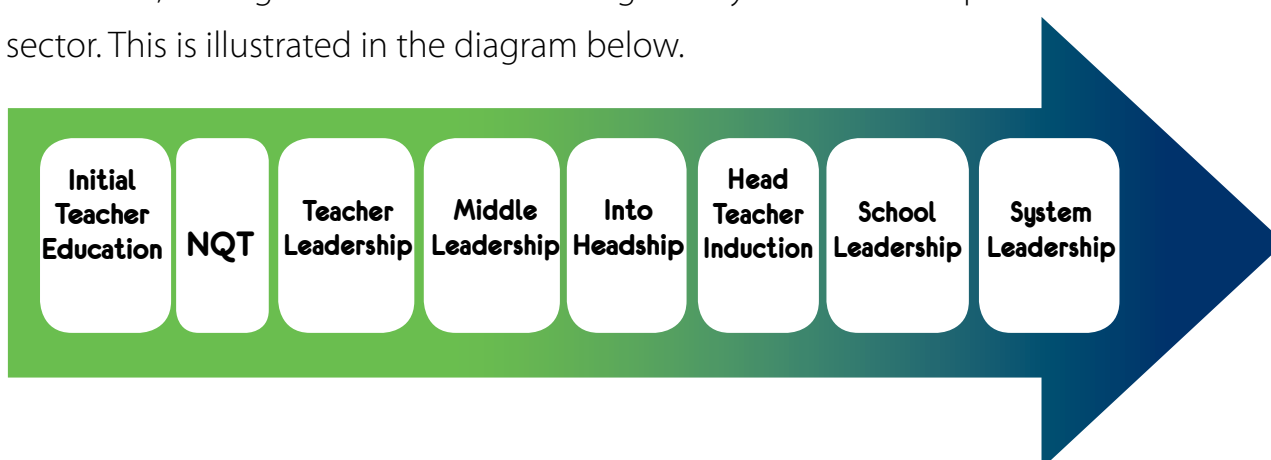
- Develop and strengthen parental engagement and participation
- Improve the curriculum links between schools and colleges
- Develop and strengthen partnerships with business and the community
- Work together to secure improvement



6. Strengthen leadership at all levels

Research has demonstrated a strong link between the quality of educational experience enjoyed by our children and young people and the standards and competence of our teaching professionals. Leadership in schools at all levels is essential in ensuring that experience is of the very highest standard.

Head Teachers and teachers who are empowered, and empower others, have a strong record of ensuring the highest quality of learning and teaching. This ensures that all children and young people achieve the best possible outcomes. Our approach ensures a consistent focus on career long professional development from the initial teacher education, through the various career stages to system leadership across the education sector. This is illustrated in the diagram below.



Leadership for continuous school improvement is most effective where every member of the school staff is empowered to lead and where every member of staff develops their ability to lead.

We also recognise the challenges of recruiting teaching and support staff in a large rural area like Argyll and Bute. We are committed to growing our own future staff, future leaders and applying creative solutions. We work with a range of partners to achieve this including innovative work with Argyll College UHI to deliver a post graduate diploma in education locally in Argyll and Bute. This approach is more sustainable and contributes to developing career options for people to stay in Argyll and Bute.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Focus on effective educational leadership
- Promote career long professional development for all staff
- Provide professional learning opportunities for front line services
- Maximise the use of resources



PLANNING TO DELIVER IMPROVED OUTCOMES

Education services gather, analyse and report on a wide range of performance information which allow us to deliver services effectively and demonstrate that we are continually improving outcomes for children and young people. For example, we use information about the progress of our children and young people to inform the approaches to learning and teaching in the classroom.

To deliver improved outcomes for children and young people Education Services will:

1. Ensure that plans are in place for Education Services, individual teams and schools across the Council and that these include appropriate measures of success
2. Take action to deliver the key ambitions for our children, young people and communities
3. Monitor progress against clear measures found in Council, Service and School Improvement Plans
4. Sustain continuous improvement and address agreed areas for further development highlighted through self-evaluation

This will be achieved through a number of approaches including:

- Presentation of quarterly performance information to Council and Community Services Committee as part of the Council's performance management reporting systems
- Preparation and publication of an annual statement of standards and quality reporting
- Presentation of relevant committee papers to Community Services Committee for example SQA examinations outcomes
- Submission of relevant performance information to Scottish Government for example outcomes for looked after children, attendance and exclusions

It is essential to gather and use performance information to intervene to secure improvement for both individual children and groups. We will actively engage parents and young people in these processes.



REPORTING ON OUTCOMES

It is centrally important to evaluate the impact of improvement activities. Effective evaluation needs reliable data from a range of sources. Data should be able to demonstrate improvement against baseline information. In addition to performance data such as exam results and standardised assessments, information should include analysis of people's views and evaluations based on direct observation of the quality of learning.



Building capacity across education is supported by sharing professional learning. We need to be able to consider what the evidence tells us about progress for individual children and across ELC, classes, schools and education services. We need to identify success and use our evaluation information to plan next steps. We will report on progress on an annual basis.



MONITORING AND REVIEW OF *OUR CHILDREN, THEIR FUTURE*

The Scottish Education system is going through another period of significant change and the expectations on staff working with our children and young people have never been higher. *Our Children, Their Future* seeks to be clear about our strategy in Argyll and Bute to realise both the national vision for Scottish Education but also our local vision for our children and young people.

The National Improvement Framework will set out additional performance reporting requirements and we will collect that information to report our progress towards achieving equity and excellence through attainment. This will introduce changes to school and local authority standards and quality reporting which will contribute to reviewing the impact and outcome of our work. We will produce a report on this work on an annual basis in line with the requirements of the National Improvement Framework.

Our Children, Their Future belongs to those whose education we provide, to the families that support them and to our staff who daily have the challenge and joy of being such a critical part of those children and young people's lives. We will ensure that we involve all stakeholders' in monitoring and reviewing our strategy.



ARGYLL AND BUTE
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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****EDUCATION****24 AUGUST 2023**

ASN SERVICE PROVISION 2023

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Additional Support Needs of children and young people across Scotland have notably increased over recent years, with the Covid-19 pandemic compounding existing needs with a range of complex pressures on mental health and wellbeing. This increase in need can be seen within Argyll and Bute specifically, with the Education Service committed to making improvements to existing provision in order to more effectively offer a consistent level of support to all children and young people.
- 1.2 During early 2022, the Education Service carried out a consultation on ASN Provision across the education estate, which included gathering the views of children and young people, their parents and carers and staff working in our schools. The views gathered led to the development of a set of proposals for service improvement. These improvements are in line with the Additional Support for Learning Act (2004).
- 1.3 As part of the Council's set priorities, a commitment to increase the equity of specialist provision to all children and young people was agreed. Similarly, a commitment to reduce the number of children and young people having to travel outwith Argyll and Bute to access specialist education provision was also accepted.
- 1.4 This paper outlines proposals for service improvement in line with the above and recommends that Community Services Committee:-
- 1.4.1 Acknowledges the growth in the number of children with a recognised Additional Support Need at a national level, and specifically within Argyll and Bute.
 - 1.4.2 Agrees that lobbying of the Scottish Government, in collaboration with other Scottish local authorities to address the funding gap facing local

authorities in meeting the needs of our children and young people effectively should be pursued, in the first instance through COSLA.

- 1.4.3 Accepts the professional advice from the Education Service in regard to how to best address the issues set out in this paper within Argyll and Bute, and deliver on Council priorities set for Education.
- 1.4.4 Agrees to support funding of the revenue and capital required to implement the proposals, and notes that the revenue savings which have been identified within existing Education Service resources, could otherwise be put towards the Council's ongoing revenue funding gap, and therefore recommends to the Council that they:
 - 1.4.4.1 Approve virement of the phase 1 capital costs of £1,255,000 from within the Education Service as set out in Appendix 1.
 - 1.4.4.2 Approve virement of the phase 1 revenue costs of £495,560 as appropriate, up to £495,560, from within the Education Service as set out in Appendix 1.
 - 1.4.4.3 Agree in principle the viring of revenue and capital funding within the Education Service, in accordance with the Council's Financial Security Regulations paragraphs 3.14 to 3.16, for phase 2 of the proposals, with the necessary report(s) being submitted to Council at the appropriate time and subject to the Councils overall financial position at that time.

ASN SERVICE PROVISION 2023

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update in regards to the review of ASN services within Argyll and Bute, and to propose a number of measures to address the growing and increasingly complex needs of our children and young people.

2.2 The growth in the number of children with a recognised Additional Support Need is reflected across the country, but is compounded by the geography of Argyll and Bute and the inequitable spread of appropriate resource.

2.3 The report presents the Education Service's response to these issues for consideration by Members in regard to the identified areas of potential improvement which are in line with two of the Council priorities, set for the Education Service:

- Working to improve and secure equity of specialist provision across Argyll and Bute by addressing gaps where they exist across the education estate.
- Reducing the number of children and young people who have to travel to outwith the area to access services by enhancing provision where gaps currently exist.

2.4 In taking forward the suggested proposals, the Council will be creating high-quality provision to serve all four localities of Argyll and Bute in a more equitable manner.

2.5 Significant legislative change and recent key publications and policy should also be taken into consideration when evaluating the impact of ASN provision and these include:

- Adoption of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots Law (2021)
- Publication of The Morgan Review (Additional Support for Learning Implementation Review 2020)
- The Promise Scotland (Implementation Plan 2021-2024)

- 2.6 Recommendations made herewith are done so in line with the guiding principles of the above noted publications as well as the statutory legislation as noted herewith.
- 2.7 Lobbying of the Scottish Government is suggested as a next step, in collaboration with our colleagues from across Scottish local authorities to address the funding gap facing local authorities in meeting the needs of our children and young people effectively. Despite the well evidenced growth in complex needs, there are no additional funding streams on the horizon in order to support our work at local level.
- 2.8 The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) have documented the importance of 'Alternative Curricula' or modes of provision for learners with complex needs. A paper collated by the EIS also outlines the various models in place across the country and exemplifies the response to a growing level of need across our educational establishments. The proposals herewith are in line with the practice elsewhere in Scotland. [18 - 2022 AGM Motion - Alternative Curricula.pdf](#)
- 2.9 There is a significant budget pressure continuing to develop around meeting the needs of our most complex learners within the current provision across Argyll and Bute. This budget pressure includes the need for specialist teaching and support staff being dispensed into schools as well as the continued need for pupils to travel outwith Argyll and Bute to access specialist day provision.
- 2.10 In taking forward the proposals as outlined herewith, the service anticipates that over time, this budget pressure could be more adequately addressed, with targeted resources streamlining the need for support being dispensed with a far greater impact on our learners facing the most significant challenges to their progress.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:
- 3.1.1 Acknowledges the growth in the number of children with a recognised Additional Support Need at a national level, and specifically within Argyll and Bute.
- 3.1.2 Agrees that lobbying of the Scottish Government, in collaboration with other Scottish local authorities to address the funding gap facing local authorities in meeting the needs of our children and young people effectively should be pursued, in the first instance through COSLA.
- 3.1.3 Accepts the professional advice from the Education Service in regard to how to best address the issues set out in this paper within Argyll and Bute, and deliver on Council priorities set for Education.
- 3.1.4 Agrees to support funding of the revenue and capital required to implement the proposals, and notes that the revenue savings which have been

identified within existing Education Service resources, could otherwise be put towards the Council's ongoing revenue funding gap, and therefore recommends to the Council that they:

- 3.1.4.1 Approve virement of the phase 1 capital costs of £1,255,000 from within the Education Service as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.1.4.2 Approve virement of the phase 1 revenue costs of £495,560 as appropriate, up to £495,560, from within the Education Service as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.1.4.3 Agree in principle the viring of revenue and capital funding within the Education Service, in accordance with the Council's Financial Security Regulations paragraphs 3.14 to 3.16, for phase 2 of the proposals, with the necessary report(s) being submitted to Council at the appropriate time and subject to the Councils overall financial position at that time.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 Meeting the needs of children and young people identified as having an additional support need (ASN) is a key area of focus within Scottish education governed by a number of statutes and practice guidance. The main statutory basis for ASN derives from the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004 and the subsequent 2009 Act which strengthened and clarified certain duties of Education authorities. The Additional Support for Learning Act 2004 section 1 defines Additional Support Needs (ASN) as:-

"A child or young person has **additional support** needs for the purposes of this Act where, for whatever reason, the child or young person is, or is likely to be, unable without the provision of **additional** support to benefit from school education provided or to be provided for the child or young person".

4.2 Sections 4 and 5 of the 2004 Act place a legal duty on local authorities to meet these additional support needs. These are;

Section 4 Duties of education authority in relation to children and young persons for whom they are responsible:-

- (1) Every education authority must—in relation to each child and young person having additional support needs for whose school education the authority are responsible, make adequate and efficient provision for such additional support as is required by that child or young person, and make appropriate arrangements for keeping under consideration—

(2)

- ⓪ the additional support needs of, and
- ⓪ the adequacy of the additional support provided for, each such child and young person.

(3) Subsection (1)(a) does not require an education authority to do anything which—

- (a) they do not otherwise have power to do, or
- (b) would result in unreasonable public expenditure being incurred.

4.3 A code of practice for professionals and parents/carers is in place to support the effective implementation of the above duties. This is now in the third edition (2017) and can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-statutory-guidance-education-additional-support-learning-scotland/>. The Act also confers certain rights of redress on parents and created paths of resolution including mediation and Tribunal.

4.4 Children or young people may require additional support for a variety of reasons and may include those who:

- have motor or sensory impairments
- are being bullied
- are particularly able or talented
- have experienced a bereavement
- are interrupted learners
- have a learning disability
- are looked after by a local authority
- have a learning difficulty, such as dyslexia
- are living with parents who are abusing substances
- are living with parents who have mental health problems
- have English as an additional language
- are not attending school regularly
- have emotional or social difficulties
- are on the child protection register
- are young carers.

4.5 This list is not exhaustive nor should it be assumed that inclusion in the list inevitably implies that additional support will be necessary. The 2009 amendment to the ASL Act deemed that every Looked After (now Care Experienced) child be considered to have additional support needs. Scottish Government guidance highlights that there should be a Named Person in place for all children and young people from early learning and child care until they leave school. The move to 1140 hours has provided additional access to young children with earlier

identification of needs. Also, the inclusion of vulnerable 2 year olds has placed additional pressure on budgets and service provision.

Scottish government guidance around addressing the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, particularly during a period of recovery from a global pandemic, has increased the numbers who are considered to have an ASN as a result of a mental health needs. A further consequence of the pandemic, particularly for young children is the impact of the lack of social contact on the development of language skills and social interaction with peers.

- 4.6 By law, education authorities must identify, provide and review the additional support needs of their pupils which can arise in the short or long term as a result of the learning environment, family circumstances, health, wellbeing needs or a disability. However, the interpretation of the manner in which the support is provided is determined by Councils within available budget constraints.
- 4.7 The presumption of inclusion of children with additional support needs (ASN) in mainstream schools is a key feature of Scottish education. In Argyll and Bute, this presumption of mainstreaming is supported by a fundamental belief that children should be educated within or as close to their own communities as possible. There is only one stand-alone special school, Parklands in Helensburgh. Inclusion within mainstream schooling is the principal mode of education delivery to children with a wide range of needs. Learning Centres have been developed in specific schools across Argyll and Bute to allow the delivery of enhanced provision to meet more complex needs locally. This paper sets out next steps in the development of these resources to allow a more equitable provision for all of Argyll and Bute's learners.
- 4.8 The Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) national practice model continues to be the approach used across Scotland for working with children and their families to ensure that all agencies work in partnership to secure the best outcomes for all children. Every child has a Named Person, who will be a health visitor for pre-school children and Head teacher (or delegated representative) from school age onwards. Identifying and addressing children's needs using the GIRFEC model is embedded in practice within all services in Argyll and Bute who work to support children and families.
- 4.9 All local authorities submit an annual census return on additional support needs to the Scottish Government through scotXed in September. It is only in recent years that a definition of support needs has been provided by the Government and the current definition in the scotXed data collection specification has 24 specific categories plus another box. The system is populated directly by schools based on their interpretation of support need and signed off by the HT.

However, this Council only uses three categories to assess ASN staffing allocations which highlights the flexibility in determining the total census population.

- 4.10 According to Scottish Government data from the Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland 2021, there were 232,753 pupils (33.0% of all pupils) with an additional support need (ASN) recorded in 2021. This was an increase of 0.7

percentage points on 2020 (226,838 pupils with an ASN record, 32.3% of all pupils). However, this is first time since 2009 that the rate has increased by less than one percentage point.

- 4.11 In Argyll and Bute, in the September 2021 census return there were 10,068 children recorded of these 3,005 in an authority educational establishment had an additional support, 29.98% of our pupil population.
- 4.12 In comparison, Argyll and Bute, in the September 2022 census return there were 9995 children recorded of these 3,257 in an authority educational establishment had an additional support, 32.59% of our pupil population.
- 4.13 In line with the National Improvement Framework (NIF), the Education Service has identified key priorities within Our Children Their Future delivered through the Education Service Plan. The Wellbeing, Inclusion and Achievement team has identified core improvement priorities to meet the needs of our learners including the commitment to provide high quality, well planned support for children and young people with additional support needs across all sectors.

5.0 Assessment of Need

- 5.1 All local authorities address need through professional support which may include teachers, educational psychologists, health professionals such as occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and social workers. Excellent support is also provided by paraprofessionals such as support assistants. Support varies depending on the assessed need of the individual child. However, the nature of the support will also depend on the resources available for example provision of special schools and units and criteria for support devised at a local level. This Council's Education Service has implemented its Staged Intervention Framework which is intended to guide school staff as to how best to support children. In Argyll and Bute, staged intervention is the agreed process used to identify, plan for and support children who have additional support needs and/or who require a targeted intervention. This is a service or specified support which is targeted at addressing particular wellbeing needs or more specialist intervention, and is therefore not made available generally to all children.

The key principles underpinning Staged Intervention, as outlined as follows:

What is staged intervention?

- *Staged intervention is used as a means of identification, assessment, planning, recording and review to meet the learning needs of children and young people.*
- *It provides a solution-focused approach to meeting needs at the earliest opportunity and with the least intrusive level of intervention. The process involves the child, parents/carers, school staff and, at some levels, other professionals, working in partnership to get it right for every child.*

- *Staged intervention is designed to be flexible and allows for movement between stages depending on progress.*

In Argyll and Bute there are three stages of staged intervention. Children may move between the stages as appropriate. At all stages of intervention, there are five questions education practitioners need to ask themselves when they are concerned about a child:

1. What is getting in the way of this child or young person's learning, and achievement / well-being?
2. Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
3. What can I do now to help this child or young person?
4. What can my agency do to help this child or young person?
5. What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

There are specific requirements for planning and review timescales where a child is approaching transition between settings or leaving school.

Stage 1

The class teacher or key worker (Early Years) identifies a need for some additional support. The Named Person is notified and the teacher /key worker makes some changes to the normal routine or gives some extra attention so that the child can get the best out of the work of the group or class.

Parents/carers will be kept informed and involved through general school reporting systems such as parents' evenings, report cards and learning logs. There will also be ongoing evaluation through these systems of the impact of the support given.

These changes might include differentiation strategies such as:

- making sure that extra attention is given;
- changing the group that the child works with;
- adjusting the amount of work that is expected;
- making minor adaptations to the classroom/ Early Years environment.

There may be involvement of an Additional Support Needs Teacher and / or Area Principal Teacher / Principal Teacher Early Years / Specialist Teacher in an advisory capacity. Psychological services may also be involved in a consultative role at this stage. This may also include children at key transition points.

Stage 2

There is an identified need for targeted planning and intervention to address additional support needs.

A Child's Plan will be in place outlining the specific targeted interventions required and detailing long- and short-term outcomes and timescales. Timescales for

review of the interventions will be built in to the plan. There are likely to be termly reviews of short-term targets and annual reviews of long-term targets.

Additional support at this level may include (in addition to supports available at Stage 1):

- new resources being accessed for use by the whole class/group;
- small groups being created for additional tuition;
- an individual programme of work being introduced;
- a short term programme of individual support being put in place.

Classroom or Pupil Support Assistants may be deployed to help deliver these supports.

Stage 3

There is an identified need for more targeted intervention and / or specialist provision and interventions including:

- a high degree of individualisation of learning and/or;
- access to a different learning environment and / or;
- substantial adaptation to the curriculum and/or;
- substantial adaptation to the learning environment.

A Child's Plan will be in place outlining the specific targeted interventions required and detailing long- and short-term outcomes and timescales. Where there is multi-agency involvement, a Lead Professional will co-ordinate this support. There may also be a Co-ordinated Support Plan in place.

Children/young people at Staged 3 will be identified in the following categories:

- Severe and complex/profound
- Moderate learning difficulties
- Social/emotional behavioural difficulties
- Hearing impairment
- Visual impairment
- Children on the autistic spectrum
- Children with language and communication difficulties
- Children with severe physical impairment

Children at Stage 3 will require significant individualisation of learning and/or substantial adaptation to the curriculum. These measures will be established and implemented by means of the relevant staff in the establishment working in collaboration with:

- each other and the parents of the child;
- the Area Principal Teacher ASN / Principal Teacher Early Years;

- specialist teachers (for example the Teacher for Deaf Children or the Lead Teacher for Visual Impairment);
- Psychological Services;
- appropriate services and agencies outwith the establishment, such as Health, Social Work and CAMHS.

Additional support at this level may include (in addition to supports available at Stages 1 and 2):

- further, more substantial elaboration of the curriculum;
- advice and support being provided to the establishment from other specialists or agencies;
- placement (shared or full-time) in a Learning Centre, Parklands School or alternative setting;
- Access to Work Based Vocational Learning or other opportunities via a Flexible Learning Plan.

An Additional Support Needs Assistant may be utilised to help deliver these supports.

- 5.2 For children to receive ASN assistant support certain criteria require to be met. This assessment is identified as the point where inconsistent interpretation issues arise. The current system for allocating ASN assistant resources is based on assessing additional support need against criteria and principles. If the child's needs meet the criteria then an assessment of the number of hours required is undertaken. The process has to ensure that there is rigour in the system of allocation, particularly if the Education Service is to balance taking a needs based approach within a reducing budgetary situation.
- 5.3 The range of needs of our children and young people is vast and complex (as set out at 3.16) and can often be compounded by environmental factors related to domestic circumstances. As a result, the approach outlined above allows for a rational and rigorous assessment of need to be undertaken in an equitable way, with the individual circumstances of each child or young person also considered fully when making decisions about the allocation of appropriate support.
- 5.4 Reasons for needing Additional Support in Argyll and Bute

ASN	ABC**	Scotland
Autistic spectrum disorder	5.30%	3.40%
Bereavement	0.42%	0.60%
Communication Support Needs	2.47%	1.60%
Deaf blind	0.04%	0.00%
Dyslexia	4.92%	3.60%
English as an additional language	1.81%	6.00%
Family Issues	1.88%	3.30%

Hearing impairment	1.39%	0.50%
Interrupted learning	0.51%	1.00%
Language or speech disorder	3.87%	2.60%
Learning disability	3.19%	1.70%
Looked after	1.62%	1.30%
Mental health problem	0.92%	1.20%
More able pupil	0.26%	0.50%
Other	1.49%	3.30%
Other moderate learning difficulty	2.63%	4.50%
Other specific learning difficulty (eg numeric)	3.89%	3.80%
Physical health problem	3.12%	2.20%
Physical or motor impairment	3.66%	1.20%
Risk of Exclusion	0.16%	0.20%
Social, emotional and behavioural difficulty	9.62%	7.80%
Substance Misuse	0.05%	0.10%
Visual impairment	1.36%	0.70%
Young Carer	1.97%	0.70%

****Based on census 2020 data**

5.5 The ASN budget supports a cohort of 45.5 FTE support teachers grouped around an allocation to 8 individual clusters. These teachers are not part of the school roll and are managed centrally by Education Support Officers (ESOs). Since April 2017, there has been a confirmed staffing allocation of support teachers to each area.

6.0 Current Landscape and Requirement to Respond to Projected Levels

6.1 The Education Service is experiencing unprecedented levels of demand for Additional Support across all education settings, with particular pressures stemming from an increase in more complex needs. At present, our current internal provision extends to only one standalone Specialist provision which is Parklands School in Helensburgh, and for the past two academic sessions the service have had to use capital funds to extend the internal spaces within the building in order to increase the pupil capacity. It is worth noting that currently Parklands School only serves those residing within the Helensburgh and Lomond area, with no similar provision existing in any of the other localities.

6.2 Learning Centre provision has been established in a number of areas as outlined in the diagram in this report, however the service have also had to invest in the expansion of many of these provisions to include capital works and an increase in requisite staffing to meet the needs of children within the local areas which have access. **For those residing outwith these areas, as highlighted in yellow on the diagram, there is no access to any specialist provision of this nature** and these children have specialist support allocated to their mainstream schools in order to meet their needs. This is allocated via

the central ASN budget which creates significant pressure due to the wide spread of needs across mainstream settings. Work will be undertaken to accurately model the number of learners who are currently accommodated in mainstream provision across the areas not currently served by Learning Centres, and whose needs would be more effectively met if these proposals are taken forward. At present, colleagues within the Education Psychology Service and Inclusion teams estimate that around 35 learners are in this position. These individuals would benefit directly from the establishment of the proposed four new Learning Centres.

- 6.3 The most recent staffing exercise undertaken by our Inclusion and Equality Team evidenced a continued year-on-year requirement for an increase in support for our children with Additional Support needs within our mainstream schools and given the budgetary constraints being faced across all local authority services, this budget has had to be right-sized. A review of provision in each setting has been undertaken and allocation of support adjusted accordingly. Other funding streams which have been allocated by the Scottish Government in regards to taking forward the Actions of the Additional Support for Learning Review of 2020 have been utilised appropriately to ensure that pupils with Additional Support Needs are having their entitlements met by maximizing the available budget without having to look to vire funds from the wider education budget.
- 6.4 With a greater investment in an equitable specialist provision such as those outlined within the proposal, this level of need within mainstream settings would be reduced. Within Appendix 1 and 2, a snapshot of possible reduction in spend into mainstream settings is outlined for one year. Circa £359k has been identified as the potential revenue saving- based on an analysis of current spend into mainstream which would be streamlined if these learners had access to one centrally located enhanced provision as outlined.
- 6.5 While the numbers of children and young people currently educated outwith Argyll and Bute remains relatively low, the cost of these placements require significant expenditure to be directed to meet the needs of a very small number of young people. At present this cost is **£449,362.81 annually** for day placements which is funded wholly from the existing Education Budget. As identified in Appendix 3, there are four pupils currently accessing external day placements who can potentially return to education within their local school, if the proposals were taken forward with a saving of **£202,440** per annum.
- 6.6 For children residing in areas outwith Helensburgh and Lomond and the Eastern side of Bute and Cowal, access to external day placements is not possible and as a result only residential care or remaining in mainstream is the only option. This creates an inequity which could be partially addressed if the proposals as outlined were taken forward. **If Learning Centre and Enhanced Wellbeing Hubs were in place, the need to consider residential placements would be accordingly reduced.**
- 6.7 At present a further **£704,615** is spent on residential placements by the

Education Service. These placements are jointly funded by Social Work and the overall cost is significantly higher. It is anticipated that if the proposals as outlined in this paper are taken forward, further work could be undertaken to assess the possibility of some of these children currently accessing external residential provision to return to Argyll and Bute. This would create a cost saving against the external placement budget

- 6.8 Review of the existing provision within Argyll and Bute against presenting needs has led to the development of an approach with a longer term aim to reduce further the number of young people educated outwith the authority and to address the emerging issues of young people for whom full-time placement in a mainstream classroom setting is not possible nor appropriately meeting their needs. This is in line with the Council's priorities as outlined at 2.3.
- 6.9 In order for us to provide the necessary level of resource to maintain an equitable access to appropriate enhanced provision for our children and young people living with significant additional support needs, the gaps in our current portfolio (as outlined in the diagram in this report) require to be addressed.
- 6.10 The Education Service are currently working on a review of ASN Allocation processes, which determines the allocation of ASN Assistant Hours into mainstream schools. The options being considered are designed to offer a greater equity of provision, and to empower Headteachers to allocate resources to the children within their care and whom they know best. The options being considered also offer greater potential for risk-management in relation to budget and a clearer mechanism for forecasting spend year-on-year.

7.0 In response to the challenges outlined, the following recommendations for future improvement to our learning estate are proposed:

7.1 Learning Centre Provision (Phase 1)

An increased level of need for Learning Centre places is creating significant pressure on existing resources, and in some cases, a lack of local specialist resource is seeing a number of learners having to travel to provision outwith Argyll and Bute, at significant cost to the local authority, as well as significant emotional cost to the young person and their family. This is particularly noticeable in the Helensburgh and Lomond Area and Dunoon areas, which have access to external placements in a way which is less viable for learners living in our more rural settlements.

The above can also, in part, be attributed to an inequity of provision of enhanced resource, including Learning Centres, across the geographical educational estate. Another consequence of this, as noted above is that learners who require enhanced provision, simply do not access it and as a result pressure is placed on the mainstream setting which they attend and ASN Assistant Hours require to be significantly increased. The information below summarises provision in each locality area and highlights the 'gaps' which are

leading to young people and families facing significantly greater barriers in the meeting of their needs.

In Argyll and Bute children and young people with a wide range of complex and challenging needs are effectively supported within their local schools, however with needs increasing we are seeing greater parental demands as well as an increasing strain on our service workforce as a result of the growing incidents of dysregulated behaviour.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 states the assumption of mainstreaming children with additional support needs.

This inclusive approach requires additional support needs resources to be targeted directly to schools. Within Argyll and Bute there is **one** Special School and a number of Learning Centres located within schools across the authority, however their location has led to an inequity of provision which is felt keenly by learners and their families as well as the staff working to support a wide range of needs.

The premise of Learning Centres being based within schools allows children with complex needs to access a high level of support and an elaborated curriculum with the option of attending mainstream classes as part of their timetable, as appropriate. This approach allows an individual and tailored method of inclusion for the child which can be reviewed regularly and adapted to suit their needs. Importantly, this method of providing an enhanced provision allows children to maintain a full lifestyle within their local area, and does not require long periods of time travelling to external placements on a daily basis or in some of the most complex cases, on a residential basis.

The staffing of the special school and the Learning Centres is applied on a formula basis according to a staff to pupil ratio to provide consistency across Argyll and Bute. The special school and the Learning Centres provide dedicated, appropriate physical spaces for those with severe and complex needs to use for their learning. We have Learning Centres (LCs) within mainstream settings where the pupil can access mainstream parts of the curriculum as appropriate and to allow maximum opportunities for inclusion.

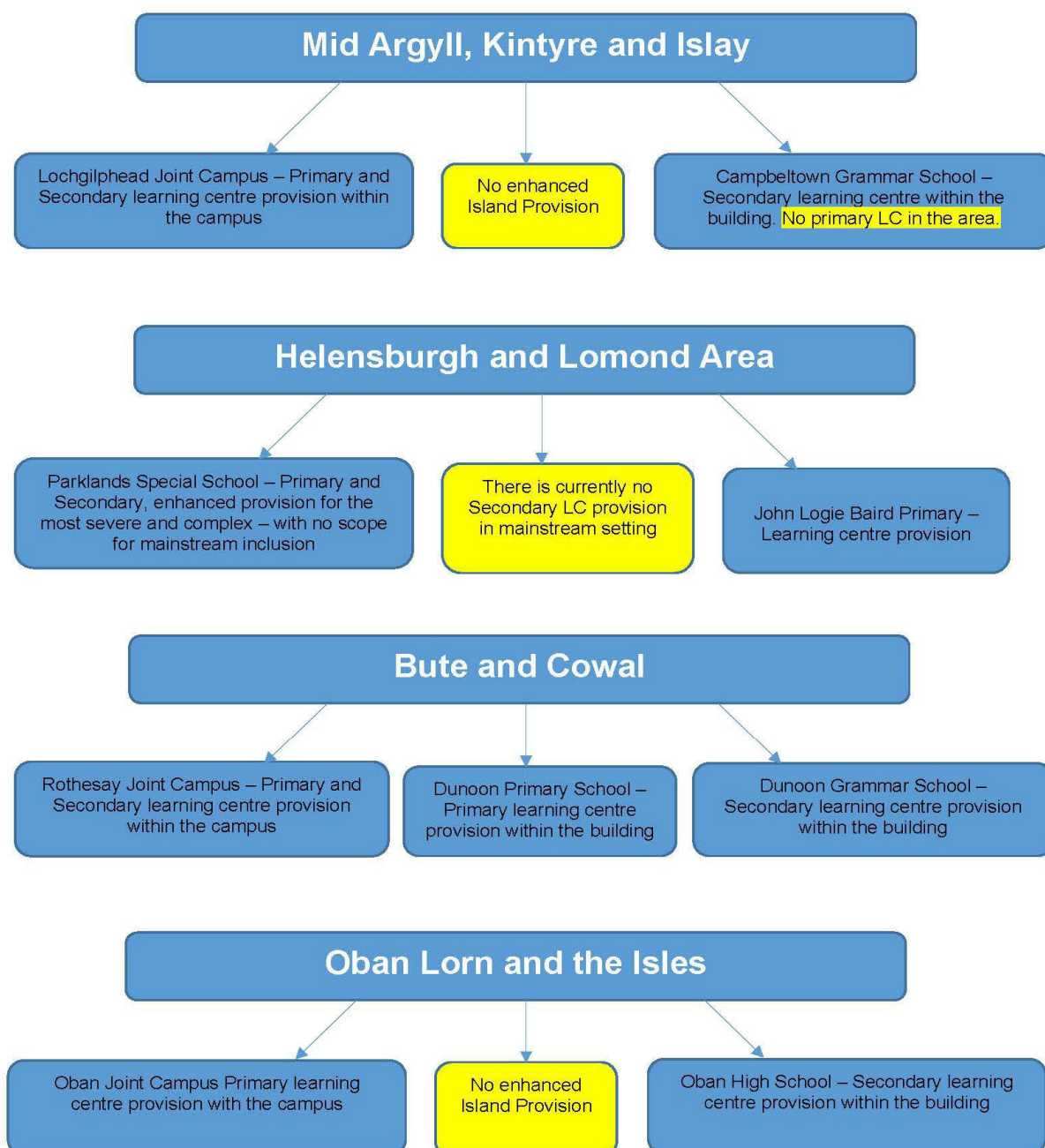
These facilities are bespoke and many include accessible teaching spaces, breakout quiet rooms, low stimulus, and high stimulus sensory rooms, appropriate outdoor space, changing facilities with the necessary equipment for people with physical disabilities, laundry facilities and accessible life skills kitchen areas. Elaborated curriculum activities can include horse-riding, swimming, learning in the outdoors and life-skills activities in the local community.

A theme of the feedback from the 2022 ASN consultation from stakeholders was the inequitable provision across different geographical areas in the authority.

The diagram on the next page shows our current Learning Centre provision for complex needs learners. Most notably, it identifies the gaps where we see an absence of provision and hence, a challenge in meeting the needs of some of our most vulnerable learners.

All of this creates an inequity of educational experience and a detrimental impact on the attainment, achievement and potential for positive outcomes of this high priority cohort of our learners.

An Overview of Enhanced Provision across Argyll and Bute's Education Estate
(May 2023)



In order to make the access to Learning Centres more equitable across Argyll and Bute, we would require to establish **primary Learning Centre provision in the Campbeltown area**, as well as **island Learning Centre provision on Mull and on Islay**. Similarly, **a secondary provision in the Helensburgh and Lomond area**, within Hermitage Academy would reduce the number of young people being educated in external day placements outwith the local area. Although our smaller islands would not have provision directly, the coverage would be expanded to allow travel to more accessible provision as part of an agreed learning plan for individual pupils. The diagram on the previous page gives a clear overview of coverage currently and where the inequity currently exists.

A breakdown of costs and necessary resources for phase 1 is noted in the appendix 1 attached.

The works could be planned in a phased timescale, without requiring all to be completed simultaneously, however to address the level of need currently being experienced and that which is projected, progressing with all would tackle the issue of inequity directly.

7.2 Secondary Enhanced Wellbeing Hubs (Phase 2)

While our Learning Centres provide an accessible environment, an enhanced pupil to staff ratio and the flexibility for a bespoke curriculum they are predominantly used by our most complex needs learners who can be experiencing both cognitive and physical impairments. The proposal to develop a number of Secondary Enhanced Wellbeing Hubs in addition to the four new Learning Centres proposed, would allow the Education Service to address the growing social, emotional and behavioural needs of a number of children and young people in a much more effective and efficient manner.

This vulnerable cohort of our children and young people are those with **complex emotional and mental health needs**. Often these children and young people require to access enhanced provision outwith the local authority at a tremendous cost, but are also often the learners from whom we see a disengagement and inability to access mainstream learning on a full –time basis. **The result of this is a significantly reduced capacity to meet their potential.**

Across the local authority we have many Care Experienced children and young people, Gypsy Travellers, Young Carers and those on the edge of exclusion and with highly dysregulated behaviour as a result of severe and complex emotional needs stemming from trauma.

The proposal to develop Secondary Enhanced Wellbeing provision within four mainstream secondary schools within the authority is a direct mechanism to tackle the challenges outlined above and to give our learners the best chance of successful outcomes. Adequately providing for their specific needs will support an improvement in attendance, engagement, attainment and achievement and secure the best possible outcomes for them as learners.

The proposal would allow schools to provide the extra support and flexibility required to create bespoke package of education for young people which avoids disengagement from education and the risk of these learners failing to attain and becoming marginalised from potential for securing a positive post- school destination.

It is anticipated that in the development of these provisions, a number of children at the primary stage who are currently transported outwith the local authority on a daily basis could be returned to their mainstream setting for their secondary education and importantly, the projected need to send further children outwith Argyll and Bute as they move into secondary education would be reduced accordingly. **Appendix 2 outlines the projected need for external day placements likely to be required within the next year.**

It is not possible to project exact numbers of learners possibly requiring external provision beyond the next 5 years, however given the pattern of emerging need across the country and Argyll and Bute specifically, the development of Secondary Enhanced Wellbeing Hubs allows us to future proof our Learning Estate and protect the most vulnerable cohort of children and young people within their own communities.

The benefits in developing these Secondary Enhanced Wellbeing provisions are threefold: (i) return pupils from external day placements, where possible (ii) Future-proof our provision in a way which reduces the need to send pupils to external day placements over coming years and (iii) provide a more robust resource to serve pupils with complex emotional and behavioural needs who are not currently achieving their potential within full-time mainstream settings.

7.3 Returning Pupils for External Day Placements – Further Detail

At present we have four primary aged children in total, currently accessing external day placements for education who could potentially have their needs met within Argyll and Bute Enhanced Wellbeing provision if the resources were in place as noted above.

Placements within Crossreach School, Erskine Waterfront are currently purchased at £65,000 per child per annum, while placements in Spark of Genius, Skypoint School in Faifley cost between £24,460 and £44,487 per annum depending on the level of support required.

At present the Education Service fund the entire cost of these placements. These figures do not include the additional cost of daily transport to and from placement as well as any requirement for an escort in this regard. Although transport costs are not covered by the Education budget, a snapshot of the current costs incurred for external day placements is included at Appendix 2 and totals **£86.086**.

The children in Crossreach are currently at the upper primary stage with at least 6 years of school education remaining. Successfully providing support for four young people within Argyll and Bute rather than via external placements would

allow release of around £260,000 annually from the day / residential special school placement budget which is currently overspent. Similarly, a significant saving in transport costs could be made.

The anonymised detail within Appendix 2 gives an overview of the current Spend on External Day Placements for Education, as well as outlining the projected need for imminent external placement and the stage at which each of these learners is at within education.

It further outlines the current annual cost of enhanced support for a small number of learners whose needs could be met more effectively and cost of support streamlined, if the proposal for Enhanced Wellbeing Hubs is taken forward. **These costs are accrued as a result of having to employ specific staff to support them in their local settings- this is not the most efficient use of budget or resource.**

7.4 Prioritisation

Prioritisation of the above proposals would see the development of the 4 Learning Centres as an immediate area of need to be implemented as soon as is possible in relation to expenditure and feasibility. This would directly address some of the key concerns about equity of resource in the areas where we see 'gaps' as illustrated in this report.

The Enhanced Wellbeing Provisions are also of significant importance as we seek to reduce the number of our children and young people who require to access appropriate education provision from external providers as well as reducing the potential for school exclusions.

8.0 Funding the Proposal

8.1 As outlined, the education service are facing a significant budget pressure in regards meeting the complex additional support needs of a growing number of our children and young people. It is anticipated that this pressure will continue to grow as outlined in section 1, if we do not look at delivering provision in a more effective, equitable and efficient way from within our existing Learning Estate.

Argyll and Bute Council is not alone in having to address the growing additional and complex needs of our children and young people, ideally a national discussion on how education services can manage this emerging landscape more effectively within core provision is required and would be welcomed. The proposed development of four new Learning Centres and Secondary Enhanced Wellbeing Hubs as outlined in this report is a strategy which the service believes will address these concerns on a local level in-so-far as possible, whilst future proofing the learning estate for our children and young people. It does so in an equitable way which offers consistent resource across all of our localities.

8.2 In order to avoid having to request a significant amount of funding from the Council to resource the proposals as outlined, the Education Service has

developed them on the basis that the projected capital and revenue costs would be met from savings within the existing Education Service budget as outlined in Appendix 1. This would allow for the establishment of four new Learning Centres.

- 8.3 The proposals require to be balanced alongside the overall budget gap facing the Council and take into account the potential savings options which may well come forward to help bridge the gap. The funding, particularly on the revenue side, are in effect savings options that have been identified early that would therefore not be available to be used as savings options if put into this proposal.
- 8.4 The proposed use of existing funds is outlined below in regards to Capital and Revenue Resource Requirement for Phase 1 (Learning Centres)
 - 8.4.1 The **Capital Resource Requirement** of £1,255,000 for the Phase 1 – Learning Centres will be funded from an existing Education Unspent Budget Earmarked Reserve agreed at Council in June 2023.
 - 8.4.2 The **Revenue Resource Requirement** of £495,560 for Phase 1 – Learning Centres will be funded from additional funding received from the Scottish Government as part of their 100 day promise to increase support within schools.
 - 8.4.3 There would be a natural pause between phase 1 (Learning Centres) and phase 2 (Secondary Enhanced Wellbeing Hubs) of the proposals being taken forward in order to re-evaluate the position and impact and to allow a review of the use of revenue funding.
 - 8.4.4 On the basis that the proposals then proceed to phase 2 the estimated capital and revenue costs to do this would require to be met, either by the Service identifying these from within existing Education budgets, or by these estimated costs coming forward as a funding request to the Council.

The Capital Resource Requirement for phase 2 is estimated at £300,000.

The Revenue Resource Requirement for phase 2 is estimated at £612,124.

- 8.5 In agreeing to progression of these proposals, a number of the Council priorities are addressed with means of measuring tangible impact on key data in relation to attendance, exclusion, attainment and achievement.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 In conclusion to the report, and in light of the significant increase in the level of additional need being displayed across the pupil population, which can also be evidenced nationally, it is recommended that the proposals for future service transformation and improvement are progressed as outlined.
- 9.2 In putting forward these proposals, the Education service are conscious of the Council's financial position and the need to find significant savings over the

coming years. The Service are currently working on a number of savings options to be outlined as we move forward with the budget process.

- 9.3 There would be a natural pause between phase 1 (Learning Centres) and phase 2 (Secondary Enhanced Wellbeing Hubs) of the proposals being taken forward in order to re-evaluate the position and impact and to allow a review of the use of revenue funding.
- 9.4 The view of the Service, is that addressing the growing complexity of Additional Support Needs within our children and young people and doing so in an equitable way, is of the highest priority. The approach which the service believes should be taken, irrespective of how it is funded is that set out in this paper.

10.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Policy - None
- 10.2 Financial – The capital and revenue costs relevant to this proposal are outline in Appendix 1.
- 10.3 Legal – The statutory duties of the Council will be met.
- 10.4 HR – Potential alterations to management structures within ASN team will be considered.
- 10.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
- 10.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – All legislative requirements will be met
 - 10.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None
 - 10.5.3 Islands – Potential to develop greater equity of access to ASN provision.
- 10.6 Climate Change - none
- 10.7 Risk – Appropriate consultation and scrutiny of process will mitigate risk.
- 10.8 Customer Service – Improvements in service/provision to better meet individual needs is being sought.

Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Education
Councillor Yvonne McNeilly – Education Policy Lead

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Funding Detail for Phase 1

Appendix 2 - Current Spend on External Day Placements for Education

Appendix 1

Additional Support Needs Review

Phase 1

Learning Centres - Estimated Capital Costs	£	Potential Funding Available for Capital Expenditure	£
Adaptations Hermitage Academy (Secondary Learning Centre)	255,000	Unspent Earmarked 21-22 DSM School Carry Forward (These funds require to be spent within Education)	1,255,000
Costing for Primary Learning Centre Campbeltown Area	300,000		
Costing for Primary Learning Centre Isle of Mull	300,000		
Costing for Primary Learning Centre Isle of Islay	300,000		
IT Equipment	100,000		
Total Estimated Capital Costs	<u>1,255,000</u>	Total Estimated Funding Available	<u>1,255,000</u>

Learning Centres - Estimated Revenue Costs		Potential Revenue Funding	
Staffing Costs - Learning Centres (Costed at New Salary Scales)		Application of identified savings	495,560
4.4 FTE Teachers (1.1 Teacher per Setting)	282,212		
300 Hours ASN Support (75 hours per setting) per week	213,348		
Total Estimated Employee Revenue Costing	<u>495,560</u>	Total Estimated Recurring Revenue Funding Available	<u>495,560</u>

Shortfall Phase 1	0
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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****EDUCATION SERVICE****24 AUGUST 2023**

SQA SCHOOL EXAMINATION RESULTS 2023

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide an update to elected members on the initial outcome of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) 2023 examination diet for young people in Argyll and Bute.
- 1.2** Following the release of the initial examination results by the SQA in August, awards for pupils in academic year 2022/23 will be updated by the SQA in September 2023 following the processing of appeal requests submitted by candidates or schools. As a consequence of the decisions associated with these requests, minor changes to the statistical data contained within this report may occur.
- 1.3** It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:
- I. Notes the guidance from the SQA, detailed below at 4.3, about qualitative comparisons of data over the last four years.
 - II. Notes the outcome of the initial SQA examination results for pupils in academic year 2022/23, and that the performance of Argyll and Bute Schools in 2023 is above the current national performance in SQA examinations in two of the four measures (National 4 and Higher) at A-C, and above all four measures (National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher) at A-D.
 - III. Requests that the Executive Director provide further reports to the Community Services Committee to allow the consideration of updated statistical school and national information, scheduled to be released by Insight (school data analysis tool) in September 2023 and February 2024.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

EDUCATION

24 AUGUST 2023

SQA SCHOOL EXAMINATION RESULTS 2023

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 On 3rd August 2023 the Council received SQA examination results for all pupils entered for National Qualifications in session 2022/23. This provided initial information on the outcome of examination performance for all pupils in each of the ten Argyll and Bute secondary schools.

2.2 The purpose of this report is to inform Elected Members of the initial outcome of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) 2023 awards for young people in Argyll and Bute. A range of statistical information is provided illustrating performance of pupils across the four National Qualification measures:

National 4
National 5
Higher
Advanced Higher

As has been the case in previous years, all data in this initial attainment report has been sourced from SEEMiS Business Intelligence Course Awards data.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- I. Notes the guidance from the SQA, detailed below at 4.3, about qualitative comparisons of data over the last four years.
- II. Notes the outcome of the initial SQA examination results for pupils in academic year 2022/23, and that the performance of Argyll and Bute Schools in 2023 is above the current national performance in SQA examinations in two of the four measures (National 4 and Higher) at A-C, and above all four measures (National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher) at A-D.
- III. Requests that the Executive Director provide further reports to the Community Services Committee to allow the consideration of updated statistical school and national information, scheduled to be released by Insight (school data analysis tool) in September 2023 and February 2024.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Pupils in each of the ten secondary schools in Argyll and Bute in S4–S6 were presented for a range of SQA qualifications in May and June of 2023. Following the release of awards, Education Services conducted an initial analysis of the results to support the preparation of a summary report for presentation to and consideration by Elected Members.
- 4.2 This paper presents a summary overview of the examination outcomes and draws comparisons of the overall attainment of pupils in Argyll and Bute with pupils nationally.
- 4.3 Although details of SQA attainment data in 2019 and 2022 are supplied in this paper, and some comparisons have been drawn to aid contextualisation of this year's attainment data, it is important to note the guidance of the SQA regarding the drawing of conclusions about educational performance over the last four years.

In the edition of SQA News dated 8th August 2023, SQA state:

"The 2023 results are between 2019 – the last exam year before the pandemic – and 2022, when a 'generous approach' was applied to awarding for the first year of the return to exams"

"There have been different approaches to awarding in each year since 2019. This means that comparisons of attainment between years should be treated with significant caution and do not allow for conclusions to be drawn on changes in education performance during this time."

- 4.4 For A-C grades, the performance of Argyll and Bute schools in 2023 is **above** the current National performance in SQA examinations in **two of the four national measures: National 4 and Higher.**

Table 1 below present the overall performance of candidates in Argyll and Bute across all course levels at Grades A-C, and, for context, compares attainment in the three academic years 2019, 2022 and 2023. It also compares 2023 Argyll and Bute A-C attainment with 2023 national attainment.

As a result of the cancellation of examinations in 2020 and 2021, and the adoption of an assessment model based on teacher judgement and demonstrated attainment, **2021 and 2022 results have not been included.**

Table 1– A-C Awards 2019, 2022, 2023 – A&B/National – National 4, National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher

	2018 - 2019	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2022 - 2023			
	A&B Attainment A-C %	A&B Attainment A-C%	A&B Attainment A-C %	National Attainment A-C %	Difference A&B 18/19 - 22/23	Difference A&B 21/22 - 22/23	Difference A&B 22/23 to National A-C
Nat 4	100%	100%	100%	87.80%	0.00%	0.00%	+12.20%
Nat 5	79.43%	78.62%	76.93%	78.80%	-2.50%	-1.69%	-1.87%
Higher	73.19%	79.51%	77.12%	77.10%	+3.93%	-2.38%	+0.02%
Adv H	75.68%	83.72%	79.44%	79.80%	+3.77%	-4.28%	-0.36%

Summary:

- Our National 4 pass rate is **100%** for the 8th year in succession. This is 12.20% **above** the 2023 national measure of 87.80%
- Our National 5 A-C pass rate has **reduced** by 2.50% on 2019. It is **below** the 2023 national measure for National 5 by 1.87%.
- Our Higher A-C pass rate **is above** 2019's figure by 3.93%. Argyll and Bute's A-C Higher pass rate is **above** the 2023 national measure by 0.02%.
- Our Advanced Higher A-C pass rate is **above** 2019's figure by 3.77%. Argyll and Bute's 2023 A-C Advanced Higher pass rate is **marginally below** the 2023 national measure by 0.36%.

4.5 For A-D grades, the performance of Argyll and Bute schools in 2022 is **above** the current National performance in SQA examinations in **all four of the national measures: National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.**

Table 2 below present the overall performance of candidates in Argyll and Bute across all course levels at Grades A-D, and, for context, compares attainment in the three academic years 2019, 2022 and 2023. It also compares 2023 Argyll and Bute A-D attainment with 2023 national attainment.

As with A-C awards, it is not valid to include comparisons with 2020 and 2021 for the reasons detailed above.

Table 2 – A-D Awards 2019, 2022, 2023 – A&B/National – National 4, National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher

	2018 - 2019	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2022 - 2023			
	A&B Attainment A-D %	A&B Attainment A-D %	A&B Attainment A-D %	National Attainment A-D %	Difference A&B 18/19 - 22/23	Difference A&B 21/22 - 22/23	Difference A&B 22/23 to National A-D
Nat 4	100%	100%	100%	87.80%	0.00%	0.00%	+12.20%
Nat 5	92.00%	91.78%	90.67%	90.50%	-1.33%	-1.11%	+0.17%
Higher	91.38%	92.62%	92.07%	90.50%	+0.70%	-0.55%	+1.57%
Adv H	87.64%	96.51%	93.03%	92.70%	+5.39%	-3.48%	+0.33%

Summary:

- As noted previously, our National 4 pass rate is **100%** for the 8th year in succession
- Our National 5 A-D pass rate has **reduced** by 1.33% on 2019. The Argyll and Bute figure of 90.67% is **above** the 2023 national measure by 0.17%.
- Our Higher A-D pass rate has **increased** on 2019 by 0.70%. Argyll and Bute's figure is 1.57% **above** the 2023 national figure.
- Our Advanced Higher A-D pass rate has **increased** by 5.39% on 2019. This is **above** the 2023 Advanced Higher national average by 0.33%.

4.6 Tables 3 and 4 present the overall performance of Argyll and Bute Secondary Schools (table 3 A-C, table 4 A-D) across all course levels between the academic years 2019 and 2023 (excluding 2020 and 2021), allowing each school to be compared with the Argyll and Bute average attainment figure and the national average attainment figure.

Table 3 – SQA data for Individual secondary schools – National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher 2019, 2022, 2023 – A-C Grades

Diet Year	Course	CGS	DGS	HA	IHS	LJC	OHS	RA	Tar A	Ti HS	To HS	A&B	National
2023	NAT 4	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	87.8%
2022	NAT 4	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	86.1%
2019	NAT 4	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	88.5%
2023	NAT 5	75.1%	77.4%	78.8%	88.4%	73.9%	77.1%	71.0%	79.9%	65.7%	70.2%	76.9%	78.8%
2022	NAT 5	71%	79%	85%	86%	76%	75%	78%	66%	61%	78%	78%	80.8%
2019	NAT 5	73%	84%	84%	85%	79%	74%	66%	88%	68%	81%	79%	78.2%

2023	Higher	68.1%	79.5%	80.5%	90.9%	75.1%	79.2%	65.8%	57.7%	50.0%	68.8%	77.1%	77.1%
2022	Higher	73%	78%	85%	85%	82%	75%	71%	64%	76%	91%	80%	78.9%
2019	Higher	67%	76%	78%	73%	70%	71%	54%	67%	50%	77%	73%	74.8%
2023	Adv H	64.3%	83.3%	78.7%	75.0%	71.7%	88.5%	81.8%	81.8%	NP*	80.0%	79.4%	79.8%
2022	Adv H	77%	73%	87%	95%	76%	85%	74%	100%	NP*	100%	84%	81.3%
2019	Adv H	80%	70%	80%	82%	94%	52%	76%	67%	33%	77%	76%	79.4%

Table 4 – SQA data for Individual secondary schools – National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher 2019, 2022, 2023 – A-D Grades

Diet Year	Course	CGS	DGS	HA	IHS	LJC	OHS	RA	Tar A	Ti HS	To HS	A&B	National
2023	NAT 4	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	87.8%
2022	NAT 4	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	86.1%
2019	NAT 4	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	88.5%
2023	NAT 5	90.5%	90.3%	91.8%	97.1%	89.0%	90.9%	87.3%	91.0%	88.6%	86.9%	90.7%	90.5%
2022	NAT 5	87.9%	92.1%	95.4%	96.5%	90.0%	90.2%	91.8%	83.2%	76.3%	90.7%	91.8%	92.1%
2019	NAT 5	90.3%	92.8%	93.8%	96.4%	92.5%	89.9%	84.5%	97.7%	82.4%	93.2%	92.0%	90.7%
2023	Higher	88.9%	95.3%	92.1%	98.7%	88.9%	93.4%	86.6%	90.4%	87.5%	89.1%	92.1%	90.5%
2022	Higher	89.2%	91.7%	94.4%	96.8%	94.4%	90.8%	91.3%	86.6%	94.1%	96.6%	92.6%	91.5%
2019	Higher	88.2%	92.6%	93.3%	95.8%	89.0%	89.9%	84.4%	89.3%	75.0%	93.5%	91.4%	89.9%
2023	Adv H	92.9%	91.7%	92.6%	100.0%	91.3%	96.2%	81.8%	100%	NP*	100%	93.0%	92.7%
2022	Adv H	96.2%	100%	99.3%	94.7%	89.7%	89.6%	94.7%	100%	NP*	100%	96.5%	93.4%
2019	Adv H	80.0%	87.0%	86.9%	100%	100%	69.0%	100%	100%	100.0%	92.3%	87.6%	87.8%

Key to School abbreviations

CGS	Campbeltown Grammar School
DGS	Dunoon Grammar School
HA	Hermitage Academy
IHS	Islay High School
LJC	Lochgilphead Joint Campus
OHS	Oban High School
RJC	Rothesay Joint Campus
TAR A	Tarbert Academy
TI HS	Tiree High School
TO HS	Tobermory High School

Summary:

- In 2023, all 10 secondary schools maintained their 100% pass rate for National 4 outperforming the national measure.
- At A-C, three of our secondary schools were **equal with or above** the 2023 national average measure for National 5.

At A-D, five of our secondary schools were **equal with or above** the 2023 national average measure for National 5.

- At A-C, four of our secondary schools were **above** the 2023 national average

measure for Higher.

At A-D, four of our secondary schools were **above** the 2023 national average measure for Higher.

- At A-C, five of our secondary schools were **above** the 2023 national average for Advanced Higher.
At A-D, five of our secondary schools were **above** the 2023 national average for Advanced Higher.

One school did not present at this level. It should be noted that, as a result of the small number of presentations for Advanced Higher, statistical variance at this level must be carefully interpreted. For example, 100% pass rate can be as a result of one pupil being presented for a subject at Advanced Higher.

- 4.7** Overall, percentage pass rate data should be interpreted very carefully as schools have positive presentation policies that are designed to encourage pupils to achieve success at the highest level of qualification that they can. In some instances, and for some pupils, this may mean that they receive a D grade within a qualification level, which is a recognised award. It is also the policy in Argyll and Bute, as with other local authorities, that full discussion and consideration of both pupil and parent views are reflected in the final decision to continue with a course and to sit the external examination.
- 4.8** This policy may result in circumstances where pupils are given the opportunity to attempt a level that they may find challenging, as it may be their last opportunity to do so, for example in S6. Schools will offer these pupils the opportunity to sit the exam to improve their positive destination chances, such as access to Higher or Further Education.
- 4.9** As a Local Authority we offer a wide range of opportunities that help to meet the needs of our individual learners, whilst also supporting a variety of pathways into secure, sustainable positive destinations.

The results reported within this briefing note **do not include** the following presentations for our young people at this time:

- 1) College courses at levels 4, 5 and 6
- 2) National Progression Awards (NPA) at levels 4, 5 and 6
- 3) Skills for Work Awards at levels 4, 5 and 6
- 4) Foundation Apprenticeships at level 6
- 5) Presentation of S3 pupils at levels 4 and 5

In recent years such qualifications and accreditations have increased individual school attainment levels considerably, once added after the release of Insight data in February. Final attainment and achievement cannot be measured until this time.

5.0 Appeals

- 5.1** The SQA Appeals Service for 2023 provides learners with the opportunity to request a

marking review if they have concerns about their certificated grade. The appeals service is free and open for learners to appeal either directly to SQA, or through their school.

Candidates who have concerns about their grade and think there may have been an error with the marking of their exam question paper(s) or coursework, can request a marking review by SQA. This is different to the 2022 appeals service as alternative assessment evidence (e.g. prelim evidence from schools) will not be submitted or considered.

The SQA marking review checks that:

- all parts of SQA assessments have been marked;
- the marking is in line with national standards;
- the marks given for each answer have been added up correctly; and
- the correct result has been entered on the SQA system.

Following review, the candidate's grade can go up, stay the same, or go down. Priority Appeals continue to be available to those with university, college or employment offers pending. SQA have sent directly to every candidate a copy of their Appeals Process Guidance.

Key dates

Priority appeals	Dates
Appeals 2023 Learner Direct service opens to learners.	8 August 2023
Appeals 2023 service opens to centres on SQA Connect.	8 August 2023
Deadline for submitting priority appeals via Learner Direct.	15 August 2023
Priority appeals service for centres closes	21 August 2023
SQA issues results for priority appeals to centres.	4 September 2023
SQA confirms outcomes to UCAS.	5 September 2023
Replacement certificates issued to learners.	mid-November 2023 [†]

Non-priority appeals	Dates
Appeals 2023 Learner Direct service opens to learners.	8 August 2023
Appeals 2023 service opens to centres on SQA Connect.	8 August 2023
Deadline for submitting non-priority appeals via Learner Direct.	29 August 2023
Non-priority appeals service for centres closes	1 September 2023
SQA issues results for non-priority appeals.	October 2023 [†]
Replacement certificates issued to learners.	mid-November 2023 [†]

[†]It may be necessary to change these dates, depending on the volume of appeals .

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 This report presents a summary of the initial analysis of the 2023 SQA external examination outcomes for Argyll and Bute pupils at authority level and in each of the

ten secondary schools.

- 6.2 In 2023 the performance of Argyll and Bute schools compared positively with national measures. For results at A-C and A-D, Argyll and Bute attainment is higher than the national average for six out of eight measures.
- 6.3 The Education Service are taking forward a programme of support and challenge with schools across the authority, involving a range of actions and measures to support schools to secure further improvement in examination outcomes for pupils. In the autumn, all secondary schools will participate in an Attainment Meeting with the Executive Director, Heads of Education and the Education Manager and Officer, at which HTs will present in-depth analysis of all aspects of their schools' attainment, and indicate key areas of focus for improvement.
- 6.4 A further report on Educational Attainment and Wider Achievement will be presented to Community Services Committee in December 2023 following the publication of updated national performance information on Insight released in September of each year.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 **Policy:** This report links directly to Outcome 3 in the Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan: Education, Skills and Training Maximise Opportunities for All
- 7.2 **Financial:** None.
- 7.3 **Personnel:** None.
- 7.4 **Equal Opportunities:** None.
- 7.5 **Legal:** None.
- 7.6 **Climate Change** None.
- 7.7 **Risk:** The performance of Argyll and Bute schools in national examinations can significantly enhance or detract from the Council's reputation and attractiveness as an area to work and live in.
- 7.8 **Customer Services:** This report provides Elected Members with an overview of Service Performance.

Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly - Policy Lead for Education

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****EDUCATION****24 AUGUST 2023**

SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** This paper provides the Committee with an update on the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) which is supported by funding through the Attainment Scotland Fund, the aims of which are to address the challenges of the poverty-related attainment gap.
- 1.2** The Attainment Scotland Fund is made up of a number of funding streams totalling £1billion. This targeted funding includes the Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) and Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) which Argyll and Bute receive and will be the focus of this paper.
- 1.3** The paper will include the draft authority 'core' stretch aims 2023-26 (Appendix 1), 2023-24 Scottish Government Pupil Equity Funding allocations for Argyll and Bute schools eligible to receive PEF funding (Appendix 2) and an overview of the Argyll and Bute Strategic Equity Funding Plan 2023-26 (Appendix 3),

SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1** The refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge, launched in March 2022, continues to build on the existing policy that has been in place since 2015. The main aim of the policy is to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- 2.2** The policy's mission is to *'use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap'*.
- 2.3** The Scottish Government require all local authorities to set new 'stretch aims' as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. These stretch aims are required to set out ambitious aims for progress by the end of the three-year period of 2023/24 – 2025/26, accompanied by interim annual aims detailing an outline trajectory for progress as outlined in their guidance [Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress](#). These should include 5 'core' aims and an additional 'plus' aim. This paper will detail the progress the Education Service has taken in meeting our 2022-2023 stretch aims and in developing new draft stretch aims for 2023-2026 period.
- 2.4** £1 billion of funding has been committed by the Scottish Government over the current parliamentary term to support the realisation of this policy. This is delivered through a number of funding streams including; Strategic Equity Funding, Pupil Equity Funding and Care Experienced Children and Young People funding.
- 2.5** This paper provides the Committee with updated information on the continued intention of the Scottish Government, as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, to disperse £1,365,575 in Pupil Equity Funding and £282,615 in Strategic Equity Funding for the 2023-24 session. It also includes our Strategic Equity Funding Plan 2023-26 as an appendix.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- a) Commends the very good progress towards achieving the 2022-2023 stretch aims and the draft stretch aims developed for period 2023-2026 as required by the Scottish Attainment Challenge.
- b) Notes the update on 2023 Scottish Government Pupil Equity and Strategic Equity Funding.
- c) Notes the provision of strategic guidance at Scottish Government and Authority levels to support the implementation of the Pupil Equity Funding and Strategic Equity Funding.
- d) Agrees with the content of the Argyll and Bute Strategic Equity Funding Plan 'SEF plan 2023- 26 : Tackling the Poverty Related Attainment gap in Argyll and Bute'
- e) Agrees that a further update on the Scottish Attainment Challenge will be presented to a future meeting of the Community Services Committee.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 The first five years of the Scottish Attainment Challenge saw progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap across Scotland. With the disruption to learning as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic we have seen an impact on attainment of children, with those affected by poverty impacted at disproportionately higher levels.

4.2 The Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress (the Framework) aims to:

- Mitigate the impact of poverty on children's outcomes by tackling the poverty-related attainment gap;
- Set high expectations through annual, locally identified stretch aims to ensure progress in recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Build on the investment in the Scottish Attainment Challenge to make a greater difference, more quickly for children and young people;
- Build consistency on processes used across the country to build a more accurate national picture;
- Drive improved outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty;

- Ensure elements of local planning and decision making while driving strategic direction.

4.3 The mission of the Framework is to contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people recognising the importance of attainment, achievement and health and wellbeing. The 'core plus' model of stretch aims reflects this.

4.4 All Local Authorities are expected to set stretch aims for the following five measures and report on these annually to Scottish Government. Progress on our 2022-2023 stretch aims and the draft aims currently in development for 2023-2026 are contained in Appendix 1.

- a) achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (literacy combined and numeracy combined);
- b) the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at all SCQF level 5 based on the "Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations" publication;
- c) the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at all SCQF level 6 based on the "Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations" publication;
- d) the proportion of 16-19 olds participating in education, employment or training based on the Annual Participation Measure produced by Skills Development Scotland; and
- e) a locally identified aim for health and wellbeing, to be measured using local datasets.

4.5 In setting the authority 'core' stretch aims close, collaborative work has been undertaken with the authority's link Education Scotland Attainment Advisor and officers across the central education team. This included examining national and local data across the identified core aims to develop a realistic and ambitious target for 2025-2026. A wider consultation process to include school leaders and representatives from professional associations will be conducted prior to submission being made to the Scottish Government by 31st September 2023.

4.6 An additional 'plus' aim is included in the model with authorities choosing an aim specific to their own context and datasets. The aim needs to detail:

- What is the change for learners?
- How much change?
- Who is target group?
- By when?
- How will be tracked and measured?

4.7 In this regard Officers will continue to work collaboratively with the authority's link Education Scotland Attainment Advisor and the Educational Psychology team in measuring and improving the strong

work already taking place across a number of schools in regards to the programme 'Our Children Their Nurturing Education'.

- 4.8** Alongside the authority stretch aims, developed to closely interrogate the reduction of the poverty-related attainment gap, schools who are eligible will continue to receive Pupil Equity Funding for the remainder of this parliamentary session. Reportable school level allocations are reported in Appendix 2.
- 4.9** Schools are allocated PEF funding directly and this is to be used to provide targeted support for children and young people (and their families if appropriate) affected by poverty. School leaders plan for the use of Pupil Equity Funding through the existing School Improvement Planning processes which includes a template for reporting on expenditure, outcomes and measures for PEF funding.
- 4.10** [National Operational Guidance](#) is provided by the Scottish Government to support school leaders in the use of PEF. This national guidance is further supported by the Argyll and Bute PEF information pack and newly developed Argyll and Bute Framework and online 'PEF Hub' which further details processes, procedures and good practice in effective and targeted use of PEF and facilitates a shared space for school leaders to moderate ongoing work in this area.
- 4.11** Head Teachers report annual through their Standards and Quality Reports the impact of the use of PEF within their school.
- 4.12** Strategic Equity Funding continues to support all 32 local authorities to invest in approaches to achieving the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. This funding is part of the Scottish Government's Attainment Scotland Fund and is distributed equitably based on Children in Low Income Families data for the 2019/20 financial year. SEF allocations have been confirmed over the four year period from 2022/23 to 2025/26 financial years to enable clarity to support strategic planning over the four year period. Argyll and Bute will receive £ 282, 615 for session 2023-2024 through SEF funding.
- 4.13** An Education Officer for the Scottish Attainment Challenge has been appointed for a 23 month seconded period from April 2023-March 2025 using SEF funding. This Officer is supporting all schools in their identification of need and their drive to close their attainment gaps in their analytical use of data and targeted use of school-specific PEF funding. In close partnership with the authority's link Education Scotland Attainment Advisor, and in conjunction across the Performance and Improvement Team, the Education Officer tracks progress towards achieving the stretch aims and engages with schools in analysis and quality assurance of attainment.
- 4.14** Planning for the spend of SEF funding for 2023-2024 includes continued funding for the recently appointed Education Officer: Scottish

Attainment Challenge, Education Support Officer: Literacy, Numeracy Lead, Nurture teachers and training and resource costs relating to literacy and numeracy. Detail of the SEF funding plan 2023-26 is contained within Appendix 3.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1** The refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge and associated funding streams focuses on and accelerates targeted improvement activity to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. It is also intended to support and complement the broader range of initiatives and programmes to ensure that all of Scotland's children and young people reach their full potential.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** Policy – Attainment Scotland Funding through the Scottish Attainment Challenge supports the central purpose of the Scottish Government and the delivery of national outcomes. Supporting delivery on the Long Term Outcomes 3 and 4.

- 6.2** Financial – Potential financial implications given the limited nature of funding in ensuring the avoidance of ongoing liabilities or redundancy costs which are unfunded.

- 6.3** Legal – The Council requires to meet their statutory duties as prescribed in the 'Standards in Scotland's etc., Act 2000'

- 6.4** HR – Potential HR implications given the time limited nature of the funding in ensuring the avoidance of ongoing HR liabilities or redundancy costs which are unfunded.

- 6.5** Fairer Scotland Duty:

6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – The Scottish Attainment Challenge is aimed at reducing inequalities.

6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty -

6.5.3 Islands - none

- 6.6** Climate Change - none

- 6.7** Risk – Potential reputational risk to the Council by failing to deliver the statutory requirements of the revisions arising within the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc., Act 2000.

- 6.8** Customer Service – none

Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly – Policy Lead for Education

30th July 2023

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Argyll and Bute Stretch Aims: Progress in 2022-2023 and
Draft Stretch Aims for 2023-2026

Appendix 2 – Pupil Equity Fund allocations 2023-2024

Appendix 3 – Argyll and Bute Strategic Equity Funding Plan 2023-2026

Appendix 1

[APPENDIX 1: Provisional 3 Year Stretch aims 2023-2026](#)

In partnership with our Attainment Advisor, we have devised provisional stretch aims as detailed below. These will be subject to change following consultation with stakeholders and finalisation of our ACEL, attendance and leavers' data for session 2022-23. We will build on progress made this year by ensuring a relentless focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap whilst raising the bar for all. This will include universal and targeted support for schools based on their attainment data with the aim of building staff capacity at all levels.

Literacy (P 1/4/7 Combined) Stretch Aim				
	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Confirmed ACEL Data 2022 (DEC)	62.4%	53%	80%	27.4pp
Interim Stretch Aim 2023/24	71%	70%	81%	11pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025-26	76%	75%	85%	10pp

Numeracy (P 1/4/7 Combined) Stretch Aim				
	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Confirmed ACEL Data 2022 (DEC)	72.7%	68.1%	85.9%	17.8pp
Interim Stretch Aim 2023/24	78%	73%	89.5%	16.5pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025-26	83%	78%	91%	13pp

School Leavers with 1 or more pass at <u>ALL</u> SCQF Level 5				
	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Confirmed Data 2021-22 (Feb 2023)	90.93% (VC 91.32%)	83.61% (VC 86.23%)	98.04% (VC 98.43%)	14.43pp
Stretch Aims 2023/24	91.5%	85%	98.5%	13.5pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	0.57pp	1.39pp	0.46pp	0.93pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	93%	89%	100%	11pp

School Leavers with 1 or more pass at <u>ALL</u> SCQF Level 6				
	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Confirmed Data 2021-22 (Feb 2023)	65.99% (VC 69.37%)	54.10% (VC 59.05%)	82.35% (VC 92.75%)	28.25pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	67%	57%	84%	27pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	0.51pp	2.9pp	1.65pp	1.25pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	72%	64%	89%	25pp

Participation Measure - 16-19 year olds in Education, Training and Employment				
	Overall	Q1	Q5	Gap (Q1 –Q5)
Confirmed SDS Data 2021-22 (Aug 2022)	93.9%	89.1%	95.5%	6.4pp
Snapshot Data SDS May 2023	92.7%	87.1%	94.2%	7.1pp
Confirmed SDS Data 2022-23 (Aug 2023)	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	93.5%	89.5%	96%	6.5pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	0.8pp	2.4pp	1.8pp	0.6pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	95%	92.5%	97%	4.5pp

HWB – Attendance in Primary - Free School Meal registered and Non Free School Meal Registered				
	Overall	FSM registered	Non FSM registered	GAP (FSM/non FSM)
Confirmed Data May 2023	92.71%	88.86%	93.43%	4.57pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	93.5%	89.5%	93.5%	4pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	0.79pp	0.64pp	0.07pp	0.57pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	94.5%	92%	96%	4pp

HWB – Attendance in Secondary - Free School Meal registered and Non Free School Meal Registered				
	Overall	FSM registered	Non FSM registered	GAP (FSM/non FSM)
Confirmed Data May 2023	88.33%	81.24%	89.46%	8.23pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	90%	82%	89.5%	7.5pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	1.67pp	0.76pp	0.04pp	0.72pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	92%	87%	94%	7pp

Appendix 2

School	PEF ALLOCATIONS + C/F 2023-24			
	2023/24 Alloc	Top Ups	2023/24 Alloc+TopUps	2022/23 C/F
Achahoish Primary School	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Ardrihaigh Primary School	£ 11,025	£ -	£ 11,025	£ 3,736
Arinagour Primary School	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Arrochar Primary School	£ 6,125	£ -	£ 6,125	£ 3,403
Barcaldine Primary School	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Bowmore Primary School	£ 9,800	£ -	£ 9,800	£ -
Bowmore Primary School Gaelic Unit	£ 1,225	£ -	£ 1,225	£ 2,208
Bunessan Primary Gaelic Unit	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Bunessan Primary School	£ -	£ 1,080	£ 1,080	£ 1,457
Campbeltown Grammar School	£ 39,200	£ -	£ 39,200	£ 49,991
Cardross Primary School	£ 8,575	£ 65	£ 8,640	£ 3,695
Carradale Primary School	£ -	£ 1,080	£ 1,080	£ 370
Castlehill Primary School	£ 28,175	£ -	£ 28,175	£ 8,789
Clachan Primary School	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Colgrain Primary School	£ 39,200	£ -	£ 39,200	£ 2,608
Craignish Primary School	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Dalintober Primary School	£ 62,475	£ -	£ 62,475	£ 33,071
Dalmally Primary School	£ 4,900	£ -	£ 4,900	£ 1,335
Dervaig Primary School	£ -	£ 3,240	£ 3,240	£ 1,332
Drumlemble Primary School	£ 2,450	£ -	£ 2,450	£ 223
Dunbeg Primary School	£ 14,700	£ -	£ 14,700	£ 5,903
Dunoon Grammar School	£ 91,875	£ -	£ 91,875	£ 3,950
Dunoon Primary School	£ 51,450	£ 390	£ 51,840	£ 38,713
Easdale Primary School	£ 4,900	£ -	£ 4,900	£ 3,864
Furnace Primary School	£ 4,900	£ -	£ 4,900	£ 6,825
Garelochhead Primary School	£ 12,250	£ -	£ 12,250	£ 901
Gigha Primary School	£ 3,675	£ -	£ 3,675	£ 3,046
Glassary Primary School	£ 4,900	£ -	£ 4,900	£ 10,033
Glenbarr Primary School	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Hermitage Academy	£ 53,900	£ -	£ 53,900	£ 51,994
Hermitage Primary School	£ 36,750	£ -	£ 36,750	£ 15,042
Innellan Primary School	£ 7,350	£ 210	£ 7,560	£ 7,582
Inveraray Primary School	£ 4,900	£ 3,740	£ 8,640	£ 5,846
Iona Primary School	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Islay High School	£ 9,800	£ -	£ 9,800	£ 996
John Logie Baird Primary School	£ 26,950	£ 4,370	£ 31,320	£ 16,781
Keills Primary School	£ 2,450	£ -	£ 2,450	£ 1,369
Kilchattan Primary School	£ -	£ 1,080	£ 1,080	£ 685
Kilchrenan Primary School	£ 2,450	£ -	£ 2,450	£ 2,450
Kilcreggan Primary School	£ 13,475	£ -	£ 13,475	£ 8,823
Kilmartin Primary School	£ 1,225	£ 935	£ 2,160	£ 3,231
Kilmodan Primary School	£ -	£ 1,080	£ 1,080	£ 692
Kilninver Primary School	£ 4,900	£ -	£ 4,900	£ 1,640
Kirn Primary School	£ 67,375	£ -	£ 67,375	£ 9,174
Lismore Primary School	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Lochdonhead Primary School	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Lochgillphhead High School	£ 24,500	£ 340	£ 24,840	£ -
Lochgillphhead Primary School	£ 41,650	£ -	£ 41,650	£ 25,180
Lochgillphhead Primary School	£ 3,675	£ 645	£ 4,320	£ -
Lochnell Primary School	£ 14,700	£ -	£ 14,700	£ 12,025
Luss Primary School	£ 2,450	£ -	£ 2,450	£ 1,102
North Bute Primary School	£ 9,800	£ -	£ 9,800	£ 2,577
Oban High School	£ 100,450	£ -	£ 100,450	£ 2,799
Park Primary School	£ 22,050	£ 1,710	£ 23,760	£ 7,334
Parklands School	£ 7,350	£ 1,290	£ 8,640	£ 2,265
Port Charlotte Primary School	£ 2,450	£ 2,950	£ 5,400	£ 1,388
Port Ellen Primary School	£ 8,575	£ 2,225	£ 10,800	£ 3,869
Rhu Primary School	£ 13,475	£ 1,645	£ 15,120	£ -
Rhunahaorine Primary School	£ 8,575	£ -	£ 8,575	£ 4,636
Rockfield Gaelic Primary School	£ 6,125	£ -	£ 6,125	£ 1,161
Rockfield Primary School	£ 53,900	£ 6,580	£ 60,480	£ 13,277
Rosneath Primary School	£ 35,525	£ -	£ 35,525	£ 6,074
Rothsay Academy	£ 34,300	£ -	£ 34,300	£ 16,664
Rothsay Primary School	£ 78,400	£ -	£ 78,400	£ 39,541
Salen Primary School	£ 2,450	£ 790	£ 3,240	£ -
Salen Primary School Gaelic Unit	£ 1,225	£ 2,015	£ 3,240	£ 7,036
Sandbank Primary School	£ 14,700	£ 2,580	£ 17,280	£ 3,447
Sandbank Primary School Gaelic Unit	£ 9,800	£ -	£ 9,800	£ 16,905
Small Isles Primary School	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
St Andrew's Primary School	£ 23,275	£ -	£ 23,275	£ 18,177
St Columba's Primary School	£ 26,950	£ -	£ 26,950	£ 6,964
St Joseph's Primary School	£ 35,525	£ 1,195	£ 36,720	£ 23,378
St Mun's Primary School	£ 33,075	£ -	£ 33,075	£ 14,501
Strachur Primary School	£ 4,900	£ -	£ 4,900	£ 1,897
Strath of Appin Primary School	£ 2,450	£ 790	£ 3,240	£ 2,714
Strath of Appin Primary School Gaelic Unit	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Strone Primary School	£ 4,900	£ -	£ 4,900	£ 1,106
Tarbert Academy	£ 2,450	£ 790	£ 3,240	£ 1,581
Tarbert Primary School	£ 12,250	£ -	£ 12,250	£ 9,034
Taynuilt Primary School	£ 6,125	£ 355	£ 6,480	£ 6,056
Tayvallich Primary School	£ 2,450	£ -	£ 2,450	£ 2,985
Tighnabruaich Primary School	£ 14,700	£ -	£ 14,700	£ -
Tiree High School	£ 4,900	£ 1,580	£ 6,480	£ 5,868
Tiree Primary School	£ 1,225	£ 935	£ 2,160	£ -
Tiree Primary School Gaelic Unit	£ 1,225	£ -	£ 1,225	£ 1,225
Tobermory High School	£ 2,450	£ 2,950	£ 5,400	£ 5,023
Tobermory Primary School	£ 6,125	£ 355	£ 6,480	£ 4,446
Toward Primary School	£ 1,225	£ 935	£ 2,160	£ 2,069
Ulva Primary School	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
TOTAL	£ 1,314,425	£ 48,990	£ 1,363,415	£ 583,993



Tackling the Poverty Related Attainment Gap in Argyll and Bute

Strategic Equity Funding Plan 2023-2026

August 2023



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*'Excellence and equity cannot be divided'**Ernest L. Boyer*

1.1 Introduction

Argyll and Bute Council is fully committed to delivering high quality educational experiences and to securing the best possible outcomes for all children, young people and adults.

Our vision statement 'Our Children, Their Future' signals our commitment to ensuring positive outcomes and destinations for all of our young people, it is our aim to ensure that all of our children and young people are well-equipped with a range of skills and competencies that they can draw on and utilise now and in later life. Ambition, Excellence and Equality are our core values as a service and all of our work is underpinned by article 28 of the UNCRC which states that children and young people have the right to education.

The impact of the Covid-19 global pandemic, has highlighted the equity gap and the need for us as an education service to take action. We maintain a relentless focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap as we strive to improve outcomes for those living in poverty. Due to the rural nature of many areas across Argyll and Bute, we are aware that national measures such as the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is not always an accurate reflection of the level of poverty that exists within our communities. We know that our schools and educators know our families and communities best and therefore we empower them to use their local knowledge in order to target resources effectively.

This document is closely linked to the education service strategic plan and is informed by a range of evidence and data including our annual progress and impact report 2022-23. It also outlines how we adhere to the [key principles of planning for Strategic Equity Funding \(SEF\) within the Scottish Attainment Challenge \(SAC\)](#).

1.2 Local Context

Improving outcomes for all of our children and young people is our raison d'être and it is through our relentless focus on removing barriers to learning and participation and ensuring excellence through equity that we will tackle the poverty related attainment gap. Our vision and work as an education service align closely to the priorities set out in Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the National Improvement Framework (NIF) and we have already made some progress towards closing the gap between our most and least disadvantaged learners but like every local authority, we have more to do.

We must ensure greater consistency across all of our schools and services in order to ensure that there is equity of experience for all. Knowing our services, schools and settings well, through the use of a wide range of meaningful data and evidence is key to building on our strengths and identifying our next steps. Change has to be well informed and managed to ensure sustainability and long lasting impact. We know that the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding is not guaranteed infinitely and therefore, we must ensure that sustainability is a key factor in all initiatives and developments at both local authority and school level.

We are ambitious for each and every one of our children and young people and in addition to our universal approaches we will use the funding to deliver more targeted support and interventions for those in key equity groups who need it most across our schools and settings.

Our skill in gathering and analysing a range of data qualitative and quantitative data has improved at pace and it is this data, subsequent analysis and consultation with stakeholders that has informed our clear rationale for the use of Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding. We will continue to seek out opportunities to collaborate with other services and third sector organisations in order to ensure a strategic and cohesive approach to tackling the poverty related attainment gap.

2.1 Key themes and areas of focus

Argyll and Bute Council Education Service has actively consulted with school leaders around the planned spend of SEF. Consultation was through virtual HT sessions around the development of stretch aims and SEF funding as well as email communication. It is the intention of the Service that as the funding amount of SEF increases over the remaining years until 2026, there will be increased consultation and collaboration.

Published national data and our own local data including Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL), school leavers' SCQF data for attainment at Levels 5 and 6, attendance data and participation measure data for 16-19 year olds and a range of other evidence has informed our SEF plan. Three main areas of focus were evident. Whilst these areas are interconnected, each has their own clear set of associated actions and measures.

Wellbeing – Readiness to Learn

The impact of COVID-19 is still prevalent, particularly on our children and young people. In listening to their views and opinions and through analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data including attendance, exclusion and numbers of referrals to other services, we recognise that there is work required in order to ensure that every one of our learners are happy, confident and feel ready to learn. Post COVID-19 pandemic, attendance at school continues to be a local and national issue, with attendance rates consistently sitting lower than pre-pandemic levels. This has led us to undertake a major piece of work to address non-attendance across Argyll and Bute. This will be formally launched during session 2023-24. Whilst we have made good progress through our 'Our Children, their Nurturing Education' (OCTNE) programme, further work will be carried out in order to ensure that all children and young people feel secure and nurtured.

Learning and Teaching

We know that our practitioners are our greatest resource and the quality of the experiences that are delivered is pivotal to ensuring excellence for all through equity informed practice. From listening to children and young people, practitioners and our parents and carers coupled with our own quality assurance evidence, we have recognised the need for work to ensure consistent high quality learning and teaching across the authority. We believe in equity of experience and know that there is work need to ensure that this is consistent across all of our learning environments and that all of our practitioners feel empowered and supported to deliver experiences of the highest quality for all learners.

Literacy and Numeracy

Attainment in literacy for Argyll and Bute continues to be an area of focus for 2023-24 and the coming years this has informed our decision to spend a significant proportion of SEF on employing an Education Support Officer for Literacy and why we are continuing our participation in the CYPIC Improving Writing Programme. Through interrogation of data, it is evident that there is need for ongoing universal and targeted numeracy work in order to raise attainment for all whilst closing the poverty related attainment gap. We will utilise the skills and expertise of our existing practitioners in order to provide support and challenge for schools.

High quality leadership and the use of research and data will be integral to all three themes. The short and long term outcomes and key themes in our Theory of Change Logic model (Appendix 1) are congruent with the national model. Whilst we will aim to build on existing practice, we will work to ensure a greater level of rigour around tracking and monitoring to ensure progress and achievement for all. In line with local and national priorities, [Participatory Budgeting](#) will be addressed through our plan in one Council locality each school session. A sum of money from SEF will be ring-fenced for this purpose and schools will be supported to lead a Participatory Budgeting approach within their own setting. One project proposal from the locality will then be selected and the funding awarded. This will provide a meaningful vehicle on which to further empower our schools and their communities.

2.2 Three Year Strategic Plan (Our Theory of Change-Logic Model)

Our three year strategic plan (appendix 1) details the high level activities that will be undertaken to achieve the intended outcomes. The activities which we will deliver through SEF will complement the activities detailed on our Service Plan with the main aim of targeting additionality to those children and young people adversely affected by poverty. A degree of flexibility will be inbuilt in order for us to respond to findings from

ongoing evaluation and monitoring and ongoing analysis of performance both quantitative and qualitative research will take place, allowing support, challenge and resource to be targeted at specific establishments.

Local authorities remain accountable for the use of Attainment Scotland Funding, including PEF, therefore in collaboration with schools, a deep understanding of their context, rationale for improvement and use of Pupil Equity Funding (or core budget) will be considered to set ambitious individual targets.

Our SEF funded Education Officer for the Scottish Attainment Challenge in partnership with our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor and other members of the central team, will coordinate a framework of support for schools in order to ensure that there is clear alignment across all funding streams and that all PEF interventions and initiatives are clearly based on evidence and data and that there is rigorous ongoing monitoring both in terms of impact on learners and budget. Our PEF guidance is included as appendix 3 and we will publish our PEF support framework early in session 2023-24.

2.3 One Year Operational Action Plan

A one year action plan will be devised and shared for each year until 2026. This contains detail of the key areas of focus under each of the three overarching themes. The plan for session 2023-24 can be found in appendix 2. Following analysis of impact of activities from each annual plan, the 3 year plan may be refined or adapted in order to respond to what our data and evidence is telling us.

2.4 Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding Streams

Our targets for the 3 year period are ambitious but achievable and will drive improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. We are cognisant of the fact that the various SAC funding streams (Strategic Equity Funding, Pupil Equity Funding and Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund) are designed to provide additionality to more universal plans and initiatives and must be utilised carefully in order to ensure a sharp focus on improving outcomes for those adversely affected by poverty. Due to the fact that funding has been guaranteed until session 2025-26, our service and schools have been able to plan ahead to ensure that initiatives and interventions which are proven to be having an impact can be scaled up or sustained. We are mindful of the fact that sustainability must be inbuilt to any work taken forward and that our ultimate goal is to ensure that the most effective approaches become embedded as routine practice in our schools and settings.

The table below indicates Argyll and Bute allocations from the various funding streams that are part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC)

Local Authorities	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Argyll and Bute SEF	£142,162	£282,615	£423,068	£563,522
Argyll and Bute PEF	£1,366,800	£1,366,800	£1,366,800	£1,366,800
Argyll and Bute CECYPF	£127,400	TBC	TBC	TBC

3.1 Stretch Aims

Attainment Advisors within Education Scotland's regional improvement teams work with authorities to identify core attainment measures and specific aims (Stretch Aims) which, informed by local evidence and data, are identified as local priority areas for improvement. The stretch aims are intended to be both ambitious and achievable within local contexts and targets are specific to individual authorities. Progress towards achieving the current stretch aims will be reported on later in 2023. Our stretch aims for 2022-23 and our provisional stretch aims for 2023-24 can be found in appendix 4.

The Stretch Aims are intended to support recovery from the pandemic and accelerate progress in closing the attainment gap and include:

- Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (literacy P1/4/7 combined and numeracy P1/4/7 combined)
- Schools leavers achieving 1 + award SCQF level 5
- School leavers achieving 1 + award at Level 6
- Attendance
- 16-19 year old participation measure

The stretch aims for literacy and numeracy identify the percentage of young people who achieve their expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level:

- An overall attainment target, which includes all young people
- An attainment target for young people who live in the most deprived areas (SIMD quintile 1)
- An attainment target for young people who live in the least deprived areas (SIMD quintile 5)
- A target to reduce the attainment gap between the most and least deprived young people

In addition, In order to measure the impact of our investment in nurture and nurturing approaches, we devised a 'Core Plus' stretch aim. This was a bespoke measure for schools engaged with Argyll and Bute's '*Our Children, Their Nurturing Education*' programme. Pupils across nine schools at P1, P4, P7 and S3 formed the sample group. Five questions to measure pupils' perception of the wellbeing indicator for 'achieving' were developed using a Likert scale. The 'overall' measure above was a cumulative measure of those responses at scale level 5 for all questions.

3.2 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting on Progress and Impact

The proposed SEF plan clearly signals our relentless focus on improving outcomes. The plan is ambitious and is part of the wider equity agenda as well as our longer term strategic goals to close the poverty related attainment gap in Argyll and Bute.

We are committed to ensuring that our improvement activities are:

Specific -The funding is specifically focusing on acute areas of required improvement which, as data suggests, is literacy and numeracy, health and wellbeing (readiness to learn) and learning and teaching.

Measurable – Evidence of impact will be collected via collection and analysis of a range of qualitative and quantitative data including progress and achievement data collected 3 times a year, stakeholder views and our own quality assurance processes. The data used to produce our stretch aims for 2022-23 work as a reliable baseline for the SEF plan 2023-26. Progress and Achievement data is collected centrally 3 times over the academic year (Oct, Feb, June) and predictions for achievement of a level operate for P1,4 and 7. We are already closely tracking the attainment profile of pupils living in SIMD Q1 and conducting follow up conversations with Head teachers and school staff. The impact of Participatory Budgeting will be measured through qualitative data from participants within the school communities that are part of the target group. Measures for interventions/approaches/resources decided through the PB process will be developed as appropriate depending on the area of focus identified by the community.

Achievable, Realistic and Timely – The aims of the SEF are achievable, realistic and timely because they are informed by and directly correspond to our 2023-26 stretch aims and our interim 2023-24 stretch aims.

The education service's SEF Plan and Strategic Plan clearly identifies how progress will be monitored and annually reported. Using existing quality assurance mechanisms, the Executive Director, Heads of Education and Education Management Team will scrutinise the progress and impact of the plan at identified points across the year, reviewing progress against the stretch aims. Quarterly meetings with our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor and Senior Regional Advisor will provide further support and challenge. Our annual Impact and Progress Report will also outline progress with improving outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty. This report will be shared with Elected Members annually at Community Services Committee. In addition, progress measures relating to Primary Schools such as Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) and attendance data will also be shared annually through primary area reports at area committee meetings.

Education Managers will analyse performance data for all link schools as part of their support and challenge role. In addition, raising attainment will be continue to be a key focus for all Quality Improvement visits to schools and ELC settings.

A robust PEF support framework is due to be finalised early in session 2023-24. This will outline the level of support and challenge that schools can expect on an annual basis and includes:

- Focus visit from Education Officer (SAC)
- Support from Attainment advisor if requested/required
- Budget support/information on a monthly basis from Administrative Finance Assistant (AfA)
- Opportunities to moderate PEF plans and progress with 'family groups' of schools with shared areas of focus.
- Targeted support as required from members of the Performance and Improvement and wider central team.

Evidence gathered from school PEF reports, professional discussions and performance data as outlined above, will inform the department's ongoing evaluation of the progress made towards meeting its annual stretch aims. This progress will be monitored externally through progress discussions with Education Scotland as well as written reports to Scottish Government. Schools report on the impact of Pupil Equity Funding to Parent Councils and the wider parent body on an annual basis through their Standards and Quality Report. The information should be accessible, succinct and focussed on progress/impact and next steps. Key messages and developments are shared at locality area committees on an annual basis.

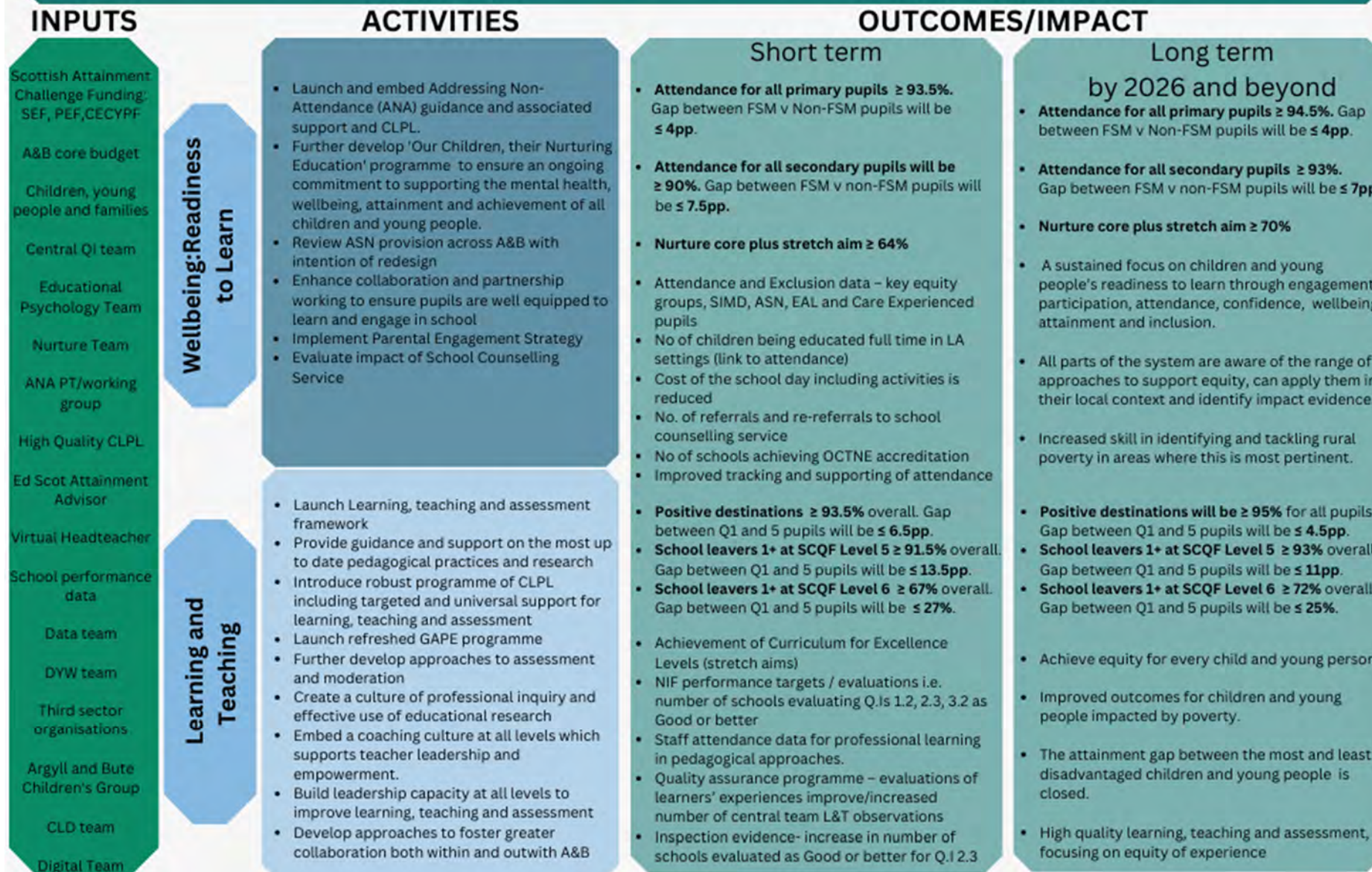
In Argyll and Bute, we believe that ensuring equity is everyone's responsibility. It is only through our collective endeavours at all levels of the system that we will make significant progress in ensuring excellence for all through equity. Our schools are empowered to make best use of available resources for the benefit of their families and communities and they are cognisant of the fact that with empowerment and autonomy comes accountability. We challenge all staff across our establishments to think and act creatively and innovatively, informed by data, evidence and research in order to improve outcomes for all children and young people and especially those adversely impacted by poverty.

Tackling the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap – Our Theory of Change Strategic Plan 2023-2026



Vision 'Our children, their future: achieving excellence through equity'

Mission: Closing the poverty related attainment gap in literacy and numeracy between the most and least disadvantaged, achieving equity for all, improving outcomes for all children and young people, especially those impacted by poverty in order to achieve the national vision of excellence and equity in education.



Tackling the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap – Our Theory of Change Strategic Plan 2023-2026



INPUTS

Literacy ESO
Numeracy Lead
Gaelic PT

Northern Alliance

Education Scotland
networks

Literacy and Numeracy

ACTIVITIES

- Build leadership capability and capacity of senior staff and teachers in schools on use of data for improvement in order to ensure rigour and consistency.
- Provide high quality professional learning on the teaching of key aspects of literacy and numeracy.
- Ensure parents/carers have the literacy and numeracy and maths skills to support their children.
- Support and challenge schools on approaches to raising attainment and use of additional resource, with focus on key equity groups.
- Work with DYW team/ employers and HE/FE to promote greater understanding of numeracy and maths as an essential skill for learning, life and work.
- Further develop use of CYPIC Improving writing methodology.
- Refresh Literacy and Numeracy strategies and guidance.
- Share impactful interventions and learning within and beyond A&B from SEF, PEF and CECYPF.

OUTCOMES/IMPACT

Short term

- **P1-4-7 literacy $\geq 71\%$ overall.** Gap between Q1 and 5 pupils will be $\leq 11pp$
- **P1-4-7 numeracy $\geq 78\%$ overall.** Gap between Q1 and 5 pupils will be $\leq 16.5pp$
- Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (stretch aims)
- Staff attendance data for professional learning in pedagogical approaches in literacy and numeracy
- Quality assurance programme – evaluations of learners' experiences improve/increased number of central team L&T observations
- Inspection evidence- increase in number of schools evaluated as Good or better for Q.I 2.3 and 3.2

Long term

by 2026 and beyond

- **P1-4-7 literacy for all $\geq 76\%$** Gap between Q1 and 5 pupils will be $\leq 10pp$
- **P1-4-7 numeracy for all $\geq 83\%$** Gap between Q1 and 5 pupils will be $\leq 13pp$
- All parts of the system are aware of the range of approaches to support equity, can apply them in their local context and identify impact evidence.
- Achieve equity for every child and young person
- Improved outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty.
- The attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people in literacy and numeracy is closed.
- High quality learning, teaching and assessment, focusing on achieving equity for all learners.

Contextual Factors

- Impact of COVID
- Increase in cost of living/ poverty
- Education Reform
- Changes in funding models
- Parent/Carer/ Family engagement
- Political change
- Focus on Health and Wellbeing
- Voice of Children and Young People
- Focus on wider achievement
- Role of local authorities Partnership working
- Local context
- Bureaucracy and workload for staff

Assumptions

- There is no hierarchy of outcomes in terms of importance to the programme
- There is a recognition that some of the outcomes will need to be continuously met, as they are contingent on ongoing activity
- Collaboration with partners will lead to innovative and impactful approaches Engagement with Children and Young People and their families will lead to better decision making
- Leadership and professional learning will support development of a positive culture and ethos
- Use of data and evidence when they are critically interrogated can lead to better targetting of those who need support and can assist with monitoring of progress
- The right to and goals of education are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- The Service's Strategic Plan will complement the SEF plan 2023-26
- Local authorities have the statutory duties to provide education, deliver educational improvement, secure best value, and fulfill their role as employer

Key resources

National Improvement Hub

Equity Toolkit

Pupil Equity Funding: Looking inwards, outwards forwards

Tackling the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap Strategic Equity Funding Operational Plan 2023-24



Vision: 'Our children, their future: achieving excellence through equity'

Mission: Closing the poverty related attainment gap in literacy and numeracy between the most and least disadvantaged, achieving equity for all, improving outcomes for all children and young people, especially those impacted by poverty in order to achieve the national vision of excellence and equity in education.

Critical Activities 2023-24

Wellbeing: Readiness to Learn

- Launch Addressing Non-Attendance (ANA) policy and guidance and deliver associated training and support.
- Early Intervention approaches for pupils experiencing emotionally based school avoidance.
- Further develop 'Our Children, their Nurturing Education' programme, support increased number of schools on their nurture journey to ensure that nurturing principles and approaches are embedded.
- Develop online wellbeing resources for children, young people and their families.
- Further develop approaches to supporting and tracking care experienced children and young people in order that they attain and achieve.

Learning and Teaching

- Launch Argyll and Bute Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework and associated materials and professional learning opportunities including refreshed GAPE programme.
- Build capacity at all levels in order to drive forward pedagogical improvement, through engagement with research and best practice whilst strengthening approaches to quality assurance and self-evaluation of Q.I 2.3
- Support and challenge schools to raise attainment through analysis of data, improved professional judgements and learning and teaching, particularly for key equity groups.
- Build leadership capability and capacity of senior staff and teachers in schools on use of data for improvement in order to ensure rigour and consistency at all levels.
- Share successful interventions and learning within and beyond Argyll and Bute from SEF, PEF and CECYPF.

Literacy and Numeracy

- Provide high quality professional learning on key aspects of literacy and numeracy
- Provided targeted literacy and numeracy support for schools based on analysis of data and evidence.
- Support and challenge schools to raise attainment through analysis of data, improved professional judgements, the target-setting process and improved learning and teaching, particularly for key equity groups.
- Support and challenge schools on their approaches to raising attainment and use of additional resource, with a focus on key equity groups.
- Engage staff at all levels in professional learning with a focus on equity and reducing poverty-related attainment gap.
- Build leadership capability and capacity of senior staff and teachers in schools on use of data for improvement in order to ensure rigour and consistency at all levels.
- Refresh A&B literacy and numeracy strategies and associated guidance.

Appendix 2
Proposed Spending Overview 2023-24

Description	Total	Duration
Education Officer (SAC)*	104,199	1st of April 2023 to 31st of March 2024
Part salary for Lead Teacher (Recovery and Renewal)- Literacy and Numeracy	16,217	1st of April 2023 to 15th of August 2023
Nurture teacher 1.0FTE*	40,086.88	11 th August 2023 to 31st of March 2024
Nurture Teacher 0.5 FTE*	20,043.44	11 th August 2023 to 31st of March 2024
Education Support Officer-Literacy*	49,323	11th of August 2023 to 31st of March 2024
Cover costs- Numeracy Lead*	7,000	August 2023-March 2024
Travel and Subsistence – Literacy ESO/Numeracy Lead)	2000	August 2023-March 2024
Literacy and Numeracy resources/training	TBC	Dependent on what is left after calculated salary increase
Participatory budgeting	5000	
Carry forward from financial year 2022-23 (spent by August 2023)	29,255	
Non-PEF schools	7,141	
Cover	3,748	
Lead Teacher (Recovery and Renewal)- Literacy and Numeracy	18,365	
Income financial year 2023-24	282, 165	
Total income inc carry forward	311,165	
Total projected cost April 2023-March 2024	311,165	
* denotes cost likely to increase due to teachers' salary increase January 2024		

Appendix 3 PEF Information Pack and Guidance



<u>Page</u>	<u>Contents</u>
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7	Pupil Equity Fund Planning – Roles and Responsibilities
8	Pupil Equity Fund Planning – Yearly Overview
9	PEF Planning Flowchart
10	Self-Evaluation Reflective Questions
11	National Operational Guidelines – PEF
12	Measurement tools
21	Example of PEF intervention reporting and expenditure
32	Guidance on Employing Staff using PEF (Or Other Temporary) Funding
34	Links to further information



Pupil Equity Funding 2022-23 Authority Guidance for Schools



1 Introduction

- 1.1 Nationally, the Scottish Government has provided funding to help raise attainment with a focus on supporting those children and young people who face barriers to their learning due to the impact of poverty. This is called Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

PEF has been allocated based on the numbers of children and young people from P1 to S3 in each primary, secondary and special school in Scotland known to be eligible and registered for free school meals. The funding is available for the financial year 2023-24. The planning for the funding is a partnership between Scottish Government, local authorities and schools with Head Teachers leading the planning process.

The First Minister launched the Scottish Attainment Challenge in February 2015 to bring a greater sense of urgency and priority for everyone involved in Scottish education to relentlessly focus their efforts on narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap at all levels and in all sectors. The Challenge has been introduced to focus and accelerate targeted improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. It also supports and complements a broader range of initiatives and programmes to ensure that all of Scotland's children and young people reach their full potential.

This advice should be read in conjunction with the national operational guidance on Pupil Equity Funding, Argyll and Bute Education Service School Improvement Planning and Standards and Quality guidance as well as *Our Children, Their Future* to ensure that all interventions are directed to meet the Education Service key objectives to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people.

1.2 Planning for improvement

- 1.2.1 When developing proposals, schools should consider the feasibility of their plans and take into account the time taken to implement some interventions, such as staff recruitment timescales, adherence to local authority policies and availability of staff sought.
- 1.2.2 Schools, with the support of the central team, colleagues and partners, should identify the issue to be addressed, and the target group (or groups) of pupils experiencing disadvantage most in need of additional support, based on an analysis of local evidence and data. Schools should ensure that they focus on a small number of priorities to meet national priorities and those detailed in *Our Children, Their Future*. A focused number of priorities will allow for robust

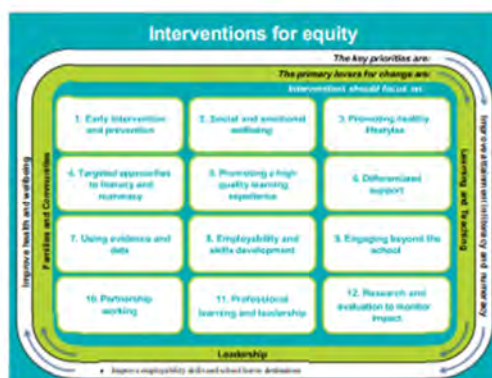
planning and evaluation. It is a legal requirement that every School Improvement Plan identify how the school plans to close the attainment gap. Therefore, the identified priorities in the PEF plan should be aligned and referred to within the School's Improvement Plan. The funding should be focused on activities and interventions that will lead to improvements in Literacy, Numeracy, and/or Health and Wellbeing for pupils experiencing disadvantage. Schools should choose to utilise funding in a way which best meets their pupils' needs, based on an analysis of their local needs, and the current evidence base. Whilst a particular focus may overlap with other areas, there should be a clear rationale for why a particular approach has been chosen, with clear methodology to measure impact and demonstrate improvement in this area. The use of funding should complement and add to the school's approaches to raising attainment.

1.2.3 Impact must be considered in terms of the desired outcomes for pupils and how progress towards these will be measured over time. Planning must include consideration of how data and/or evidence will be collected and reported, including reporting timescales. Short, medium and long term outcomes should be given to ensure progress over time. This would allow for plans to be amended if the intended results were not being achieved. Evaluation methods should be clarified before any intervention begins.

1.2.4 **Explicit consideration should be given to working in partnership with other schools, sharing practice and building capacity.** Other partnerships should also be considered, such as with local third sector partners, for example, to support family learning or health and wellbeing.

1.2.5 **A template is provided in the 2023-24 School Improvement Planning form which should be used to set out detail of the proposed plan** using, where appropriate, the framework of interventions published by Scottish Government and the Equity Toolkit.

[Scotland's Equity Toolkit | Resources | Education Scotland](#)
[Interventions for Equity | Self-evaluation | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)



2 Timeline for submission of plans and financial reporting

2.1 The following timeline will be used by the Education Service in working with schools to support and agree the completion of plans:

- Schools draft plans in consultation with colleagues, partners, children and young people and parents with support from the central team as required.
- All plans to be submitted to argyllhouse-reception@argyll-bute.gov.uk as part of the School Improvement Plan no later than Friday 16th June 2023.
- All PEF planning will be discussed by the Education Central Team and schools contacted for further information if required.
- During the first Quality Improvement Visit feedback on the school's PEF plan will be given and a date for a revised version to be completed will be agreed.
- In consultation with the link Education Manager, school plans will be revised as appropriate during school Quality Improvement Visits, and as required through discussion with the SAC Education Officer, during the session.
- At two points within an academic year opportunity will be created for peer moderation on plans and progress. This will be coordinated centrally and communicated to Head Teachers.
- Mid-year progress reporting section should be completed by the beginning of February 2024.
- Financial reports will be expected from Head Teachers in mid May on committed spends between April-September.

3 Points to consider when planning improvement approaches

3.1 Schools should take account of the following points when preparing their plans:

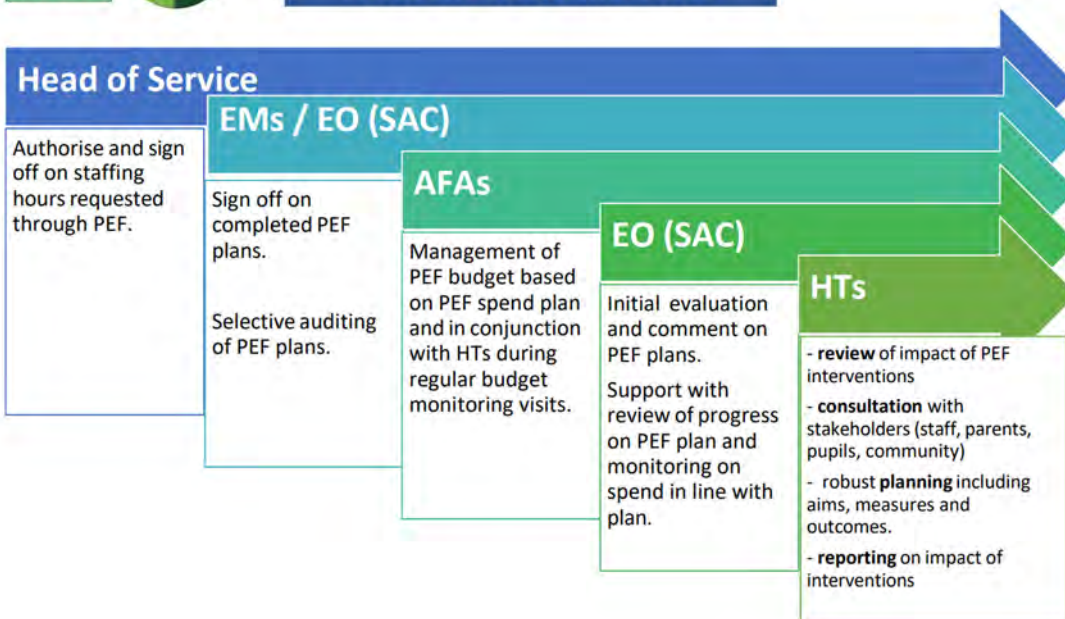
- The grant awards seek to deliver improvements to educational attainment by specific targeting of key groups of learners to reduce the impact of poverty on attainment outcomes. Funding must provide targeted support for children affected by poverty. However, Head Teachers can use their professional judgement along with an evidence based approach to bring additional disadvantaged children in to the targeted interventions.
- Funding may cover staff costs, both teaching and non-teaching, logistics, resources and services. The funding cannot be used for capital expenditure or re-establishment of a service that has been previously withdrawn through Service Choices e.g. school librarians. Any appointments will require to be in line with procurement approaches and adhere to HR policies.

- Funding must provide additionality to core service delivery in new or enhanced activity and take into account the views of children and young people and, where appropriate, other stakeholders. Schools must be able to evidence and report on how pupil views were gathered and informed PEF intervention planning.
 - Targeted deliverables in outputs such as hours of activity, numbers of pupils, analysis of pupils' background, parental involvement etc. should be included.
 - Targeted outcomes must be specified and include baselines and measures: for example, attainment levels, improved wellbeing, attendance, exclusions, achievement and positive destinations.
 - Targeted outcomes should take into consideration pupils from identified equalities groups and the 6 priority family types that may be disproportionately affected by deprivation.
 - Funding will be for financial year 2023/24. The funding budget will be managed centrally and downloaded to establishments and vired across expenditure headings as required.
 - The PEF spending plan should be shared with your AFA who will profile budget lines accordingly and monitor this with you on a monthly basis.
 - The Scottish Government also expect school to project committed spends to September 2024.
 - In conjunction with the link Education Officer, staff, the Parent Council and pupils should be consulted on the proposed plan.
 - Contracts should be temporary, not exceeding a school year and checks should be made with HR made to ensure any appointments do not lead to permanency. If permanency of post arises directly from implementation of the PEF, then the full ongoing salary costs will be met by the school.
- 3.2 A summary report on the implementation and impact of plans should be included in the supplied reporting format as part of the Standards and Quality Report and should be submitted to the Education Service at the end of each academic year, evaluating progress towards targeted outcomes.

Further guidance on planning for Pupil Equity Funding should be sought from the Education Officer: Scottish Attainment Challenge or your link Education Manager.



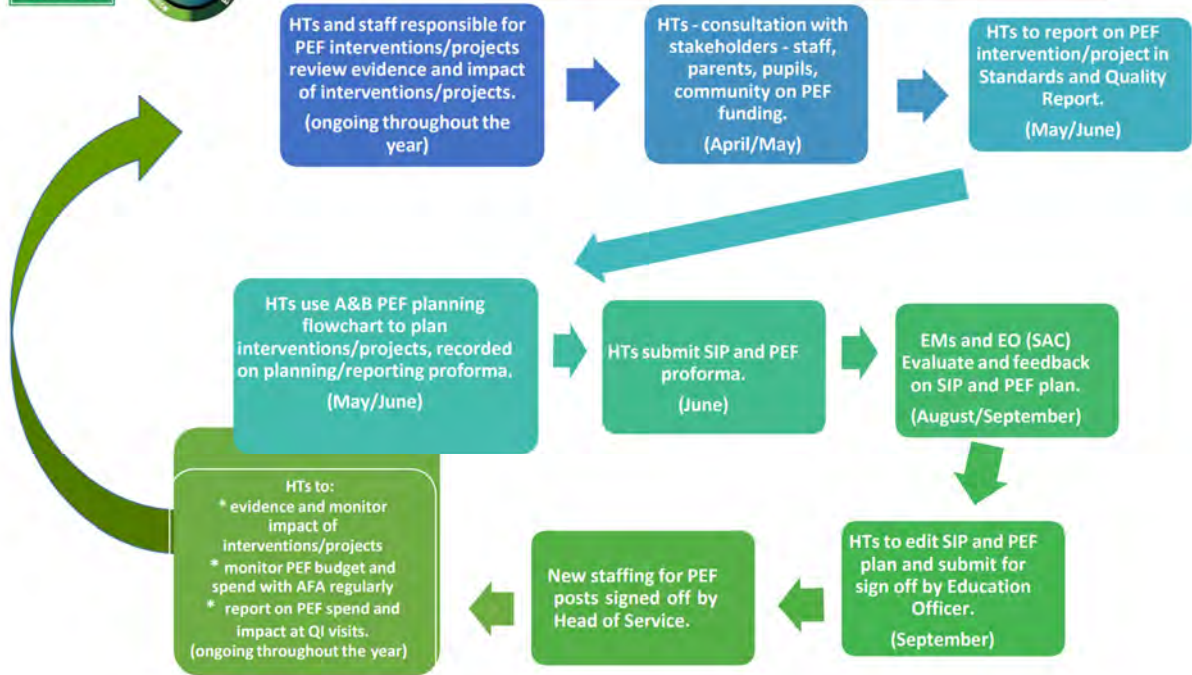
Pupil Equity Funding Roles and Responsibilities



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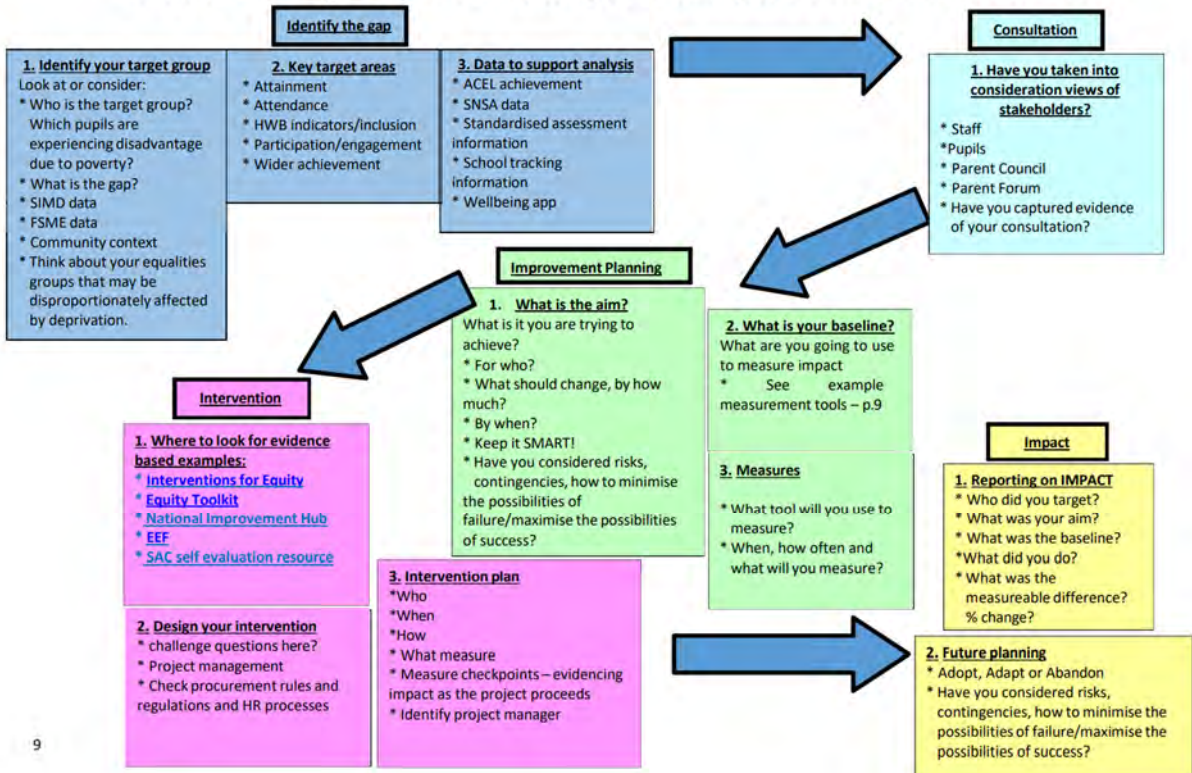


Pupil Equity Fund Planning - Yearly Overview



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Pupil Equity Fund Planning, Action, Measure Flowchart



9

Argyll & Bute Council
PEF Guidance Framework - Self Evaluation Reflective Questions

Have PEF projects/interventions been planned on the basis of a contextual analysis of your learners' needs including review of all relevant data?
Are the planned activities, interventions and/or resources providing targeted support for children and young people affected by poverty to achieve their full potential?
Are your plans grounded in evidence of what is known to be effective at raising attainment for children and young people affected by poverty?
Are activities, interventions and/or resources clearly additional to those already planned? (i.e. not budget substitution)
Have parents and carers, children and young people and other key stakeholders been involved in developing your plans?
Have you discussed the PEF projects with all relevant staff and identified leads where appropriate?
Have you set clear outcomes and measures to evidence impact?
If your plans involve the third sector, have you agreed measures and outcomes with them, including processes to evaluate impact?
Have you considered PEF projects at cluster level which might address common interests?
Have you incorporated details of PEF plans into existing reporting processes to Parent Council and Forum including SIP/S&Q?
Has consideration been given to HR and procurement requirements? Have you sought advice and confirmed processes as appropriate?
Have you considered risks, contingencies, how to minimise the possibilities of failure/maximise the possibilities of success? Sustainability beyond the life of the funding?

10



Please use the following link to access the National Operational Guidance:

[Pupil Equity Funding : National Operational Guidance 2023 \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Measurement Tools
Outcomes and Measures

Writing Outcomes:

Outcomes are specific, measureable statements that let you know when you have reached your goals. The best outcomes are written as SMART targets

- Specific
- Measureable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time bound

To develop outcomes for PEF projects/interventions ask yourself:

- Who/what will change?
- By how much?
- By when?
- How will it be measured?

Outcomes/Measures Reflective Questions:

- How confident are we that all of our staff and partners understand how to use data effectively to monitor the impact of our interventions and approaches?
- To what extent is our self-evaluation underpinned by a shared strong understanding of our data?
- Are there sufficient opportunities for professional discussion of data and evidence as part of our self-evaluation processes at all levels?
- To what extent is our effectiveness in using data and evidence enabling us to set out clear outcomes and measurable targets?
- How well are we making progress at improving the attendance and reducing rates of exclusion of children and young people living in our most deprived communities and circumstances?
- Is progress evident at all stages from early years to post school? Is progress sustained beyond the intervention?
- How confident are we that our interventions and approaches, whether universal or targeted, are leading to improvement? How effectively do we change our approaches if they are not having the intended impact?
- To what extent are we narrowing the attainment gap in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing? What can we do to ensure that we make sufficient

progress over time in all three of these areas?

- How confident are we that all children and young people, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances, are accessing a wide range of learning experiences and pathways? Are they progressing to positive and sustained destinations?

Some possible measures:

Listed are a number of measures generally used by schools, this list is not exhaustive and you may find other measures to be more appropriate for your intervention/project.

- Pre/post teacher judgement (on specific criteria linked to plan)
- Whole school tracking information
- Emergent literacy trackers
- XBRA data
- Pre/post pupil survey
- Standardised assessments
- GL assessments
- SNSA
- Boxall
- YARC
- Suffolk
- Wraps
- Parallel spelling
- Behavioural Indicators of Self Esteem (BIOS)
- Levels of parental engagement
- Attendance data
- Class assessments
- Wellbeing webs / tools
- Class observations
- Record of behaviour incidents
- Monitoring of pupil work (progression of 'book looks')
- Leuven Scale

Measurement - Leuven Scale

***** The following is an excerpt from-*****

***Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Pupil Equity Fund***

A Guide to Tracking Change and Measuring Impact Using the Five Measures

Measurement - Engagement with Learning

What is Engagement with Learning?

Children with a high level of engagement show high levels of concentration and are fully absorbed by the learning experience. They show interest and motivation and, therefore, tend to persevere with tasks. Their body language indicates intense mental activity and they most engaged are operating at the very limits of their capabilities. As a result of these qualities high levels of engagement lead to deep learning. Engagement with activities and learning from activities happens in different ways:

- **Behavioural**

A learner who is behaviourally engaged would be observed to be doing the activity set, or one of the activities on offer, and would not be behaving in a disruptive manner.

- **Emotional**

A learner who is engaged emotionally would be experiencing emotional responses to the activity: such as interest, enjoyment, or a sense of belonging or achievement. This may be apparent from the learner's level of motivation to engage with the activity, or from his or her facial or bodily expression.

- **Cognitive**

A cognitively engaged learner would be absorbed in the activity. He or she would be pursuing learning going beyond the requirements of the task, perhaps by doing it to his or her very best ability, by experimenting, asking questions or doing further reading. He or she would relish challenge and may be motivated to persist in solving problems and overcoming difficulties.

A learners' engagement will vary according to their interest, motivation to learn, confidence, ability to do the task, and mood. Some factors are within the learner and some relate to the teacher's relationship with the learner, understanding of the learner's level of skill and prior learning, and skill in planning learning activities that capture the learner's interest. Environmental aspects such as seating arrangements, space, temperature and resources can also affect engagement.

Measuring Engagement with Learning

A measure of engagement has been developed for use in Western Isles schools using the Leuven Involvement Scale. The Scottish Government has recommended the Leuven Scale to schools as a measure of engagement to be used through Primary and Secondary. It is a five point framework that can be used to measure engagement against set criteria.

The Leuven Involvement Scale (Adapted)		
Rating		Exemplification
5	Extremely High	<p>The learner is continuously engaged in the activity and completely absorbed in it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is absolutely focused, concentrating without interruption • is highly motivated, is finding the activity strongly appealing, perseveres • not distracted, even by strong stimuli • is alert, has attention for detail, shows precision • demonstrates intense mental activity and experience • the learner's capabilities, imagination and mental capacity are in top gear • the learner obviously enjoys being engrossed in the activity
4	High	<p>There are clear signs of involvement but these are not always present to their full extent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the learner is engaged in the activity without interruption • most of the time there is real concentration, but during some brief moments the attention is more superficial • the learner feels challenged, there is a certain degree of motivation • the learner's capabilities, and imagination are, to a certain extent addressed in the activity • they are mostly happy to engage in most learning and other school activities
3	Moderate	<p>The learner is busy the whole time, but without real concentration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in routine actions, attention is superficial • the learner is not absorbed in the activity, activities are short lived • limited motivation, no real dedication, does not feel challenged • the learner does not gain deep level experiences • the learner does not use his/her capabilities to full extent • the activity does not address the learner's imagination
2	Low	<p>The learner shows some degree of activity although this is often interrupted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited concentration: looks away during the activity • fiddles, fidgets, and/or daydreams • easily distracted from tasks • learner's action only leads to limited results • Significant support is needed to engage with learning • referral is needed to HT/SMT or Support for Learning (Staged Intervention)
1	Extremely Low	<p>The learner hardly shows any activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no concentration: staring, prolonged daydreaming • an absent, passive attitude • no goal-oriented activity, aimless actions, not producing anything • no signs of exploration and interest • not taking anything in, no mental activity

Method of Assessment (See Figure 1 on P17)

The PEF Dataset sheet requires the recording of a baseline measure of engagement and then allows for up to five future recordings, all completed using the same methodology. The learner's level of engagement is assessed through observation of him/her in class in a situation during which they are expected to complete a task that has been set. The observer must complete the process as set out in the flow diagram (**Figure 1, Page 17**). A focused observer may be able to observe more than one child at a time in the same class.

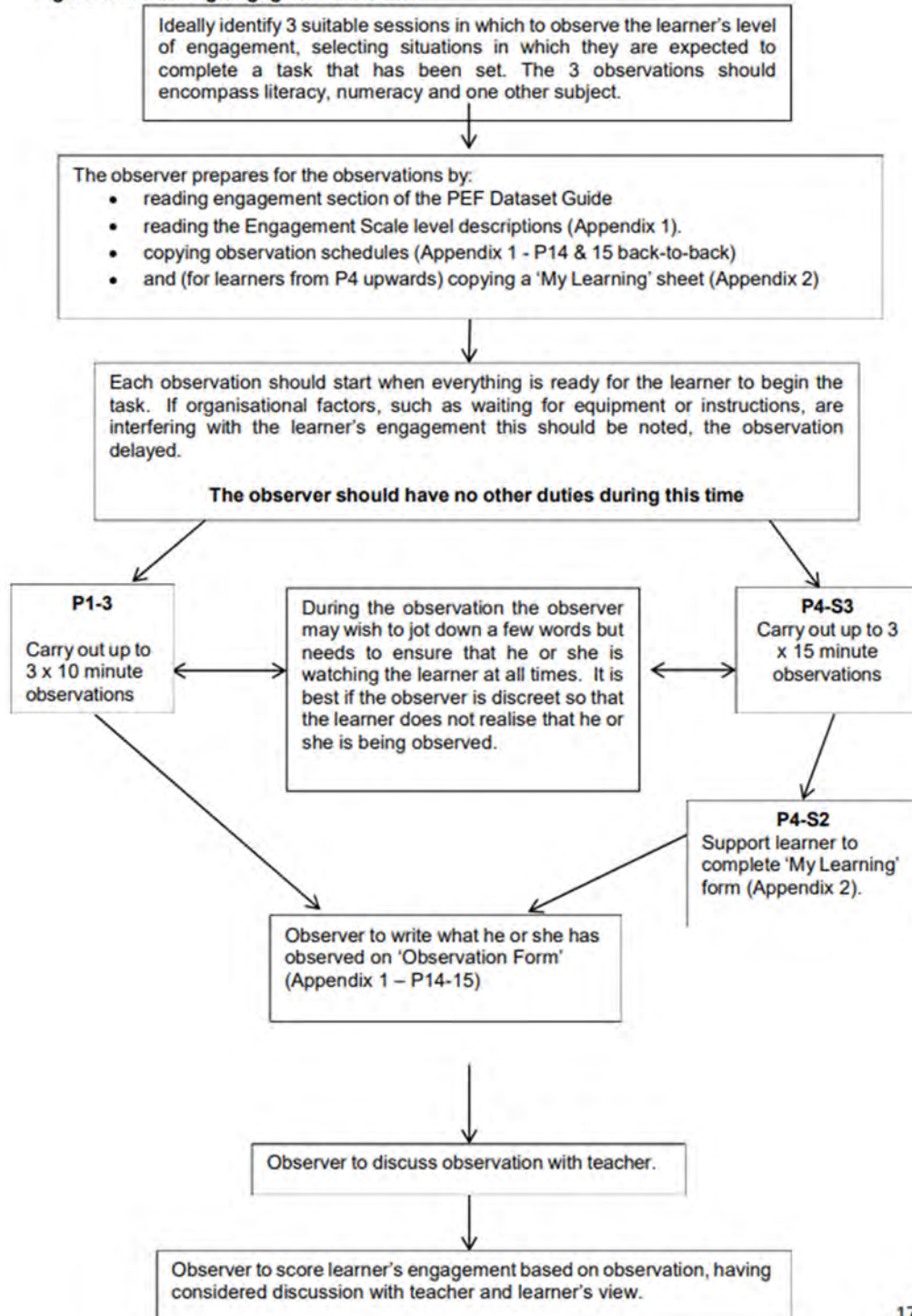
To make reliable judgements, it is recommended that the engagement score be calculated as an average of three observations of different activities, ideally all on the same week. They should all be of the same duration, as set out below:

- P1-3: 3 x 10 minute observations
- P4-S3: 3 x 15 minute observations

Learners who are in Primary 4 or above can be asked to complete a brief self-report form after the end of the observed period.

After taking a baseline measure of engagement, the Dataset allows for up to five more recordings. The minimum expectation is that there would be one more recording in May 2018, repeating the methodology of the first baseline measure. If engagement is a particular issue for a learner, then additional interim measurements could be taken.

Figure 1. Measuring Engagement Process



Measuring Engagement: Observation Form

Observer:

Learner:

Curriculum Area:

Activity:

Date:

Observation Start time:

Observation Finish Time:

Aspect of Engagement	Evidence observed
Estimate of percentage of time spent on activity	
Focus on Activity	
Enjoyment of activity	
Being challenged by activity	
Showing interest in further exploration or research	
Imagination or creativity being engaged by activity	

Level of Engagement agreed (based on Engagement Scale levels, see reverse), following reflection on learner's view, and discussion with teacher:

Measuring Engagement:**Scale of Engagement**

(Adapted from the Leuven Scale for Involvement for use in the Western Isles)

Rating		Exemplification
5	Extremely High	<p>The learner is continuously engaged in the activity and completely absorbed in it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is absolutely focused, concentrating without interruption • is highly motivated, is finding the activity strongly appealing, perseveres • not distracted, even by strong stimuli • is alert, has attention for detail, shows precision • demonstrates intense mental activity and experience • the learner's capabilities, imagination and mental capacity are in top gear • the learner obviously enjoys being engrossed in the activity
4	High	<p>There are clear signs of involvement but these are not always present to their full extent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the learner is engaged in the activity without interruption • most of the time there is real concentration, but during some brief moments the attention is more superficial • the learner feels challenged, there is a certain degree of motivation • the learner's capabilities, and imagination are, to a certain extent addressed in the activity • they are mostly happy to engage in most learning and other school activities
3	Moderate	<p>The learner is busy the whole time, but without real concentration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in routine actions, attention is superficial • the learner is not absorbed in the activity, activities are short lived • limited motivation, no real dedication, does not feel challenged • the learner does not gain deep level experiences • the learner does not use his/her capabilities to full extent • the activity does not address the learner's imagination
2	Low	<p>The learner shows some degree of activity although this is often interrupted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited concentration: looks away during the activity • fiddles, fidgets, and/or daydreams • easily distracted from tasks • learner's action only leads to limited results • Significant support is needed to engage with learning • referral is needed to HT/SMT or Support for Learning (Staged Intervention)
1	Extremely Low	<p>The learner hardly shows any activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no concentration: staring, prolonged daydreaming • an absent, passive attitude • no goal-oriented activity, aimless actions, not producing anything • no signs of exploration and interest • not taking anything in, no mental activity

Learner Feedback Form

Name:

Date:

Which statement best describes your learning in the last activity?

Please tick	What I thought	
	The activity was fascinating. I was really absorbed in it. I felt energised by the challenge. I had to use my imagination.	
	I found the activity interesting. I enjoyed it and I had to think hard, I concentrated well. I felt I was being challenged.	
	I worked hard. The activity was OK. I quite enjoyed it, I had to think.	
	I kept getting distracted. The activity wasn't interesting. I didn't get much done.	
	I found the activity boring. I didn't see the point	
<p>Comments:</p>		

Pupil Equity Funding Planning and Reporting	School Name:
<p style="background-color: yellow; margin: 0;">Pupil Equity Funding must be used to deliver activities, approaches or resources which are clearly additional to universal local improvement plans.</p> <p>Identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is the target group? What is the gap? SIMD data? FSME? Community context? Think about your equalities groups that may be disproportionately affected by deprivation. What data did you use to identify this? ACEL achievement, SNSA data, Standardised assessment information, School tracking information, Wellbeing app To be included: <p>- School locality (rural, urban, remote rural, etc. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/transparency-data/2017/05/rural-schools/documents/rural-schools-list-2017-xlsx/rural-schools-list-2017-xlsx/govscot%3Adocument/Rural%2BSchools%2Blist%2BMay%2B2017.xlsx)</p> <p>- % FSME</p> <p>- % SIMD 1/2 and other bands as appropriate</p> <p style="background-color: yellow; margin: 0;">A consideration for longer term planning of approaches, with funding confirmed for 3 years, should be considered in the targets below.</p>	

A few examples of how you may want to detail context for your PEF expenditure. These are only for illustration purposes and can be amended as necessary.

Sample 1

The school is classed as a (remote rural, rural, urban, etc).

Target group: # pupils from P1-P7 who are:

- > % SIMD 1 or 2
- > x% of children Deciles 3-4, x % of children Deciles 5-7, x% of children Deciles 8-10
- > x% of children FSME
- > x% of children EAL
- > through professional judgement and knowledge of families, pupils have been identified as requiring additional support due to socio-economic background.

Add school information here

X% of these targeted pupils have been identified as needing literacy intervention through use of X data* (attainment, attendance, engagement), and X% have been identified as needing numeracy intervention through use of X data.

A further # pupils have been identified as requiring HWB/nurture support.

* Note: Data gathered around attainment, attendance, engagement must then correlate with SIMD, FSME and other markers of disadvantage. For example the target group could be defined as, "all those living in SIMD quintile 1 (and/or with FSME etc.) and whose attendance is under 80%". Some of those with low attendance may have no observable socio-economic disadvantage so they will need an intervention not funded through PEF.

Sample 2

The school is classed as a (remote rural, rural, urban, etc).

The SIMD picture for the school is limited due to the rural context of the school has only a small amount to tell us (enter data here %SIMD 1&2). Staff have accessed school data, information and local knowledge to identify families experiencing disadvantage or potential disadvantage. (Enter details of what this is for your school's context) We also know of a small number of families who, for various reasons, do not apply for FSME, even though they would fall within the eligibility category (include %FSME).

Targeted PEF funded interventions will support pupils who:

- are care experienced
- from a traveller background
- have experienced ACEs
- have challenges forming attachments
- live in one of the aspects of poverty as identified in the national strategy for 'closing the gap'.
- experience digital inequity

Targeted PEF interventions will include nurture for those children identified through Boxall profiles

Identification of target groups/individuals through observation, profiles (Boxall), ACEL, SNSA, GL (etc.) linked to markers of disadvantage (see note in sample 1).

Through consultation with stakeholders and data across the school (reading, writing, mental agility, etc.) has been identified as a priority area for targeted intervention.

Pupil Equity Funding Planning and Reporting				
What are you planning to do with your PEF Allocation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals to address identified issues within Literacy, Numeracy and/or Health and Wellbeing. How have you consulted with and involved parents/carers and pupils in the process? Aim and expected impact of proposals. Plans to work in partnership with other schools/local partners/providers, if applicable Link to Our Children, Their Future Link to HGIOS 4 Quality indicators / NIF Which organiser does the planned key actions fall within – Teaching and Learning, Leadership, Family and Community 		How will progress be measured (what, when and how)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will you know your interventions are having an impact/improving outcomes? Proposals for measuring impact (including specific reference to targeting young people most affected by poverty). Data, new and existing, which will be required. Plans for how data will be collected and reported. 		What was the impact of your planned interventions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have quantitative and qualitative data that tells the story of attainment and achievement for the target group(s)? What was the impact for pupils based on the outcome(s)/measures(s) you identified?
This section of the plan tells the story of how your PEF spend impacted attainment for those pupils disadvantaged by poverty.				
Area	Key Actions	Outcome and Measure	Mid-Year Progress	Impact
<i>Detail here what is the area of focus for the intervention, who will be the key lead person and links to key documents.</i>	<i>The actions we are planning in order to improve attainment in the areas we have identified for the target group(s) experiencing disadvantage due to poverty.</i>	<i>(Success Criteria to facilitate evaluation of learners' progress) This is what we want to happen for the pupils by when, by how much, who, what and includes how we will measure the specific outcomes.</i>	<i>This is where we check to see if things are on track and if we need to continue, adapt or abandon what we had planned. Record information on progress and detail any changes. What is progress looking like based on your planned action/outcome/measure – on track, complete, not on track?</i>	<i>This is where we bring together qualitative and quantitative data to show how what we did improved attainment for the identified pupils. How did you meet the aims set out in your proposed interventions? What data do you have that evidences impact? Identify any significant changes in expenditure.</i>

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Area	Key Actions	Outcomes and Measure	Mid-Year Progress	Impact
Literacy HGIOS – 2.3, 3.2 OCTF – Outcomes 1, 2 Organiser – Learning & Teaching	<p><i>Define the intervention here</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What action/change is taking place? Staff involved? <p><i>Timings- is it whole year or over a number of weeks/term?</i></p> <p>Target group will demonstrate progress in literacy skills of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - blending and segmentation - reading fluency - comprehension skills - vocabulary <p>Gather baseline data from target group including rate of progress from previous year</p> <p>Systematic regular pupil support sessions timetabled through the week for targeted pupils, using Dancing Bears and PM+ resources (ASN: PEF and PST: PEF)</p> <p>Provide training for all practitioners in the effective use of Accelerated Reader online programme</p> <p>Provide training for all practitioners on the effective use of the reading scheme - guided reading lessons and online resources</p> <p>Pupil Support Teacher (PEF) to teach alongside class teachers within class shared reading sessions</p>	<p><i>by when, by how much, who, what</i></p> <p>Target group A - % increase in (raw score, age, level, etc.) from baseline for x skill measured by (YARC, Suffolk, Parallel Spelling, Accelerated Reading, Nussy, etc.)</p> <p>By June 2024 100% of targeted pupils with a +1yr gap will improve their reading age by at least 6 months +months in school</p> <p>Target group : Accelerated Reading data - gathered through Star Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> August baseline November, April, June – pick ups <p>Pupil confidence and motivation survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> August baseline June pick up <p>Comparison of library and reading records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2023/June 2024 will evidence an increase in texts read 	<p><i>Detail here progress towards outcome (on track? Complete and moving on to? Not on track and why?) Identify if any adaptations need to be made or if aspects need to be abandoned.</i></p> <p>As of December 2023, 89% of targeted cohort are on track with improvements. Data has been analysed from RA within Star Tests in August and November pick-ups.</p> <p>13% not on track are also now in receipt of weekly targeted comprehension support (ASN: PEF). Early indications using the inbuilt assessment within the supported resource are evidencing a weekly upward trend of raised scores.</p>	<p><i>Detail the impact of the interventions as outlined in your Outcome and associated measure.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In June 2024, almost all pupils within target cohort (93%) have raised reading ages by at least 16 months (AR data) In June 2024, almost all pupils articulate an increased confidence and motivation to read. This was evidenced by pupil and parent surveys and learning conversations with pupils. Teachers observe increased engagement amongst cohort within class shared reading sessions. Library and reading records for almost all pupils in cohort evidence increased number of texts read from comparison of same records for children the previous academic session. ASN pupils within P2/P3 targeted cohort evidence improvements in progress, with almost all moving through at least 6 PM+ benchmark levels In June 2024 most pupils within phonic target cohort (87%) increased retained phonic sounds by 14+ months. This is evidenced through internal phonics tracking records, Highland Literacy assessments, Codecracker fluency scores and Burt reading tests.

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		<p>By June 2024, 100% of P2 and P3 pupils with +1 year gap) will improve their phonological awareness by 14+ months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASN pupils in P2 & P3: by June 2024 individually profiled increases in PM Benchmark levels from August benchmark Target group : by June 2024 14+month increase in retained phonic sounds from August baseline measured by Codecracker and Highland Literacy phonological awareness 	<p>As of December 2023, 94% of targeted P2/P3 ASN cohort have increased PM benchmark levels in line with individual targets. 6% of pupils not increasing are now being supported by timetabled 1-1 Pupil Support Teacher sessions in addition to daily practice with ASN.</p> <p>As of December 2023 phonic target groups are making good progress with Codecracker fluency records indicating consistently raised scores in 100% of pupils.</p>	
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<p>Numeracy HGIOS – 2.3, 3.2 OCTF – Outcomes 1, 2 Organiser – Learning & Teaching</p>	<p>P4/5 Target groups will demonstrate progress in numeracy skills of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mental agility <p>Pupil Support Teacher (PEF) will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the NPLR (Numeracy Professional Learning Resource) professional document with staff. Staff familiarise themselves with the NPLR. Gather baseline data from target group through use of SEAL assessments and Numeracy Signposts Use assessment information to identify gaps and emerging patterns. Using the patterns that have emerged from assessments and using the NPLR as a scaffold, PST (PEF) will employ targeted SEAL strategies with identified individuals and groups daily in 8 week block periods. 	<p>Target group A - % increase in (raw score, number of occurrences, time) from baseline. <i>Measured by (Boxall, pupil survey, wellbeing web data, Emotion Works, staff observation, SNSA, Progress and Achievement Data, etc.)</i></p> <p>By end of each 8 week block 100% of targeted P4/5 pupils with identified gaps will improve their confidence and skill in mental agility by engaging in daily supported focus sessions.</p> <p>Target groups : SEAL assessment data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre intervention block baseline Post intervention block pick up <p>Pupil confidence survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre intervention block baseline Post intervention block pick up <p>Teacher observation during class lessons.</p>	<p>Detail here progress towards outcome (on track? Complete and moving on to? Not on track and why?) Identify if any adaptations need to be made or if aspects need to be abandoned.</p> <p>As of December 2023, 3 blocks have been complete. Almost all children within these cohorts are observed to have increased confidence and post block survey and assessments evidence this alongside improvements in almost all cases (92% of pupils across the 3 blocks).</p> <p>Further blocks are planned for the remainder of the year, with a renewed focus on applying Number Talks strategies.</p>	<p>Detail the impact of the interventions as outlined in your Outcome and associated measure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By end of 8 week blocks all pupils within target groups (100%) evidenced improved progress in mental agility. Authority SEAL Maths Recovery assessment records (mental agility) show individual progress. By end of 8 week blocks, almost all (95%) pupils articulate an increased confidence in applying mental strategies. This was evidenced by pupil and surveys and learning conversations with pupils. Staff observe targeted pupils relying less on concrete aids to make calculations. Additionally, most pupils can articulate processes using the language of Number Talks.
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<p>HWB HGIOS – 2.3, 3.1 OCTF – Outcomes 1, 3 Organiser – Learning and Teaching</p>	<p>Identified pupils will develop their skills, attitudes and resilience to be more 'learning ready'. - spending more time in class - more time engaging with teacher designed activity - less time (or less number of) being dysregulated - an improved sense of self-worth and ambition. - increased understanding of vocabulary of emotion - increased understanding and use of self-regulation strategies.</p>	<p>Target group A - % increase in (raw score, number of occurrences, time) from baseline. Measured by (Boxall, pupil survey, wellbeing web data, Emotion Works, staff observation, SNSA, Progress and Achievement Data, etc.)</p> <p>By June 2024, 100% of all pupils will improve their HWB by having experience of outdoor learning at least once per week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In June 2024, pupils will self-evaluate on their Wellbeing wheels 7+ on 'I am encouraged to be active' (current baseline as of June 2023 was 70%) 	<p>Detail here progress towards outcome (on track? Complete and moving on to? Not on track and why?) Identify if any adaptations need to be made or if aspects need to be abandoned.</p> <p>As of December 2023, pupils have participated in 8 outdoor learning sessions. These sessions are proving very popular with all pupils. HT has noted improvement in positive attitudes and behaviour.</p>	<p>Detail the impact of the interventions as outlined in your Outcome and associated measure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By June 2024, almost all pupils participated in all outdoor learning sessions. (Attendance data) By June 2024, all pupils showed an increase in ability to self-assess risk and participate in co-operative outdoor learning activities. This was evidenced by HT observations and learning conversations with pupils. In June 2024, 100% of all pupils recorded 7+ on their Shanari indicator 'I am encouraged to be active'. <p>Possible next steps ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per positive results, this intervention will continue for next school session 2024-25 and will continue to be a SIP HWB priority
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<p>Parental Engagement HGIOS – 2.3, 2.7 OCTF – Outcomes 3, 5 Organiser – Families and Communities</p>	<p>Target Group of identified pupils with less than 85% attendance through 2022-23 reporting periods. Our family liaison officer will offer home visits and engage with identified families on a weekly basis. Targeted families with 5 or less weekly Seesaw engagements. Support with SeeSaw through provision of school device Prepared video 'how to' guides. Additional face to face workshops will be offered where appropriate or necessary Monthly coffee mornings will be organised and run by family liaison officer throughout the year</p>	<p>By June 2024 attendance for targeted pupils will increase by at least 10%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance records – monthly tracking and monitoring <p>100% of families of pupils identified will show an 85% increase in engagement with SeeSaw</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 10 weekly engagements in Seesaw <p>Increased attendance at stay and play sessions, parents' nights/meetings / Coffee Mornings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance register for Stay and Play / Parent Meetings 	<p>Detail here progress towards outcome (on track? Complete and moving on to? Not on track and why?) Identify if any adaptations need to be made or if aspects need to be abandoned.</p> <p>As of December 2023, 60% of targeted pupils have increased attendance by 10%, 25% of pupils have a 5% increase and the remaining 15% have no increase or show a further decline. From January 2024 the Nurture Base will be opened up to facilitate a 'Soft Start' session targeting this 15% to enable an alternative experience to start their day.</p> <p>Seesaw engagement has increased within all targeted families. All are making at least 10 weekly engagements, with 52% exceeding this target.</p> <p>95% of targeted families attended November Parents Meeting. The remaining 5% took up the offer of phone consultations with staff.</p> <p>Numbers at monthly coffee mornings have increased from 10 (September) to 26 (December)</p>	<p>Detail the impact of the interventions as outlined in your Outcome and associated measure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By June 2024, the majority of targeted pupils had raised attendance levels by at least 10%. (Attendance data) By June 2024, all targeted families showed an increase in Seesaw engagement. This was evidenced by online interactions. By June 2024, 100% of targeted families had attended at least 12 Stay and Play sessions and 4 coffee mornings. Parents reported the value of these informal sessions and how this has helped them connect better with the school. This was evidenced through Sessional registers and Parental Feedback <p>Possible next steps ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per positive results, this intervention will continue for next school session 2024-25. Plan to include information at Coffee Mornings and to offer specific workshop support in shared reading to targeted group.
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Pupil Equity Funding Planning and Reporting				Remember contracts should be temporary and should not exceed a school year							
Staff Spend Detail * Note: - Please see information from HR regarding PEF posts											
Name	Post	Start Date	Proposed End Date	Cumulative Time in Post							
				years	months						
				years	months						
Highlight the Intervention for Equity addressed by your PEF interventions Remember to tick											
https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/Interventions%20for%20Equity											
Early intervention and prevention	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social and Emotional Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Promoting Healthy Lifestyles	<input type="checkbox"/>	Targeted approaches to Literacy and Numeracy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Promoting a High Quality Learning Experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	Differentiated Support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employability and Skills Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engaging Beyond the	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partnership Working	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Learning and Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research and Evaluation to Monitor Impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Using Evidence and Data	<input type="checkbox"/>
You may wish to add a note to attached spreadsheet/table dependent on your allocation amount											
Spend Details			Carry Forward 2022-23	PEF Allocation 2023-24							
Staffing	Accelerated Reader	£5,623.11	£ 2,200	£ 13,000							
Supported Study Resources	Seesaw	£818.40	Spend Checkpoints Mid-Year Spend checkpoint (Dec – Jan) Identify any significant changes in expenditure.								
Purchased/Commissioned Services	Sum Dog	£294.00									
Other	Education City (still to be authorised)	£1520									
	PM Benchmark assessment kit	£262.50									
		£336.75	Final spend (End of Session) Identify any significant changes in expenditure.								
Break spend details down into the specifics of the staffing, resources etc.											

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	Numicon Maths Recovery		£	£
	* Please note that your PEF spend plan should be shared with your AFA who will profile this budget line and monitor it monthly.		During your mid-year checkpoint note spends and any change in spend allocations here.	Note all final spends and any committed spends that would be part of any carry forward here.

GUIDANCE ON EMPLOYING STAFF USING PEF (OR OTHER TEMPORARY) FUNDING

Ring fenced post for a current employee (irrespective of whether s/he already holds a permanent or temporary post)

The post may be ring fenced providing the number of hours being offered is less than 10 per week and the employee is suitably skilled and experienced to undertake the duties. Otherwise, the post should be advertised. A new post must be created in order to identify this work is funded by PEF and as being a separate and distinct contract from any other the employee may hold.

Do not put hours funded by PEF through as additional hours on a timesheet/via MyView – we need to be able to monitor and track where and how PEF is being utilised. The procedure to be followed is:

1. An ad auth form must be completed and authorised, clearly showing the PEF budget code and that it is a temporary post. The form is sent to annemargaret.houston@argyll-bute.gov.uk
2. The successful candidate will receive a contract separate to any others s/he may hold with the council so a Successful Candidate Form (SCF) needs to be completed and sent to annemargaret.houston@argyll-bute.gov.uk . This can be sent at the same time as the Ad Auth form.
3. You cannot process hours you wish to allocate to PEF funding via timesheets/MyView – you must follow the above process. It will help to monitor and report on spending against this budget.

Employing a new employee

The recruitment process as described at 1-3 will need to be followed. As we don't know how long PEF funding will continue, posts will be offered on a temporary basis. You need to be aware that the employee is building up employment rights from when s/he starts in post and If s/he continues to be employed in a PEF funded post for a continuous period of 2 or more years, s/he will be entitled to a redundancy payment when the funding comes to an end, which could be substantial. The cost of redundancy will not be funded centrally.

You may also wish to note that if the employee **transfers** from another post within the Council and there is no break in service before s/he starts work with you, his/her service is continuous from their start date with the Council. If, however, s/he does not transfer to your post, i.e. s/he stays in their original post as well as your post, then their continuous service date is the date s/he begins employment with you.

PEF funding to augment reduced staffing budget

Where an employee has been identified as having their hours reduced due to reduction in budget, it is possible to offer the employee work funded by PEF. There is likely to be implications for employees accepting a PEF funded post and HR's Transformation team will be able to support and guide you in this. Their involvement is essential to ensure we comply with Council and legal processes and to ensure the employee understands the implications of accepting this type of post and receives the relevant correspondence and contract. If you plan to use PEF funding which may help mitigate the number of hours an employee has to reduce, you must

discuss this with the HR Transformation team prior to taking any action.
(HRtransform@argyll-bute.gov.uk).

PEF funding to second an employee

There have been some occasions where an employee has been deployed to PEF funded duties rather than undertake the duties of their contracted post. This may be because the PEF post offers better conditions, e.g. more hours than their contracted post. Irrespective of whether there is an increase in hours or not, the employee should be seconded into the PEF funded post (which has been duly created and described as above) and at the end of the secondment s/he will return to their substantive post. Their contracted post can be backfilled for the period of the secondment.

Temporary posts

Be realistic about the duration of a temporary post and review your requirements regularly to ensure you are complying with the purpose of the funding.
Be aware that if you employ a person for a period of 2 or more years, that person has the same employment rights as a permanent employee and if s/he cannot be redeployed into a suitable post then s/he will be entitled to a redundancy payment. There may not be a central budget for paying redundancy costs.

Links to further information

- [PEF examples Scotland](#)
- Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/>
- EEF [Early Years Toolkit](#) summarises the evidence for early years settings
- EEF Promising Projects
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/promising/>
- National Improvement Hub [NIH SAC Useful research link](#)
- Pupil Equity Funding National Operational Guidance (published 30/3/22)
[Pupil Equity Funding : National Operational Guidance 2023 \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- Equity Toolkit
[Scotland's Equity Toolkit | Resources | Education Scotland](#)
- The Scottish Attainment Challenge Self Evaluation Resource
[Scottish Attainment Challenge self-evaluation resource | Resources | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit
[Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)
- The Cost of the School Day Toolkit, updated 2021 | CPAG
[Cost of the School Day Ideas Bank | CPAG](#)
- Looking inwards, outwards
[Pupil Equity Funding: Looking inwards, outwards, forwards – sharing effective practice to maximise support for learners and practitioners | Resources | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Appendix 4 Provisional Stretch Aims 2023-2026

June 2023

Subject to further consultation and confirmation of data from session 2022-23

Literacy (P 1/4/7 Combined) Stretch Aim				
	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Confirmed ACEL Data 2022 (DEC)	62.4%	53%	80%	27.4pp
Interim Stretch Aim 2023/24	71%	70%	81%	11pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025-26	76%	75%	85%	10pp

Numeracy (P 1/4/7 Combined) Stretch Aim				
	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Confirmed ACEL Data 2022 (DEC)	72.7%	68.1%	85.9%	17.8pp
Interim Stretch Aim 2023/24	78%	73%	89.5%	16.5pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025-26	83%	78%	91%	13pp

School Leavers with 1 or more pass at <u>ALL</u> SCQF Level 5				
	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Confirmed Data 2021-22 (Feb 2023)	90.93%	83.61%	98.04%	14.43pp
	(VC 91.32%)	(VC 86.23%)	(VC 98.43%)	
Stretch Aims 2023/24	91.5%	85%	98.5%	13.5pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	0.57pp	1.39pp	0.46pp	0.93pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	93%	89%	100%	11pp

School Leavers with 1 or more pass at <u>ALL</u> SCQF Level 6				
	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Confirmed Data 2021-22 (Feb 2023)	65.99% (VC 69.37%)	54.10% (VC 59.05%)	82.35% (VC 92.75%)	28.25pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	66.5%	57%	84%	27pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	0.51pp	2.9pp	1.65pp	1.25pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	69%	63%	89%	26pp

HWB – Attendance in Primary - Free School Meal registered and Non Free School Meal Registered				
	Overall	FSM registered	Non FSM registered	GAP (FSM/non FSM)
Confirmed Data May 2023	92.71%	88.86%	93.43%	4.57pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	93.5%	89.5%	93.5%	4pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	0.79pp	0.64pp	0.07pp	0.57pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	94.5%	92%	96%	4pp

HWB – Attendance in Secondary - Free School Meal registered and Non Free School Meal Registered				
	Overall	FSM registered	Non FSM registered	GAP (FSM/non FSM)
Confirmed Data May 2023	88.33%	81.24%	89.46%	8.23pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	90%	82%	89.5%	7.5pp

Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	1.67pp	0.76pp	0.04pp	0.72pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	92%	87%	94%	7pp

Participation Measure - 16-19 year olds in Education, Training and Employment				
	Overall	Q1	Q5	Gap (Q1 – Q5)
Confirmed SDS Data 2021-22 (Aug 2022)	93.9%	89.1%	95.5%	6.4pp
Snapshot Data SDS May 2023	92.7%	87.1%	94.2%	7.1pp
Confirmed SDS Data 2022-23 (Aug 2023)	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	93.5%	89.5%	96%	6.5pp
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	0.8pp	2.4pp	1.8pp	0.6pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	95%	92.5%	97%	4.5pp

<i>Argyll and Bute – ‘Our Children, Their Nurturing Education’</i>	
	Overall
Confirmed Data (June 2023)	61.08% (N.B 2023 Stretch Aim = 60%)
Interim Stretch Aim 2023/24	64%
Interim Improvement between 2023 and 24	2.92pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	70%

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****EDUCATION****24 AUGUST 2023**

ARMED FORCES COVENANT STATUTORY DUTY 2022

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 On 22nd November 2022 UK wide legislation came into force in relation to the Armed Forces Covenant.
- 1.2 The Armed Forces Covenant Duty places a legal responsibility on certain organisations, namely Scottish Local Authorities and NHS Health Boards to pay 'due regard' to the principles of the Covenant.
- 1.3 'Due regard' means that in line with the Duty, organisations will need to consciously consider the unique responsibilities and sacrifices made by members of the Armed Forces. It also aims to negate the potential disadvantages faced by the Armed Forces community when looking to access local services. These disadvantages include: frequent house relocations, separation from loved ones and support networks for long periods of time and unfamiliarity with civilian life.
- 1.4 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:-
- (a) Note the change to the Armed Forces Covenant Statutory Duty 2022.
 - (b) Note the progress of the Education Service in fulfilling the duties of the Armed Forces Covenant and the remaining areas for action which relate directly to Education.
 - (c) Agree that this area of Local Authority duty continues to remain a key focus for Education.
 - (d) Agree that alternative funding sources be investigated, for the key posts of Service Pupil Advisor and Additional Support for Learning Teacher, to ensure the continued fulfilment of our statutory duties.

ARMED FORCES COVENANT STATUTORY DUTY 2022

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The new Armed Forces Covenant Duty aims to increase awareness of service life in the Armed Forces community, among organisations that provide services in healthcare, education and housing. It also highlights potential disadvantages that members of the Armed Forces community may experience as they look to access key local services.

2.2 Although UK legislation, this particular law has force in the devolved administrations and wide consultation took place within Scotland before it was finalised. This new legislative duty re-emphasises the need for local authorities and health boards to have statutory cognisance of the needs of armed forces families, to support them accordingly, and to report on engagement.

2.3 Legal duty –

2.3.1 “The Armed Forces Act 2021 will amend the Armed Forces Act 2006 by inserting sections that place a legal duty (the ‘Covenant Duty’) on specified public persons and bodies, to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory functions in the fields of healthcare, education, and housing.”

2.3.2 “The Duty must be complied with when a specified body makes a decision relating to the following matters: *Admissions, Educational attainment and curriculum, Child Wellbeing, Transport, Attendance, and Additional Needs Support (ASL)*.” “Such as when it develops, implements and/or reviews a relevant policy, or makes decisions on its delivery of relevant services.”

2.3.3 So far as the education of children and young people is concerned a requirement to have “due regard” already exists in Scotland through the provisions in the Education (Scotland) Act, 2016. Sections 3A and 3B of that Act imposes a duty of “due regard” on Scottish Ministers and education authorities to reduce inequalities of outcome

for all pupils. This by default also includes those pupils from families with an armed forces background.

- 2.4 From June 2024 changes to the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Service Pupil Support Programme funding arrangements will mean funding for the Service Pupil Adviser and the Additional Support for Learning Teacher will no longer be available. As such we will not have the ability to fund these posts from this Trust Fund again.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- (a) Note the change to the Armed Forces Covenant Statutory Duty 2022.
- (b) Note the progress of the Education Service towards fulfilling the duties of the Armed Forces Covenant and the remaining areas for action.
- (c) Agree that this area of Local Authority duty continues to remain a key focus for Education.
- (d) Agree that alternative funding sources be investigated, for the key posts of Pupil Advisor and Additional Support for Learning Teacher, to ensure the continued fulfilment of our statutory duties.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The Covenant sets the following goals with respect to Education:

4.1.1 Children of members of the Armed Forces should have the same standard of, and access to, education (including early years' services) as any other citizen in the area where they live.

4.1.2 There should be special arrangements to support access to schools if a place is required part way through an academic year as a result of a family having to move for Service reasons.

- 4.2 Armed Forces Covenant Duty - Key Aim: That children and young people of Armed Forces families receive the support they need to address barriers to participation, learning and achievement; promote positive mental health and wellbeing; benefit from the development of high-quality education which is sustained; and achieve their full potential.

- 4.3 ADES advice has been developed providing a Scotland-specific context and perspective which identifies and aligns with the structures, processes and policies already rooted in Scottish education that address the needs of children and young people of armed forces families. It includes:

- an explanation of the duty for local authorities
- good practice examples
 - areas of concern

- challenges, and barriers that might be faced by armed forces families and their children
- suggestions and resource links for further information.

4.4 The key aims supported by ADES regarding the implementation of this legislation include:

- 4.4.1 Promote the development of a local authority Corporate Message.
- 4.4.2 Ensure the ADES Armed Forces Families Lead Officer (AFFLO)/Head Teacher at Hermitage Academy, Douglas Morgan, is known to the appointed, local authority Armed Forces and Veterans Champion and other sector leads for armed forces families.
- 4.4.3 All Headteachers and Early Learning Centre (ELC) managers, should know their local authority AFFLO/HT Hermitage Academy.
- 4.4.4 All Headteachers must have their young people of armed forces families identified, so far as possible.
- 4.4.5 Appropriate local authority staff, including managers of funded ELC provision, should have awareness to enable an informed 'warm welcome'.
- 4.4.6 Local authority central staff should have knowledge of the Lead Officer for Armed Forces Families role.
- 4.4.7 Promote awareness of the ADES National Education Officer (Armed Forces Families) and the Forces Children's Education website.

4.5 Argyll and Bute Council holds the Armed Forces Covenant – Silver Recognition Award and as a result are very well placed to act on the ADES advice. Current practice within the Local Authority means that Argyll and Bute have proactively met the majority of the aims as outlined in green in the table below. The aims outlined in amber require some further work and where this is appropriate the actions and timescales have been highlighted.

Aim	Argyll and Bute Action	Timescale
1. Promote the development of a local authority Corporate Message	<p>A corporate message and approach to supporting Armed Forces Families has existed in Argyll and Bute since March 2014.</p> <p>There is still a need to develop a refreshed Corporate Message within the updated national legislation. In the context of the update national legislation This outcome will be added</p>	Completion by September 2023

	to the agenda of the next Armed Forces Community Partnership	
2. Ensure the ADES AFFLO/ HT Hermitage Academy is known to the appointed, local authority <u>Armed Forces and Veterans Champion</u> and other sector leads for armed forces families.	No action required. The ADES AFFLO / HT Hermitage Academy sits on the Armed Forces Community Partnership with the Armed Forces and Veteran Champion.	Complete
3. All Headteachers and ELC managers, should know their local authority Lead Officer for armed forces families, children, and young people (AFFLO)	Armed forces families, children, and young people Lead Officer role incorporated into the Hermitage Academy Head Teacher Remit in January 2021. Raising the profile of this part of the remit along with that of the Service Family Adviser through locality HTs meetings would be beneficial.	D Morgan and E Flett to attend all Locality HTs meetings by October 2023.
4. All Headteachers must have their young people of armed forces families identified, so far as possible.	Process for initial enrolment and identifying armed forces families updated in March 2021.	Complete
5. Appropriate local authority staff, including managers of funded ELC provision, should have awareness to enable an informed 'warm Welcome'.	The 'warm welcome' exists in the HALCO locality, where the vast majority of our armed forces families live.	Complete
	Service Adviser has shared awareness of the welcome booklet across all compulsory education establishments. This will be extended to all ELC's in August 2023.	August 2023
6. Local authority central staff should have knowledge of the Lead Officer for armed forces families' role.	The Central Education Team remit for Service Families was incorporated into the Head Teacher remit for Hermitage Academy in January 2021.	Complete
7. Promote awareness of the ADES National Education Officer (Armed Forces Families) and the Forces Children's Education website.	Links to the Forces Children's Website exists in the Warm Welcome pack and also from the Armed Forces Section of the Argyll and Bute Website.	Complete

4.6 In upholding the Armed Forces Covenant Duty in Argyll and Bute Council the roles of the Service Pupil Advisor and Additional Support for Learning Teacher provide a range of supports and initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for service children and young people.

4.6.1 The Service Pupil Advisor, is required to fulfil the statutory duty outlined above. The Service Pupil Advisor, liaises between schools and the Armed Forces Community. This role is to co-ordinate additional support for Armed Forces children and young people with a particular focus on identifying gaps in learning as a result of transitions, and providing social and emotional support for those struggling with the deployment of a parent/carer. The role of the Service Pupil Advisor also includes:

- Key point of contact for service families during and outside school hours.
- Co-ordinating and supporting delivery of Seasons for Growth. An educational support programme which aims to promote social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people coping with significant loss, separation and change in their lives.
- Supporting new armed forces families moving to Argyll and Bute with regards to education and schools.
- Provision of information/advice and attendance at Child Planning Meetings for armed forces children and young people
- Facilitating and leading Professional Learning Community meetings.
- Supporting Forces and Me Groups in various schools, RNRM Youth Forum, Cloud 9 Youth Group, Armed Forces Ambassadors at Hermitage Academy.
- Leading weekly drop in sessions for parents.
- Providing monthly updates via the creation of Newsletter for all staff in Nurseries and Schools in Argyll and Bute area which provides information on resources available, useful websites, funding opportunities, CPD events and organisations and charities that support armed forces young people and families. The newsletters are also shared with West Dunbartonshire Council, Schools in Argyll & Bute and are shared nationally on the Forces Children Education website.
- Networking and exchanging of ideas nationally in order to benefit Argyll & Bute Armed Forces children and young people.
- Sustaining a strong presence on social media to provide families with constant access to support.
- Responsibility for tracking and continually evaluating all work undertaken to support armed forces families.
- Contributing to training for staff to raise awareness of issues facing service families.

4.6.2 The impact of the role of Service Pupil Advisor on improving outcomes for service children and families includes developing individualised strategies of support for pupils, having a key point of contact for service children, young people and their families who understands service life providing a sense of being understood, supported and listened to. Within the community the Service Pupil Advisor has developed a range of positive working partnerships which have resulted in successful participation for service children and young people in projects like The Give Holiday Provision (Inspiring young people through volunteering opportunities, the Helensburgh and Lomond Youth Forum and Seasons for Growth.

4.6.3 The Additional Support for Learning Teacher, works with children and young people from Armed Forces background in numerous primary schools in the Helensburgh and Lomond area to support them in a variety of ways. For example:

- Offering Seasons for Growth Sessions.
- Facilitating numeracy support for small groups of identified pupils.
- Facilitating literacy support for small groups of identified pupils.
- Providing general in-class learning support – for small groups of pupils with additional learning needs.
- Leading and facilitating STEM activities.
- Organising and offering after school homework clubs in various locations.
- Leading small nurture and social skills groups.
- Providing one to one support for young people with additional support needs in accessing the local community.

4.6.4 The impact of this role of Additional Support for Learning Teacher on improving outcomes for service children and young people is the provision of targeting support in learning, schools have reported seeing an increase in both numeracy and literacy levels as a result of targeted interventions led by the additional support for learning teacher. Schools have also reported on the impact of the development of social skills supporting transitions, emotional support and promotion of positive mental health with an underpinning focus on supporting service children and young people to benefit from the development of high-quality education which is sustained; and achieve their full potential.

4.7 Argyll and Bute houses HMNB Clyde which will be the Royal Navy's Submarine Flotilla base and new Training Centre. It is expected that numbers of naval personnel could rise by approximately 1,500 between 2023 and 2030. There are currently approximately 650 armed forces children and young

people in schools across Helensburgh and Lomond and a total of 775 across Argyll and Bute. This figure is based on families who have declared to their school that they are Armed Forces and does not include pre 5 figures. The term 'Armed Forces' refers to serving, veteran and reserve members of the Armed Forces.

- 4.8 The terms of the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Service Pupil Support Programme state that funding can be used for temporary staff such as teachers or Armed Forces Service Pupil Advisors. However, funding cannot be used for multiple year programmes and should be regarded as a one off contribution. Furthermore, it is proposed that the current funding will no longer be available from June 2024. Therefore it is fundamental to the duty of Argyll and Bute Council in fulfilling the statutory duties outlined in the Armed Forces Covenant that the cost pressure resulting from these funding changes in relation to the Service Pupil Advisor will be required to be sustained through being absorbed into education and the role of the Additional Support for Learning Teacher role will need to be discontinued with the responsibilities of this role being absorbed into mainstream Education ASN provision or by securing other funding for the MOD posts currently in place from other sources.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The work led by the AFFLO/HT Hermitage Academy, the Armed Forces Service Adviser, Additional Support for Learning Teacher and wider teams / partnerships with MOD, has resulted in the successful achievement of the Silver Recognition Award for Argyll and Bute. It is recognised that their ongoing work provides best value and continuous improvement.
- 5.2 Argyll and Bute council will continue to support AFFLO / HT Hermitage Academy and the associated team in their work to ensure our Armed Forces children and young people receive the support they need to address barriers to participation, learning and achievement and positive mental health and wellbeing, and to ensure they benefit from high-quality education to achieve their full potential.
- 5.3 As a result of changes to the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Service Pupil Support Programme funding arrangements, alternative funding sources be investigated to allow fulfilment of our statutory duties.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1	Policy	This report links directly to Our Children Their Future in ensuring that Argyll and Bute is the best place in Scotland for our children to grow up. It also articulates outcomes 4 and 6 of the Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan: Children and young people have the best possible start; People live in safer and stronger communities.
6.2	Financial	Educational services for children and young people from MOD families are currently funded via Armed Forces Covenant Trust Service Pupil Support Programme. Changes to such funding arrangements will have implications for the Council in terms of securing alternative funding sources.
6.3	Legal	Armed Forces Covenant Legislation November 2022 alongside the statutory duties of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and all previous relevant acts will be met.
6.4	HR	None
6.5	Fairer Scotland Duty	Providing equity and inclusion to meet the needs of all young people including Armed Forces children and young people.
6.5.1	Equalities	All legislative requirements will be met.
6.5.2	Socio-economic Duty	Reducing inequalities of outcome caused by the potential disadvantages faced by the Armed Forces community when looking to access local services.
6.5.3	Islands	No differentiated impact.
6.6	Climate Change	None
6.7	Risk	Failure to support children and young people from MOD families will impact on their life chances and risk reputational damage to the Local Authority as a recognised and necessary destination for MOD families.
6.7	Customer Service	Continued support will be provided by the Lead Officer for Armed Forces Children and the associated team.

Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Education
Councillor Yvonne McNeilly - Policy Lead for Education

Wendy Brownlie - Head of Education – Performance and Improvement
Jennifer Crocket - Chief Education Officer/ Head of Education – Wellbeing, Inclusion and Achievement

Date: July 2023

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****EDUCATION****24th AUGUST 2023**

SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 – KILCHRENAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides details of the Options Appraisal for Kilchrenan Primary School, carried out in accordance with the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, as amended.
- 1.2 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:
- a. Notes the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements; and;
 - b. Agrees that officers now formulate a draft closure proposal that will be presented to the December 2023 meeting of the Committee for approval by members which, if adopted, would subsequently trigger the formal consultation process under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 – KILCHRENAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 When considering the future of a rural school the Education Authority must first satisfy the preliminary requirements as set out in Section 12A of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, as amended.
- 2.2 On 9 March 2023, Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the preliminary requirements in relation to considering a rural school closure and produce an Options Appraisal for Kilchrenan Primary School. As Kilchrenan Primary School is a rural school, the preliminary requirements stipulate that a possible closure proposal, and all the reasonable alternatives, are assessed, having particular regard to the following:
- a. Their likely educational benefits;
 - b. Their likely effect on the local community – having particular regard to the sustainability of the community and the availability of the school premises to the community;
 - c. The likely effect of any different travelling arrangements on the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities, as well as the possible environmental impact.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:
- a. Notes the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements; and;
 - b. Agrees that officers now formulate a draft closure proposal that will be presented to the December 2023 meeting of the Committee for approval by members which, if adopted, would subsequently trigger the formal consultation process under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 This report provides details of an Options Appraisal, carried out in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, as amended (the 2010 Act), in respect of Kilchrenan Primary School.
- 4.2 The Options Appraisal for Kilchrenan Primary School is attached as **Appendix A**.

- 4.3 Four possible options have been assessed in considering the future of Kilchrenan Primary School:
- a) Re-open Kilchrenan PS;
 - b) Continue the mothballing of Kilchrenan PS with the pupils zoned to Taynuilt PS;
 - c) Re-open Kilchrenan PS and realign/extend its catchment area;
 - d) Close Kilchrenan PS and realign the catchment area for Taynuilt PS to include the Kilchrenan PS catchment area.

For each option, information was collated and particular regard was given to:

- Community feedback;
 - Pupil numbers;
 - Assessment of rural factors – namely the likely effect on the local community (having particular regard to the sustainability of the community and availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community); and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements that may be required (having particular regard to the effect on pupils, staff and any other users of the school's facilities, and any environmental impact).
 - Educational benefits; and
 - Financial information
- 4.4 An authority that is contemplating a rural school closure proposal must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act prior to formulating any proposal.
- 4.5 Consideration was given to the underlying reasons as to why the future of Kilchrenan Primary School is being reviewed, and all reasonable alternatives to closure of the school as a response to those underlying reasons were identified. All four options (including closure) were then assessed – having particular regard to likely educational benefits, likely effect on the local community and likely effect on travelling arrangements. Following this assessment, closing Kilchrenan Primary School and realigning the catchment area of Taynuilt Primary School to include the current catchment area for Kilchrenan Primary School is considered to be the most reasonable option to address the underlying reasons for the possible proposal.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Options Appraisal for Kilchrenan Primary School has been prepared in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the 2010 Act.
- 5.2 After consideration of the preliminary requirements, all identified reasonable alternatives and the reasons why the future of the School is being considered, closing Kilchrenan Primary School and redrawing its catchment area to the delineated catchment area of Taynuilt Primary School is considered to be the most reasonable option in order to address the underlying reasons for the possible proposal. Officers are now in a position to formulate a draft proposal that they propose to present at the December 2023 meeting of the Committee for members' consideration, which, if approved, would subsequently trigger the

formal consultation process under the 2010 Act.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – An authority that is considering formulating a rural school closure proposal must first satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, as amended.
- 6.2 Financial – there are financial implications for each option, as set out in the Options Appraisal.
- 6.3 Legal – The Options Appraisal for Kilchrenan Primary School has been prepared in accordance with the preliminary requirements as set out in Section 12A of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, as amended.
- 6.4 HR – None
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: None at present
 - 6.5.1 Equalities – None at present
 - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None at present
 - 6.5.3 Islands – None at present
- 6.6 Risk – None at present
- 6.7 Customer Service – None at present

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Yvonne Mcneilly, Policy Lead for Education

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28th July 2023

Appendix A: Options Appraisal – Kilchrenan Primary School

Appendix A



EDUCATION

OPTIONS APPRAISAL

KILCHRENAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

AUGUST 2023

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Immediately before the retirement of the Head Teacher of Kilchrenan Primary School (PS) in February 2022 there were four pupils residing within the Kilchrenan catchment area who were still attending the school. At that point, the children transferred to Taynuilt Primary School. Three further pupils at Kilchrenan PS had transferred to St. Columba's Primary School in Oban at the start of the 2021-2022 school session. There were no Primary 1 pupils registered to attend Kilchrenan Primary School in session 2021-22, and one possible primary 1 enrolment for August 2022.

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

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

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

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

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

1.5 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.

1.6 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.

- 1.7 Kilchrenan Primary School has had no further pupils enrolled since elected members approved its mothballing.
- 1.8 At the aforementioned Committee meeting on 9th March 2023, the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the preliminary requirements as set out in the 2010 Act, and prepare an Options Appraisal for Kilchrenan Primary School, to enable the Education Service to identify and consider the options for the school's future. This document is that Options Appraisal.
- 1.9 The 2010 Act makes special arrangements with regard to rural schools that are, in effect, a presumption against their closure. There is a requirement to examine specifically factors particularly relevant to rural schools 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, the impact of any different travel arrangements, and the educational benefits or otherwise for pupils should a rural school be closed. 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 the case of Kilchrenan Primary School, are as follows:
 1. Kilchrenan Primary School has been mothballed for almost eighteen months. The school roll is currently zero 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. At the time of writing, there are 16.29 full-time equivalent (fte) vacancies across Head Teacher and Teacher posts in Argyll and Bute.
 3. Whilst the School is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for maintenance. The costs of continued mothballing, and of bringing the fabric of the school to the required standard for any re-opening, are also considerable.

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

3.0 BACKGROUND

Argyll and Bute is an area of outstanding natural beauty, 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, Further Education, through partnerships and via 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 plan, with 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 the 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 new developments.

[AB_CorporatePlan_3.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

3.2 Our Children Their Future

Education Authorities, 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 Kilchrenan and the Local Area - the Kilchrenan Primary School Setting

Kilchrenan is a village situated in a scenically beautiful area to the west of Loch Awe, six miles south of the village of Taynuilt, from where it is reached by a single track road. The area around Kilchrenan features some of the rural industries with which Argyll and Bute is associated, particularly forestry and renewables, in the form of wind farms. Tourism is also a key element of the local economy. Other villages in the area, from which children attended Kilchrenan PS include Dalavich, Inverinan and Ardanaiseig. A plan to establish a Regional or National Park around Loch Awe, applications for which are already in motion, encompasses the whole catchment area for Kilchrenan Primary School, and is supported and is being promoted by members of the local community.

3.4 The School within the Community

Kilchrenan PS was previously active within the community, as a focus for social and educational events. The pupils invited the community to attend events on several occasions every year. During the period of mothballing, there were no requests for the building to be used for community events. The newly-refurbished Kilchrenan Village Hall is a community-managed facility that hosts various community events and activities, and forms the civic hub of the village.

Some members of the local community in Kilchrenan have expressed interest in exploring options for a transfer of the school building from the local authority to the local community, under the terms of the *Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015*. The proposal centres on the use of the school building as a community drop-in office for small local home-based businesses, and as the hub for the Kilchrenan Community Council's campaign to create a Regional or National Park around Loch Awe, as supported by four further Community Councils in the Loch Awe area.

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. Accurate 2011 census data for the specific Kilchrenan Primary School catchment area is not available. More up-to-date data is detailed in table 1 below, which contains details from the National Records of Scotland (NRS) Small Area Population Estimates for the

Loch Awe 2 datazone which includes the Kilchrenan catchment area. It shows the changing population from 2011 to 2021 for the whole datazone population and for age groups 0-11, 12-67 and over 67.

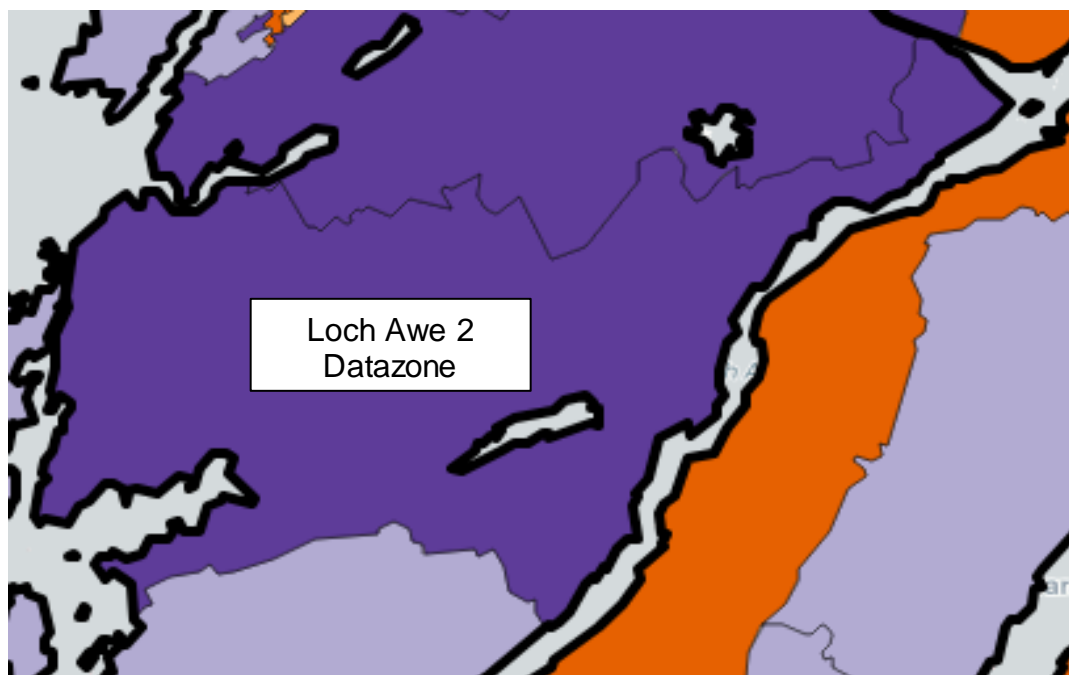
Table 1: Population Information

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

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

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

Figure 1



3.6 Development and House Building

A new Local Development Plan (LDP2) is now available, which sets out planning and development proposals for the next 10 years from 2020, and a vision for 20 years. The Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan provides the local planning framework for the Council area, excluding the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park area. The Plan is divided into the written statement and proposals maps. The written statement provides the general policy context against which planning applications for new development proposals should be assessed. This is supported by the proposals maps which show the range of development opportunities and constraints within the area, for example:

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

3.7 Kilchrenan Primary School

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

Appendix 4 shows the Kilchrenan PS Floor Plan.

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

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

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

3.8 Taynuilt Primary School

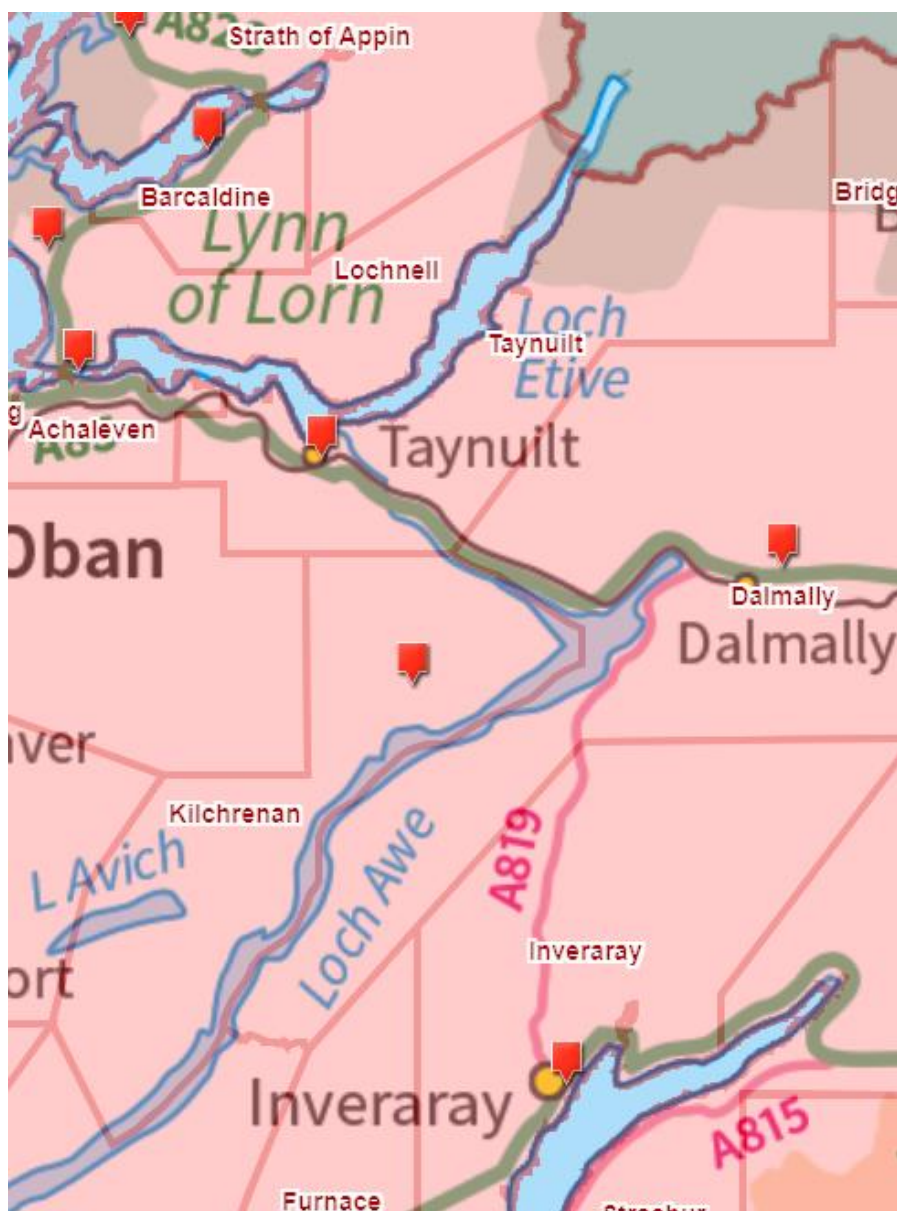
Following the mothballing of Kilchrenan PS, children from the Kilchrenan catchment area have attended Taynult PS. Taynult PS is a non-denominational and co-educational school situated in the centre of Taynult village. The present school building opened in 1989. The school accommodation is of semi-open plan design, with one double and two single class bays opening onto a shared open area. There is a large gymnasium, which also acts as an assembly hall, lunch hall and houses the pre-school unit each afternoon. In 2008, a purpose built nursery adjacent to the school building was opened.

Appendix 5 shows the Taynult Primary School Floor Plan.

The school has strong and active traditions in outdoor learning, the creative arts, STEM, ITC and in sport and physical activity. The school enjoys the support of an active Parent Council and strong community partners.

Like Kilchrenan PS, Taynult PS is classified as very remote rural by the Scottish Government. The Map in Figure 2 below shows the adjoining catchment areas of Kilchrenan and Taynult Primary Schools:

Figure 2



3.9 Pupil Numbers

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

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

Table 2

	Kilchrenan PS	Taynuilt PS
Capacity	41	163
	Roll	Roll
2006-07	23	72

2007-08	20	77
2008-09	19	79
2009-10	18	78
2010-11	10	88
2011-12	10	81
2012-13	8	81
2013-14	7	83
2014-15	4	91
2015-16	4	83
2016-17	9	82
2017-18	6	79
2018-19	7	72
2019-20	8	69
2020-21	12	67
2021-22	6	70
2022-23	0	66

Table 3 shows projected rolls for Taynuilt PS and estimated numbers of pupils in the Kilchrenan PS catchment area, according to figures held by Argyll and Bute Council:

Table 3

	Kilchrenan PS	Taynuilt PS
	Roll	Roll
Capacity	41	163
2023 -2024	8	58
2024 -2025	8	60
2025-2026	10	55
2026-2027	8	48

The Kilchrenan PS roll further dropped to zero over the course of the 2021-2022 school year (see Table 2, above). Pupils within the catchment area (as set out in Table 3, above) do not reflect the number of pupils who would be attending the school because parents choose to send their children to Taynuilt PS or to the local denominational primary school for the area, St. Columba's PS in Oban.

In August 2022, no primary 1 pupils registered to attend Kilchrenan Primary School for session 2022-23, and there have been no registrations for session 2023-24.

4.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Meetings

A Community Engagement Meeting was held in Kilchrenan Village Hall on 31st May, 2023 from 09:00-18:00 hours. The meeting's purpose was to seek the views of the community on the future of Kilchrenan Primary School. Over the course of the day, the meeting was attended by 20 people.

A meeting also took place with the Head Teacher of Taynuilt PS as the formally assigned receiving school in the event of the closure of Kilchrenan PS, to gauge the views and of staff on the future of Kilchrenan Primary School.

There was also a meeting with the Chair of the Parent Council of Taynuilt PS to gather opinions from parents/carers on the potential impact of any decision that is made on the future of Kilchrenan PS.

A virtual meeting also took place with children living in the Kilchrenan catchment area who now attend Taynuilt Primary School. The purpose of the meeting was to gather pupils' views on the future options for Kilchrenan Primary School, and, where applicable, on their educational provision before and after leaving Kilchrenan Primary School.

A number of children from the Kilchrenan PS catchment area attend St. Columba's PS in Oban, and movement of pupils from Kilchrenan PS to St. Columba's PS in 2021 was one of the reasons for the Kilchrenan roll falling significantly. In terms of catchment area, the Kilchrenan area falls within the catchment for St Columba's PS in its role as the sole denominational school in the Oban, Lorn and the Isles area. Parents/carers within the Kilchrenan catchment area therefore have the automatic right to enrol their children in St Columba's PS. Meetings with the HT of St. Columba's PS, the Chair of the St. Columba's Parent Council and with the children attending St. Columba's PS from the Kilchrenan catchment area were held, to gather their views on the future of the school.

4.2 Attendees at the Community Engagement Event and at the other meetings detailed above were provided with an overview of the information that the Council would be using in this Options Appraisal. This included school roll projections, and information relating to the recruitment and retention of staff, transport and on local services and facilities.

The questions put to stakeholders were as follows:

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

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

- *Re-open the school*
- *Continue with mothballing*

- *Re-open the school but widen the catchment area*
- *Close the school*

4.3 **Feedback**

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

- **Community and Parents**

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

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

Some members of the community were of the view that the community of Kilchrenan would be negatively impacted by not having its own primary school. They felt the village would be less attractive to families who may wish to move to the area. They also suggested that attracting people to the area was key to ensuring more affordable housing for local people was built. The view was expressed by one attendee that, as a result of children travelling to Taynuilt every day, they and their parents were already spending significant amount of time in another community, to the possible detriment of the Kilchrenan community. The point was also made that the absence of a school in Kilchrenan was having a negative impact on the finances of the Kilchrenan Village Hall, as it was no longer being hired by the council for PE sessions.

However, others made clear that they felt that Taynuilt was relatively close by and offered a school which could still be viewed as being within the local community, albeit six miles from Kilchrenan. The point was also made that the present Kilchrenan catchment is not one single community, Dalavich being eight miles from the school. As regards social or more affordable housing, the point was made that it is the absence of such, and not whether there is or is not a school in the area, that prevents people from moving into and sustaining the community, and it is this issue which should be addressed above the closure or re-opening of the school.

Distances to be covered by pupils in getting to school each day was a further area raised by a minority of attendees. They pointed to transport issues as a reason for keeping the school open: the travel implications for pupils, particularly in the Dalavich area, travelling daily to Taynuilt were seen as impracticable, and attendance at school would be prey to adverse weather conditions. However, parents of children currently travelling daily to Taynuilt and Oban from both Kilchrenan and Dalavich said that the weather had also been a factor prior to the mothballing of the school, and that the now direct bus journey to Taynuilt, and even to Oban, took less time than the previous school bus to Kilchrenan, as the latter took a circuitous route and detours to pick up pupils. They also pointed out that the majority of the after-school or evening activities in which children engaged were in Taynuilt or Oban, and that the journey would therefore have to be made anyway. Furthermore, parents were aware that secondary education would be in Oban, and that the journey would therefore become a necessity at some point. Some also spoke of their own daily commute via Taynuilt, and observed that they were often able to take their children to school themselves without issue.

As well as being clear on the advantages of attending a small rural school, all attendees who wished to the school to be re-opened nonetheless acknowledged the issues associated with very small school rolls, and that this was not every parent/carer's preference. They also acknowledged the associated problems with the recruitment and retention of staff, and the consequences of both issues for a school's sustainable future.

The option of re-opening the school, but with a wider catchment area was not seen by any attending the Community Engagement Event as a viable option. It was acknowledged that this could lead to increased transport costs for the local authority. It was also felt that extending the catchment area would not necessarily bring more pupils to the school, and could also negatively impact on neighbouring schools which are also small in size. The specific geography of the area was also seen as making any extension of the Kilchrenan catchment area non-viable.

The majority of the community, and all parents attending who had experience of sending their children to Kilchrenan PS, believed that the most viable option is to formally close the school, as the decline in school roll has been a result of parents actively choosing to send their children to Taynuilt and St. Columba's Primary Schools. Some of those in attendance viewed the challenge of recruiting and retaining high-quality staff as a reason to close the school. Five parents of children now attending other primary schools said there were many identifiable benefits of their children having moved from Kilchrenan Primary School.

Parents/carers of pupils now at other schools pointed to what they see as a higher quality of educational provision due to less broad composite classes and more individualised learning and support.

They also spoke of children now having a greater range of opportunities across the curriculum, particularly in PE and in practical subjects.

A wider scope and choice relating to socialisation and the development of personal friendship groups and relationships was also seen as an advantage for pupils who have moved from Kilchrenan PS.

The outdoor spaces at Kilchrenan were criticised by some parents/carers, who pointed out that sections of the outdoor spaces at the school had been deemed unsafe for pupils to use. The facilities available at Taynuilt were praised by parents/carers.

The absence of catering facilities at Kilchrenan was criticised by parents/carers, who felt that it restricted the variety, choice and freshness of food and drink on offer, and that it was not a cost-effective means of catering for children's dietary needs.

The general state of the fabric of Kilchrenan PS, and its recent further deterioration, was also seen as a negative by parents who had experience of sending their children there. The limited accessibility of the building was also seen as problematic.

The absence of a breakfast club at Kilchrenan was seen as restrictive of flexibility for families. Some parents/carers also spoke of the absence of wrap-around childcare and registered child minders in the Kilchrenan area. They said any increase in flexibility created by Kilchrenan PS being reopened was negated by the restrictions such as an absence of childcare had on parents' ability to work.

The reopening of Kilchrenan PS was also seen by some parents as having a potentially divisive effect on the local community. They felt that, despite reopening, a significant number of parents/carers would nevertheless continue to choose primary education in Taynuilt or Oban. Parents spoke of the risk of resentment from those in the community sending their children to Kilchrenan PS towards those sending their children elsewhere; being potentially seen as disloyal to the local community, and putting at risk the long term viability of the school.

As part of the engagement around this Options Appraisal, the parent/carer body at Taynuilt PS expressed its concern about the falling roll at their school. From their point of view, the re-opening of Kilchrenan PS could mean children who would otherwise attend Taynuilt PS may not do so, and despite the small number of children

involved each year, they see the closure of Kilchrenan PS as having positive consequences for Taynuilt PS, in terms of pupils numbers and its effect on the number of classes and teachers, the broadening of the mix of children in the school, and the number of parents potentially able to give of their time and resources for the benefit of the school community.

- **Children/young people**

As part of the pre-consultation on the future of Kilchrenan PS, the views of children living in the catchment for Kilchrenan PS were sought. Of the eight children spoken to in both Taynuilt PS and St. Columba's PS, five had had experience of being at Kilchrenan PS.

Almost all children who could make a comparison spoke of the very small group of which they were part at Kilchrenan PS. They said that they had enjoyed this, one pupil saying that the close relationships were missed, but were glad to have a wider group of peers with whom to make friends and develop relationships. Two pupils spoke of not having enough choice of people to play with at Kilchrenan. Two pupils spoke of how attending Taynuilt PS was preparing them better for meeting large groups of people in secondary school and beyond. One pupil said that he was enjoying doing much more group work in Taynuilt PS. One pupil said that after an argument or if there was a problem, there were now more people to approach than at Kilchrenan.

Almost all children spoke of the better facilities and range of activities on offer in their new schools, with better PE and more sports on offer.

Views on the travel from home to Taynuilt or Oban were mixed. One pupil said the journey was too long, and others acknowledged that there can be travel problems in bad weather. Others said they had good fun on the bus and had special "bus friends".

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

- **Staff**

There was no contact with previous teaching staff from Kilchrenan PS in the pre-consultation. The Head Teacher retired in 2022, and the teacher at the school was redeployed elsewhere. However, the views of staff in Taynuilt PS were summarised by the Head Teacher, who indicated that the enrolment of former Kilchrenan pupils had been positive for the school and posed no issues in terms of capacity

or provision to all learners. The same view was offered by the Head Teacher of St. Columba's PS, within the catchment area of which the Kilchrenan area falls in terms of denominational educational provision.

For details of individual comments made by attendees at the Community Engagement Event, please see Appendix 4.

5.0 THE PROPOSAL AND REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSAL AS CONSIDERED AT THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT

To summarise information provided above, Kilchrenan Primary School has been mothballed for 18 months. The school roll reduced to zero in February 2022 following the Head Teacher's retirement, attempts to recruit a replacement Head Teacher having been unsuccessful. At that point, the remaining pupils in the school transferred to Taynuilt PS. Their parents'/carers' view was that the very small school roll was not conducive to the type of education they sought, and was limiting opportunities for social interaction and development. This followed the moving of several pupils to St Columba's PS the previous August. The school was mothballed in the period after February 2022, and there have been no attempts to register pupils for primary one, or any other stage, since then.

While the building is mothballed it continues to deteriorate. The Community has been proactive in making 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. At the time of writing, there are 16.29 full-time equivalent vacancies for both Head Teachers and Teachers across Argyll and Bute. Recruitment in the Oban, Lorn and the Isles area is challenging due to the rural location of almost all of its schools.

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

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

- a) Re-open Kilchrenan PS;
- b) Continue the mothballing of Kilchrenan PS with the pupils zoned to Taynuilt PS;

- c) Re-open Kilchrenan PS and realign/extend its catchment area;
- d) Close Kilchrenan PS and realign the catchment area for Taynuilt PS to include the Kilchrenan PS catchment area.

6.0 OPTION A: RE-OPEN KILCHRENAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

6.1 Community Feedback

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

- Parents/carers of children presently under the age of five wish their children to attend a local school which is within walking distance and which reflects the local context;
- Residents with no children of school age foresee their families moving to the area and wish there to be a school for their grandchildren;
- Community members believe the absence of a school makes it less likely that the community will be sustained by families moving to the area;
- Travel to schools outside of the immediate community is inconvenient, potentially expensive and is at the mercy of adverse weather conditions.

6.2 Pupil Numbers

Table 3 above details the projected roll for Kilchrenan PS. If the school were to reopen in August 2023, there would be no pupils on the roll, as there are no children of primary one age in the catchment, and the parents/carers of the other eight pupils living in the catchment have said they will not move their children back to Kilchrenan PS, as their children are settled in their schools and friendships have been established. As stated, the provision at the schools pupils now attend in Taynuilt and Oban is viewed by those parents consulted to be preferable to that which was available at Kilchrenan.

The numbers presently projected to enter primary one, should the school re-open and should parents decide to send children to Kilchrenan PS, over the next three years is as follows:

August 2024 – 1 pupil
August 2025 – 4 pupils
August 2026 – 1 pupil

Were the school to re-open, a sustainable future for the school may not be viable unless other parents in the catchment area reversed their decision to keep their children at Taynuilt PS and St. Columba's PS, which they have indicated they will not do. As attendance at Taynuilt PS becomes more of a norm in the area, and through positive reports of educational provision there, it

is not guaranteed that local children attaining primary school age will automatically attend Kilchrenan PS, placing future viability further in doubt.

6.3 Financial Information

The finance to re-open the school, including costs relating to employees, premises, supplies and services and catering is **£150,763**.

In addition, the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£29,000**.

The annual cost of mothballing Kilchrenan Primary School is **£9,888**. This does not include costs related to the transfer of a member of staff to another school, and the associated over-staffing costs.

The annual cost of transporting pupils to Taynuilt Primary School during the mothballing of Kilchrenan PS is **£27,295**. Were the school to re-open, this cost would no longer apply, although the previous costs of transporting pupils from Inverinan, Dalavich and other areas of the catchment would be re-incurred.

6.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

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

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

6.4.1 Community Impact

The reopening of the school would most likely increase opportunities for the school premises to be used by the community. It would also be possible that the school would invite the community to specific events. The presence of a school and the facilities/activities that may be offered could make the area a more attractive place to live. Reopening the school 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. Some who attended the Community Engagement Event indicated the desire for the school to become a hub for the many local small businesses, and a base for the campaign to establish a Regional or National Park around Loch Awe, and subsequently a key facility within it, both of which could have significant positive impact on the local community.

Although still available for such use, Kilchrenan Primary School has not been used by or for the community since it has been mothballed. The presence of a newly refurbished village hall near to the school means that there is an existing, high-quality resource for community events in the area.

Other than the points about the school's role in attracting potential residents to the area, respondents did not note any negative impact on the community of the school's mothballing.

6.4.2 Travel Arrangements

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

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

6.4.3 Educational Benefits

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

However, the reopening of the school would entail those local children choosing to attend being part of a very small school roll, which a number of parents/carers, and indeed children, in the catchment area viewed as disadvantageous to educational development for a number of reasons, including limited social groups and interaction, fewer curricular

opportunities and experiences and less individual attention on account of composite classes covering a wide range of age groups.

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

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

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

6.5 Summary

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

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

If the School were to be reopened, the premises and facilities would be available for use 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 present pupil travel arrangements have been in place for almost 18 months. 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 travel arrangements have a negative environmental impact.

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.

Considering all of the above, re-opening Kilchrenan PS is not considered to be a reasonable option.

7.0 OPTION B: CONTINUED MOTHBALLING OF KILCHRENAN PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS ZONED TO TAYNUILT 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.”* Kilchrenan Primary School has been mothballed for almost 18 months.

7.1 Community Feedback

Only one attendee was of the view that mothballing of Kilchrenan PS could continue, to allow children of pre-school age to attend the school once they attained the required age. All others at the Community Engagement Event who expressed an opinion felt that mothballing the school over a longer period would be wasteful due to deterioration of the property, and that a firm decision to close or re-open the school should be made.

7.2 Pupil Numbers

Pupil numbers are not projected to increase over the next four years, as per Table 3 above. The table reflects the maximum school roll possible, and does not take into account the choices of all parents/carers of primary-aged children to send children to Taynuilt PS or other schools outwith the catchment area by virtue of making a placing request.

7.3 Financial Information

The annual cost of mothballing Kilchrenan Primary School is **£9,888**. This does not include costs related to the transfer of a member of staff to another school, and the associated over-staffing costs. Neither does this take into account the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard for any re-opening of the school, which is **£29,000**.

The annual cost of transporting pupils to Taynuilt Primary School during the period of mothballing of Kilchrenan PS is **£27,295**.

7.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

Section 12A(2) of the Act requires the education authority to identify its reasons for the potential closure proposal in relation to a rural school, and consider whether there are any reasonable alternatives to the proposal which could more suitably address those underlying reasons. For the proposal and each and any alternatives identified, the education authority is required to assess the likely educational benefits, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

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

7.4.1 Community Impact

If mothballing of Kilchrenan PS were to continue, pupils would continue their education at Taynuilt PS, or elsewhere, and there would be no change to the current impact on the community. The building has not been used by the community during the period of mothballing, with the nearby Kilchrenan Village Hall fulfilling the civic requirements of the community. Furthermore, if the mothballing of Kilchrenan PS were to continue, the building would deteriorate further, with the result that it may not be available for community use under any circumstances.

Some members of the community view the buildings and grounds as an opportunity to develop a local small business hub, and as both a base for the campaign to create a Loch Awe Regional/National Park, and a key facility within such a park should it be established. Continued mothballing would stall any such developments, or any alternative plans for the building brought by the local community.

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

7.4.2 Travel Arrangements

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

7.4.3 Educational Benefits

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

The continued mothballing of Kilchrenan PS would continue the arrangements which have been in place for the last 18 months. However, any continued deterioration in the fabric and fittings of the school building as a result of mothballing would exacerbate the issues

associated with re-opening, as described in section 6.4.3 above, and their potentially negative impact on the quality of educational provision in the building in any future scenario.

7.6 Summary

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

The current annual cost (2022/23) to the Council of the mothballed Kilchrenan Primary School is **£9,888**. This includes electricity, heating oil, and ground maintenance, building maintenance and repair costs. It does not include the cost of over-staffing in another school to which the member of Kilchrenan's staff transferred. Neither does it take into account the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard should mothballing be followed by re-opening of the school, which is **£29,000**. Continuation of mothballing would mean no change to the annual transport cost of taking pupils to alternative schools, which is **£27,295**.

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

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

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

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

8.1 Community Feedback

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

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

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

8.2 Pupil Numbers

It is very unlikely that the establishment of any new catchment area would increase the potential roll of Kilchrenan PS, particularly as there is no guarantee that children living in any newly-extended catchment area would necessarily attend Kilchrenan PS – as placing requests can be made for children to attend schools other than their catchment school.

8.3 Financial Information

The finance required to re-open the school, including costs relating to employees, premises, supplies and services and catering is **£150,763**

In addition, the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£29,000**.

There would also be a financial cost associated with the transport to school of pupils within a larger catchment area.

8.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

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

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

8.4.1 Community Impact

The reopening of the school with a larger catchment area would increase opportunities for 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. Some who attended the Community Engagement Event indicated the desire for the school to become a hub office for the many local small businesses, and a base for the campaign to establish a Regional or National Park around Loch Awe, both of which could have significant positive impact on the local community.

Although still available for such use, Kilchrenan Primary School has not been used by or for the community since it has been mothballed. The presence of a newly refurbished village hall near to the school means that there is an existing, high-quality resource for community events in the area.

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

8.4.2 Travel Arrangements

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

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

car usage by staff, and greater distances for pupils to travel to school by vehicle, with commensurate negative environmental impact.

8.4.3 Educational Benefits

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers in exercising freedom and responsibility in their practice, within the context of broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. There are no specific educational benefits associated with the re-opening the Kilchrenan PS with a wider catchment area, as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence, ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

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

A small number of those consulted indicated the potential benefits of attending a school with a very small roll.

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

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

8.5 **Summary**

Of the 20 people who attended the Community Engagement Event, none expressed support for the re-opening of Kilchrenan Primary School with an extended catchment area.

All who reflected on the option acknowledged that the unique geographical character of the area makes an extension unviable. They saw it as unlikely that any extension of the catchment area would increase the school roll, as there are few dwellings that could be included in such an extension. Pupils now attending Taynuilt PS or St. Columba's PS would be very unlikely to transfer

back to Kilchrenan PS, and those families included in a newly-extended catchment area may wish their children to remain in the school they presently attend. Therefore, if the school reopened with an extended catchment area, the school roll would most likely still be unsustainably low.

There are financial implications associated with the reopening of Kilchrenan Primary School with an extended catchment area. The total cost of re-opening the school for educational provision is **£150,763**, while the additional cost of bringing the property to the level and standard required for reopening is **£29,000**. The annual expenditure of **£9,888** mothballing costs would no longer apply. Additional transport costs could also be incurred by the local authority.

If the School were to be reopened with an extension of the catchment area, the premises and facilities would be available for use 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 and time from Kilchrenan PS to Taynuilt PS is 6.7 miles in 14 minutes, via the B845. Adverse weather can be a factor, however this is no different to other rural schools and areas. The present pupil travel arrangements have been in place for almost 18 months. Should the school reopen with an extended catchment area, 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, and further for pupils to travel by vehicle, which may mean travel arrangements have a negative environmental impact.

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.

Considering all of the above, reopening Kilchrenan PS with an extended catchment area is not considered to be a reasonable option.

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

9.1 Community Feedback

The majority of people who attended the Options Appraisal meeting were not in favour of re-opening Kilchrenan PS as a school, and saw closure as the only viable option. Parents/carers of school-age children commented that the mothballing of the school after the roll fell to zero in February 2022 was a result of parental choice – several pupils had left the school at the beginning of the 2021-22 school session, transferring to St Columba's PS, and the remaining pupils moved to Taynuilt PS on the retirement of the Head Teacher in February 2022. Parents spoke of their greater satisfaction with the overall educational provision in their children's new schools. Among the key reasons for this were

less broad composite classes, more focus on children's individual learning needs, a wider social mix and increased choice in terms of friendship groups, wider curricular opportunities and a greater range of sports and activities on offer. Parents acknowledged the benefits of a small and close school community, but pointed out both that Taynuilt is not too far away, and that there are already great physical distances within the Kilchrenan catchment area. Some parents also said that the travel arrangements involved in getting to Kilchrenan each day were not greatly different from those involved in getting to their present schools in Taynuilt and beyond.

Parents also felt that the absence of wrap-around childcare and child minders in the Kilchrenan catchment area negated any benefits of there being a school in Kilchrenan, as travel beyond Kilchrenan was required to access such services, allowing parents to work.

Some members of the community spoke of their active intentions to repurpose a closed Kilchrenan PS for the benefit of the community. They wish to use the school as a hub office for local small businesses, and as a base for the campaign to establish a Regional/National Park in the Loch Awe area, as well as a key facility in the park if it is subsequently established.

9.2 Pupil Numbers

Table 4 below details the occupancy level for Taynuilt PS over the next four years as a percentage of its maximum capacity, taking into account the likely intake of pupils from the present Kilchrenan PS catchment area were Kilchrenan PS to be closed.

Table 4: School Occupancy

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Approved Capacity Taynuilt PS	163	163	163	163
Projected Roll Taynuilt PS	58	60	55	48
Kilchrenan PS Projected Roll	8	8	10	8
Maximum Roll Projection Taynuilt Primary	66	68	65	56
Taynuilt PS Occupancy %	40%	42%	40%	34%

Should Kilchrenan PS close, pupils from the Kilchrenan PS catchment area would attend Taynuilt PS, other than any pupils choosing denominational education at St. Columba's Roman Catholic PS, in the catchment for which Kilchrenan lies. There is a declining trend in the school roll at Taynuilt PS and the predicted occupancy rate for Taynuilt PS varies between 42% and 34% over the next four years. There are no issues associated with the capacity of Taynuilt PS to receive pupils from the present Kilchrenan catchment area, and such a scenario can be seen as beneficial to the Taynuilt PS school community.

9.3 Financial Information

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

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

9.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

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

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

9.4.1 Community Impact

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

civic requirements in the area, and is newly-refurbished, well-equipped and community-co-ordinated.

Some members of the community view the buildings and grounds as an opportunity to develop a local small business hub, and as both a base for the campaign to create a Loch Awe Regional/National Park, and a key facility within such a park if established. The closure of the school would permit the local community to take such ventures forward, under the terms of the *Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015*. Such a re-purposing of the building could potentially have a very positive impact on the economy and sustainability of the community in the longer term.

The closure of the school may have a negative impact on the numbers of those with children considering a move to the area, a concern held by some of those who attended the Community Engagement Event. This could have an adverse effect on the sustainability of the local community, although others pointed to a lack of affordable housing being the greatest issue for community sustainability.

Other than the possible role of the reopened school attracting new residents to the area, attendees at the Community Engagement Event did not detail any further negative consequences of the school being closed.

9.4.2 Travel Arrangements

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

9.4.3 Educational Benefits

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

Scottish Government classification defines both Kilchrenan PS and Taynuilt PS as remote rural schools. However, Taynuilt PS has a more accessible location in a larger village. Children from the Kilchrenan area, attending Taynuilt Primary School are benefitting from learning with a

greater number of peers of the same age and stage as themselves, as opposed to experiencing a single, multi-composite classroom. Pupils also benefit from the increased friendship groups that a larger school can offer, and 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 larger groups of children, take part in team activities and move with an established group of friends and peers to secondary school at Oban High School.

In interview, two pupils spoke of not having enough choice of people to play with at Kichrenan. Two pupils spoke of how attending Taynuilt PS was preparing them better for meeting large groups of people in secondary school and beyond. One pupils said that he was enjoying doing much more group work in Taynuilt PS. One pupil said that after an argument or if there was a problem, there were now more people to approach than at Kilchrenan.

Almost all children spoke of the better facilities and range of activities on offer in their new schools, with better PE and more sports on offer.

9.5 Summary

From those who attended the community engagement event, there was majority support for the closure of Kilchrenan PS as a school, and realigning the catchment area of Taynuilt PS.

The projected roll for Taynuilt PS ranges between 42% and 34% of the school's maximum capacity over the next four years. Upon the closure of Kilchrenan PS, the intake of a small number of children from the previous Kilchrenan catchment area will put no pressure on the school's capacity, and will be positive for the school in terms of the greater mix of children attending, the potential input of additional engaged parents and the potentially positive impact on the school's staffing.

The closure of Kilchrenan PS would incur no increased annual transportation costs, and the annual costs of maintaining the school building in its mothballed state, **£9,888**, would be saved by the council. The projected substantial costs of re-opening the school would require no further consideration.

Travel arrangements to Taynuilt PS, which almost all children and their parents have deemed to be satisfactory, are already in place for children within the Kilchrenan catchment area, and would continue should Kilchrenan PS be closed. There would be no clear negative environmental issues associated with the closure of the school. The vehicular transport arrangements would remain as they are.

In Taynuilt PS, children benefit from a positive learning environment, and from learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of the young people who attend the school. In addition there are more opportunities for personal and

social development, and for access to a potentially broader range of learning experiences and activities.

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

10.0 OVERVIEW OF OPTIONS

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

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

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

This section of the report both summarises and provides more information on the key factors considered in such an assessment, and goes into significant detail

regarding the educational benefits of closing Kilchrenan PS, particularly as regards the educational provision offered by Taynuilt PS.

11.2 Pupil Projections

As detailed above, the realignment of the Taynuilt PS catchment area to include that of Kilchrenan PS, and the subsequent enrolment of additional pupils, will not substantially affect the school occupancy in relation to the school's maximum capacity. As detailed in the table below, the predicted occupancy rate for Taynuilt PS varies between 42% and 34% over the next four years. There are no issues associated with the capacity of Taynuilt PS to receive pupils from the present Kilchrenan catchment area, and such a scenario can be seen as beneficial to the Taynuilt school community.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Approved Capacity Taynuilt PS	163	163	163	163
Projected Roll Taynuilt PS	58	60	55	48
Kilchrenan PS Projected Roll	8	8	10	8
Maximum Roll Projection Taynuilt Primary	66	68	65	56
Taynuilt PS Occupancy %	40%	42%	40%	34%

11.3 Assessment of Rural Factors

11.3.1 Educational Benefits

Learning and Teaching

The following focuses on learning and the curriculum at Taynuilt PS, which is the school most Kilchrenan PS pupils have been attending since February 2022, and would be the future receiving school for children presently living within the Kilchrenan PS catchment area.

The curriculum at Taynuilt PS includes a broad range of planned experiences, to help every child and young person to develop knowledge, skills and attributes for success in learning, life and work.

In Taynuilt PS, 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 – curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary learning, the ethos and life of the school and opportunities for personal achievement.

In Taynuilt PS, children are taught in 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 autonomy, creativity and responsibility, in the context of broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. The Head Teacher of Taynuilt Primary School leads a team of staff who are challenged and supported through a range of continuing professional review and development opportunities. The school is part of the Oban Lorn and the Isles Schools 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 Taynuilt 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.

Taynuilt PS has been focusing strongly on the development children's understanding of their rights – their role in wellbeing, sustainable living and school improvement – and working towards Rights Respecting School accreditation. A further key focus for the school is the empowerment of parents/carers in shaping and participating in policy, learning and the life and ethos of the school through a strong parent council and a vibrant parental voice. A third improvement focus for the school community has been to develop further the use of self-evaluation and attainment data to inform improvement planning at whole-school level, and to support appropriate, effective, timely interventions for children in their learning and attainment. Other ongoing improvement priorities include supporting digital learning, developing Reading through targeted interventions, supporting progress in Numeracy through the use of *Stages in Early Arithmetical Learning*, and promoting Pupil Leadership

of activities and initiatives, and ownership of and engagement with their own learning.

Taynuilt PS 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. The poly-tunnel supports children's understanding of health and wellbeing, bio-diversity and sustainability.

Taynuilt PS is in a village location within Taynuilt, which, like Kilchrenan Primary School, is classed as a very remote rural school. The Head Teacher has a strong understanding of the rural communities that the school serves.

Taynuilt PS has its own linked ELC on site, with which it coordinates an active transition calendar. The school also has strong links with Oban High School with which it liaises, alongside all other OLI schools, throughout the year to ensure a smooth transition for P7 pupils into S1.

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 analysis of pupil work. As a result of such practice, appropriate interventions are put in place, involving parents/carers and other agencies to ensure the needs of each child are met.

In Taynuilt PS, most children are achieving the expected levels for their stage in Reading, Writing, Listening and Talking and Numeracy. The attainment of children at Taynuilt PS is strong: between 2019 and 2022, attainment levels for P1, P4 and P7 pupils at Taynuilt PS in Numeracy and across the three areas of Literacy were above the Argyll and Bute and National averages.

Taynuilt PS continues to develop positive relationships within the school through a focus on Nurture and Rights Respecting Schools. The larger staff, parent/carer body and partner group of the school naturally increases the breadth of talent and interest that may be available to share within a school setting. This applies both in terms of the wider curriculum and within aspects of the curriculum that may be enhanced by staff individual expertise e.g. PE, language, science, expressive arts teaching.

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. Taynuilt PS has been evaluating its community links as

part of its Covid Recovery Plans, providing enhanced opportunities for social interaction and skills development.

Environment for Learning

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

11.3.2 Community Impact

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

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

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

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

11.3.3 Travel Arrangements

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

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

11.4 Financial Impact

The main elements included within a school budget are teacher employment costs (basic salary costs plus related employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions plus any relevant individual allowances); Local Government Employee costs and an allocation for discretionary expenditure incurred by the school (educational equipment, materials, staff travel, etc.). Teacher staffing budgets are calculated on an annual basis and within the Primary sector are determined, taking cognisance of the SNCT class size maxima, by the number of classes required to provide for the specific number and age of pupils in each school. When a school ceases to be operational, the teacher staffing budget is adjusted (at the appropriate time), as per entitlement information from Education HR, with the staffing budget resulting in a nil value. As a result of the authority's policy for no teacher redundancies, it is presumed that the staff will be deployed elsewhere within the authority and therefore their salary costs still exist, and there is an increase to the receiving school's budget. This is also in line with the national priority of maintaining teacher numbers. This methodology also applies to the school's discretionary budget which again is formula-based. The budget of the receiving school, in terms of any pupils being transferred, will increase. The figures outlined below take account of the fact that the staffing and discretionary budgets for Kilchrenan PS have been adjusted to nil.

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

The costs/savings outlined above assumes all revenue expenditure would cease. This includes non-domestic rates, utility costs, insurances, etc. If the school were to be formally closed, this would allow the council to take steps towards selling the school premises to a third party or progressing its handover to local community groups under the terms of the *Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015*.

11.5 Environmental Impact

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

12.0 CONCLUSION

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

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

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

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

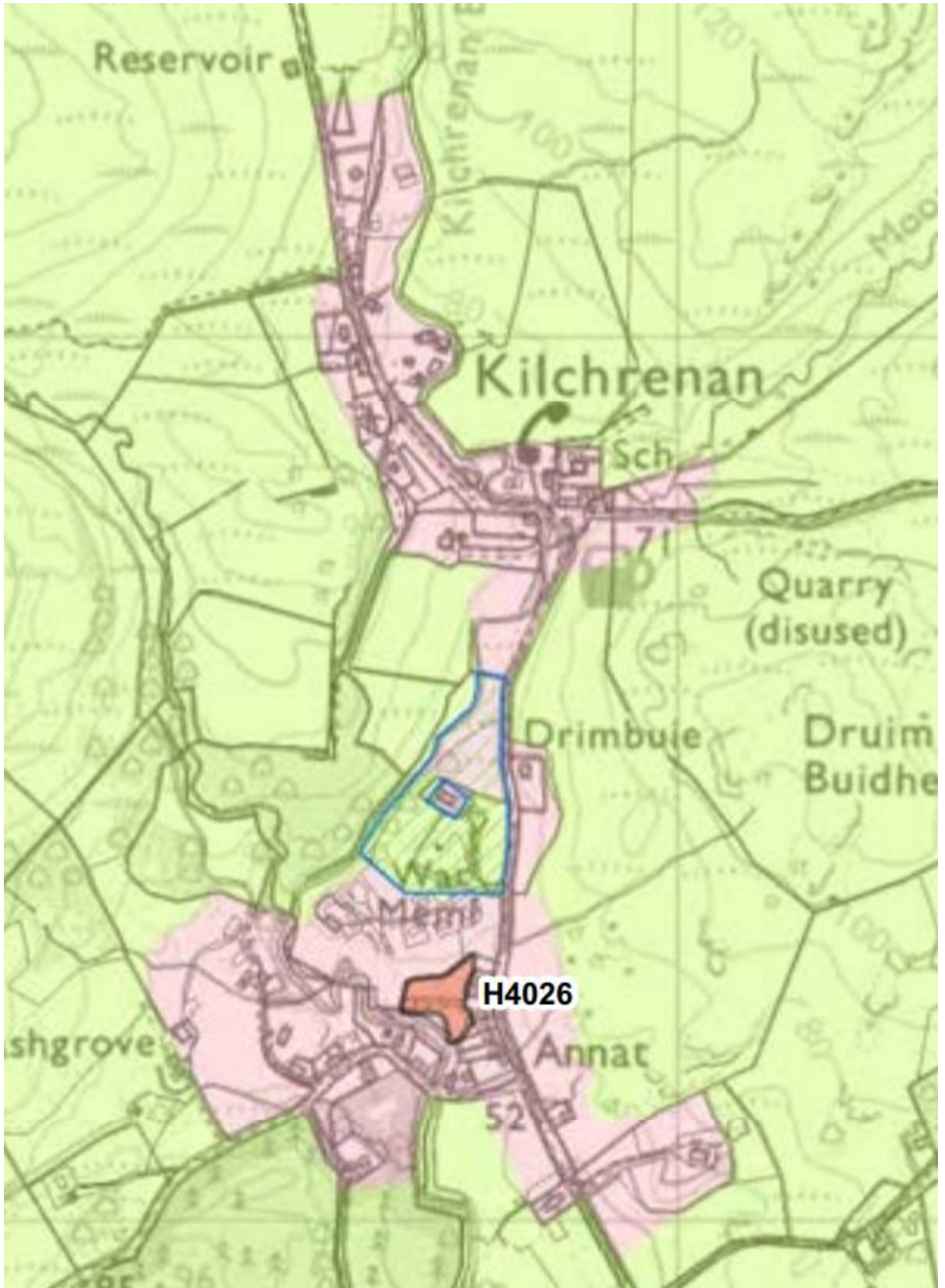
Members are asked to:

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

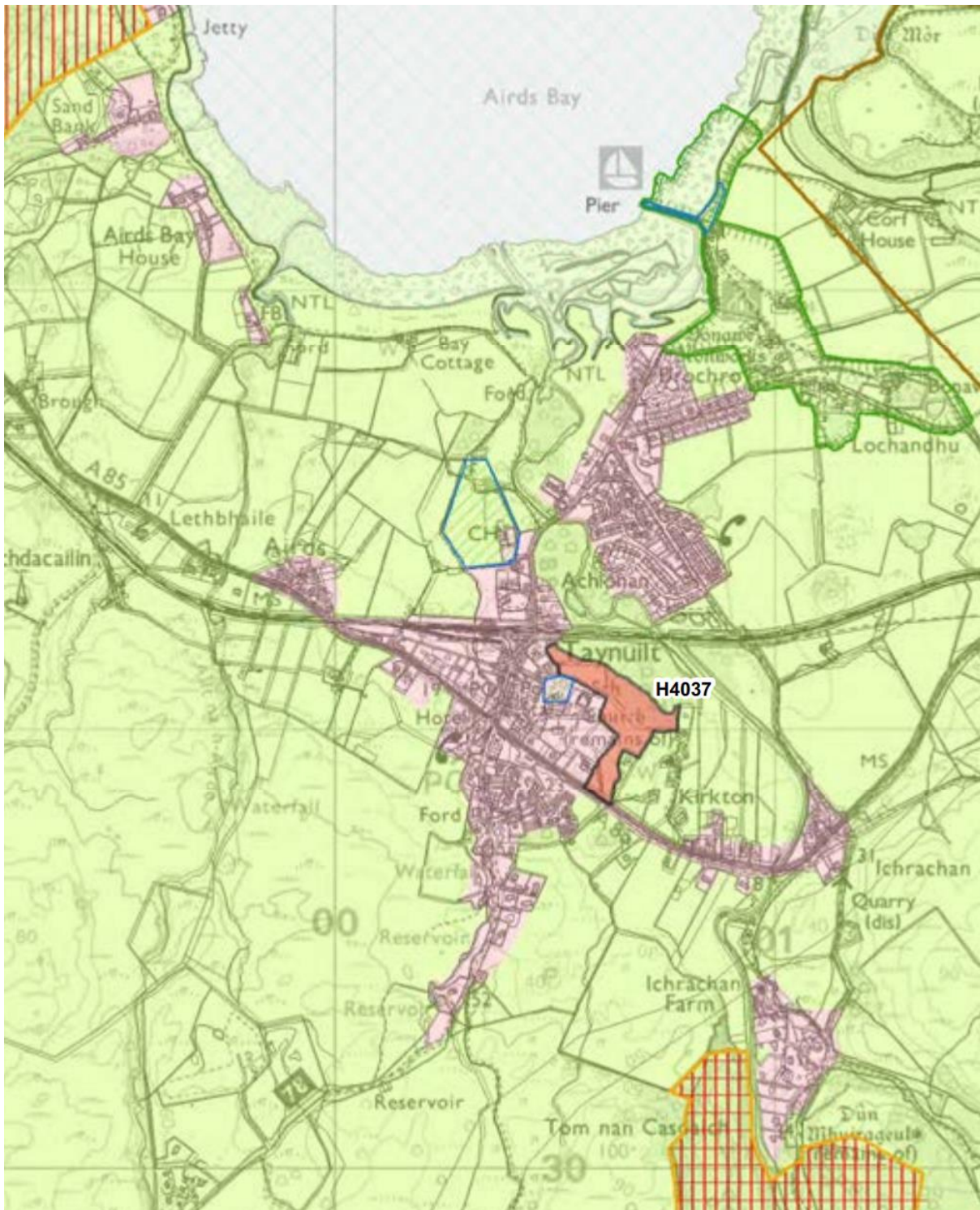
APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – LDP2 for Kilchrenan
- Appendix 2 – LDP2 for Taynult
- Appendix 3 – Key for Local Development Plans
- Appendix 4 – Floor Plan of Kilchrenan PS
- Appendix 5 – Floor Plan of Taynult PS
- Appendix 6 – Record of views expressed at Community Engagement Event, Kilchrenan Village Hall, 31st May 2023

Appendix 1 – LDP2 for Kilchrenan



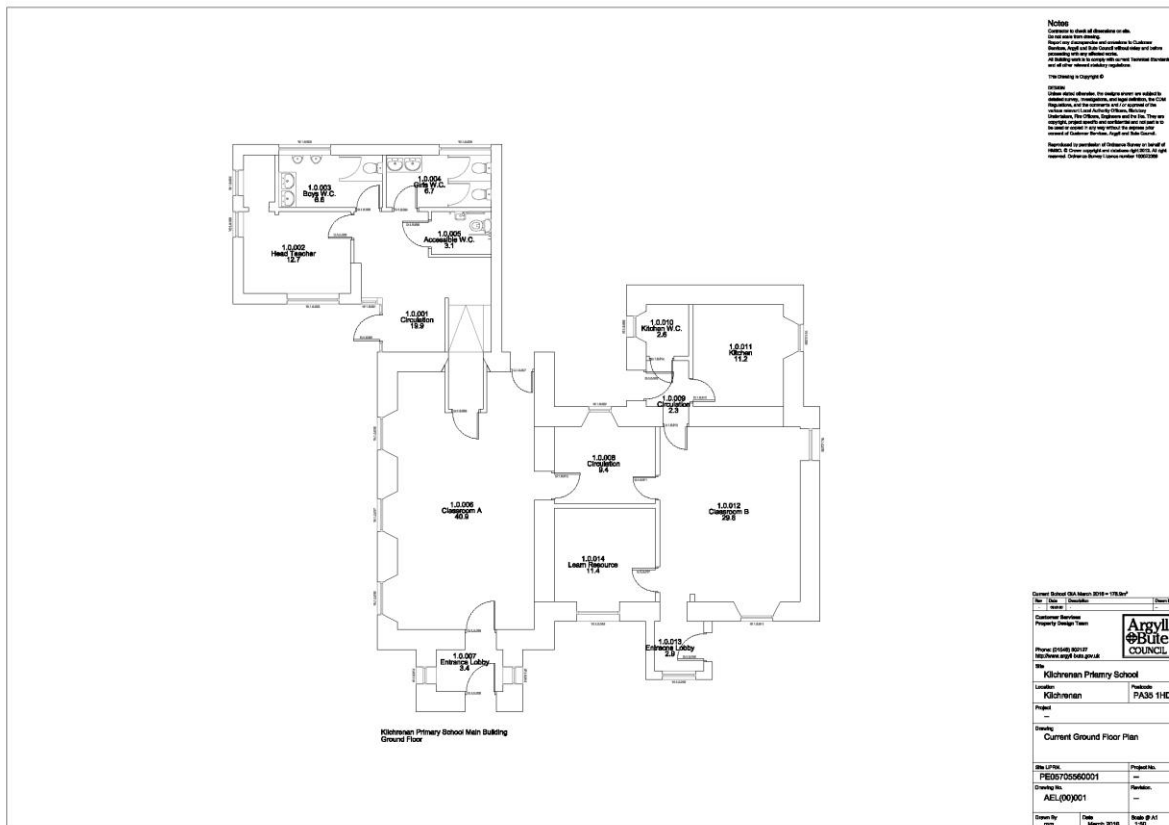
Appendix 2 - LDP2 for Taynuilt



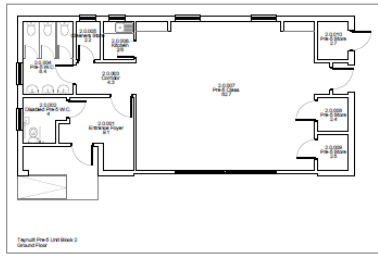
Appendix 3 – key for Local Development Plans

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

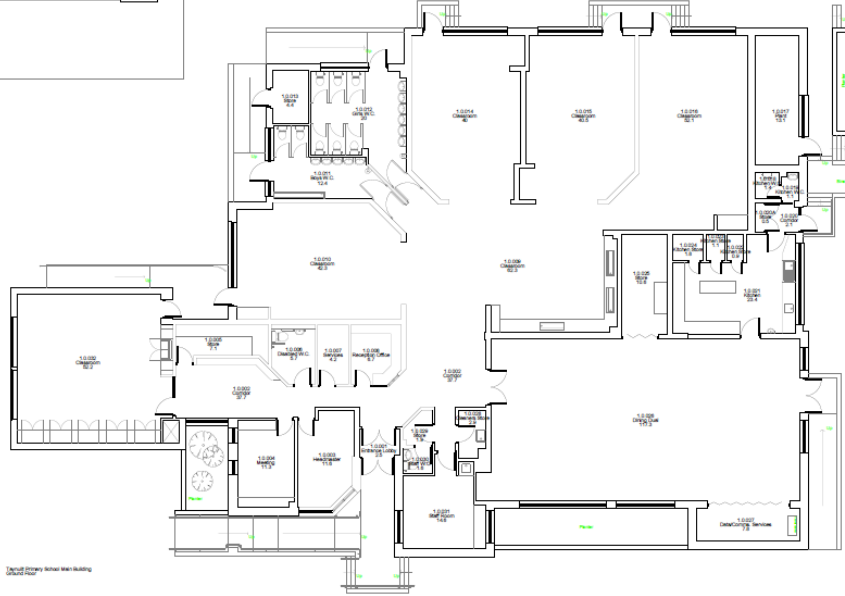
Appendix 4 – Floor Plan of Kilchrenan PS



Appendix 5 – Floor Plan of Taynuilt PS



Notes:
1. All dimensions are in millimetres unless otherwise stated.
2. All work is to be in accordance with the current Building Regulations.
3. All work is to be in accordance with the current BS standards.
4. All work is to be in accordance with the current BS standards.
5. All work is to be in accordance with the current BS standards.



Taymull Primary School Main Building
02/23/2023

Project Information	
Project Name	Taymull Primary School
Client	PACT Ltd
Phase	Current Ground Floor Plans
Scale	1:50
Drawn	[Signature]
Checked	[Signature]
Project Manager	[Signature]
Architect	[Signature]
Date	02/23/2023

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

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

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

Option 1 – Continue with Mothballing of Kilchrenan PS

- Wider range of professionals moving to area due to improvement in connectivity. There may be more children in the community in the future.
- Continue with mothballing until viability improves
- Having a school in the area may support the creation of more social/affordable housing in the area, as families are more likely to move to the community.
- Continuing mothballing would be the worst of both worlds – better to make a firm decision. (several attendees were of this view)

Option 2 – Reopen Kilchrenan PS with the current catchment area

- The area is less attractive to families without a school – it is the hub of the community
- There are concerns about transport for pupils from Dalavich travelling to alternative schools further away.
- Kilchrenan could reopen within a hybrid model – links to other schools to deliver aspects of the curriculum virtually.
- We would like our child to attend the local school here in the village of Kilchrenan
- We would prefer to send our child to Taynult – better opportunities and a wider social circle
- If Kilchrenan doesn't reopen, the community is at risk as there will be nothing to attract young families.
- 45 minutes to an hour on a bus to get to further away alternative schools is too much for young primary pupils.
- The school could reopen for children in ELC and P1-P4 only
- Reopening the school is a lovely thought, but it feels unrealistic and economically unlikely

Option 3 – Reopen Kilchrenan PS with a widened catchment area

- Extending the catchment area would lead to increased transport costs and longer bus times for pupils within the catchment
- Greater distance within the catchment area would increase the risk of pupils not making it to school because of travel problems or weather.
- Extending the catchment would take pupils away from other primary schools, which are also small
- It is impractical due to the geography of the area.

Option 4 - Close Kilchrenan PS permanently

- At Kilchrenan PS, children don't get the same opportunities as in other schools.
- Kilchrenan PS pupils don't get the PE choices of pupils in other schools.
- The building is dilapidated - fabric of the building is a concern.
- The answer from the previous HT to every complaint or suggestion was that there is insufficient funding.
- Kilchrenan PS has no suitable play areas – play areas deemed “unsafe”.
- Closing the school is a no-brainer.
- In Kilchrenan PS, the standard of teaching for children was not good – wide composite classes meant pupils weren't getting individual attention.
- The travel options to Taynuilt and St Columba's are not a problem – journey times are comparable from Dalavich to Kilchrenan and Dalavich to St Columba's in Oban because of the detours on the route to Kilchrenan.
- There is no wrap-around childcare in Kilchrenan, and an absence of registered childminders. Regardless of whether Kilchrenan is open, parents working is difficult.
- There are no cooking facilities in Kilchrenan – meals have to be brought from Taynuilt which is not a cost effective or efficient way of doing things and restricts what children can have.
- No breakfast Club at Kilchrenan which affects flexibility for families.
- Children who were attending Kilchrenan were having to go to Oban and Taynuilt anyway for after-school activities.
- By attending a larger, better-resourced school rather than Kilchrenan, children are benefitting greatly socially, and have wider opportunities. “They can be who they want to be, can choose who they are friends with”
- Kilchrenan is not accessible as a building, eg. for those with disability
- If Kilchrenan was closed, the cost of keeping it open could be redirected towards enhanced transport for pupils
- Closing Kilchrenan would be our choice, as we would rather send our child to Taynuilt.
- We are very satisfied with provision in Taynuilt PS and would not move our children to a reopened Kilchrenan PS
- If Kilchrenan reopens, pressure may be brought to bear on those families who choose an alternative – community pressure to attend the village school

- (From pupil) We could turn Kilchrenan school into a play areas – football goals, rugby posts
- (From pupil) We could turn the grass into a football pitch

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
EDUCATION

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
24TH AUGUST 2023

SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 – ACHALEVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides details of a draft proposal for Achaleven Primary School, formulated in accordance with the requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, as amended (the 2010 Act).

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee agrees to adopt the draft proposal, as set out in **Appendix A**, as a “relevant proposal” that is now to proceed to statutory consultation under the 2010 Act.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****EDUCATION****24TH AUGUST 2023**

SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 – ACHALEVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 On 10th June 2021, Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Achaleven Primary School, as the number of pupils at the school had dropped to very small numbers, and in anticipation that in August 2021 all pupils would be enrolled in other local schools, bringing the school roll to 0.
- 3.2 On 25th August 2022, the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an Options Appraisal for Achaleven Primary School. The Community Services Committee received a report on 9th March 2023 providing details of the Options Appraisal for Achaleven Primary School; carried out in accordance with the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act. The Committee agreed to note the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements, and requested that officers formulate a draft closure proposal, which is attached as **Appendix A**. If the draft proposal is adopted, it will subsequently trigger a formal consultation process under the 2010 Act.
- 3.3 The statutory process for the closure of a rural school is laid out in the 2010 Act, as amended by the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. Those amendments to the 2010 Act introduced, amongst other things, a presumption against closure of a rural school and detailed specific preliminary requirements which the education authority is required to follow prior to formulating a rural school closure proposal.
- 3.4 There is a requirement to have special regard to the rural schools factors and it is necessary to consider and assess any reasonable alternatives to 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 as part of the preliminary requirements, and Options Appraisal, which were undertaken prior to the Proposal Paper being drafted. They are also revisited within the Proposal Paper.
- 3.5 The Council, as an Education Authority, has a statutory duty in terms of the *Education (Scotland) Act 1980* to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across its entire area for the current school population and future

pattern of demand. This is reflected in “Our Children, Their Future” which is the Education Vision and Strategy for Argyll and Bute Council.

- 3.6 The Proposal Paper, attached as **Appendix A** of this report, addresses the various requirements in terms of the 2010 Act and recommends that Members agree to now move to a formal statutory consultation on the proposal to close Achaleven Primary School.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee agrees to adopt the draft proposal, as set out in **Appendix A**, as a “relevant proposal” that is now to proceed to statutory consultation under the 2010 Act.

5.0 DETAIL

- 5.1 Achaleven Primary School has been mothballed, and has had no pupils attending since August 2021. Achaleven Primary School has been designated as a rural school, in accordance with Section 14 of the 2010 Act.

- 5.2 The statutory process for the closure of a rural school is laid out in the 2010 Act, as amended by the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. Those amendments to the 2010 Act introduced, amongst other things, a presumption against closure of a rural school and specific requirements that the Education Authority is required to follow if they are considering formulating a proposal to do so. This includes consideration of certain preliminary requirements and this exercise has been previously undertaken and reported to the Community Services Committee on 25th August 2022. The draft Proposal Paper at **Appendix A** will, if accepted, allow officers to proceed to a statutory consultation on the proposal, in line with the process as required by the 2010 Act, and detailed within Section 21 of the Proposal Paper.

- 5.3 The draft Proposal Paper at **Appendix A** includes an assessment of:

- the school roll and predicted school roll;
- teacher numbers; and
- the condition of the school premises.

- 5.4 The Council has also undertaken an assessment of likely educational benefits and effects which this proposal may have if implemented on:

- the pupils of the affected schools;
- any other users of the school’s facilities;
- any children who would (in the future but for implementation of the proposal) be likely to become pupils of the School;
- the pupils of any other schools in the Council’s area.

5.5 The Council has also had special regard to the following factors if this proposal was to be implemented, given that Achaleven Primary School is classified as a rural school:

- likely effect on the local community;
- availability of the School's premises and other facilities for use by the community;
- likely effect caused by different travelling arrangements;
- environmental impact; and
- financial impact.

5.6 In addition, the Council has also considered how to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that might arise from implementation of the proposal.

5.7 Further details of the proposal for Achaleven Primary School are contained within **Appendix A**.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Attached as **Appendix A** to this report is a draft Proposal Paper in respect of Achaleven Primary School which sets out details of a draft closure proposal, recommended for adoption in order that it can now proceed to a statutory consultation exercise, conducted in accordance with the 2010 Act.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Policy – Preparation of this draft proposal for statutory consultation is in accordance with previous decisions of the Community Services Committee.

7.2 Financial – The financial implications are detailed within the draft Proposal Paper and will be subject to consultation, if agreed.

7.3 Legal – The Proposal Paper for Luing Primary School has been prepared following satisfaction of the preliminary requirements (Section 12A), and in compliance with the general requirements of the 2010 Act.

7.4 HR - None within this report.

7.5 Fairer Scotland Duty – None within this report.

7.5.1 *Equalities - protected characteristics* – See Section 20 of the Proposal Paper.

7.5.2 *Socio-Economic Duty* – See Section 20 of the Proposal Paper.

7.5.3 *Islands* – See Section 20 of the Proposal Paper.

- 7.6 Climate Change – Environmental impacts in regard to different travelling arrangements are outlined within Section 18 of the Proposal Paper.
- 7.7 Risk – None within this report.
- 7.8 Customer Service – None within this report.

DOUGLAS HENDRY

Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

Policy Lead for Education

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Head of Education – Performance and Improvement

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Rachel Binnie

Education Manager

Rachel.Binnie@argyll-bute.gov.uk

9th August 2023

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Proposal Paper, Achaleven Primary School

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Argyll and Bute Council

Education



PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: August 2023

Review of Education Provision

Achaleven Primary School

Proposal for the closure of Achaleven Primary School

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that education provision at Achaleven Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024.

The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Achaleven Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

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

- Achaleven Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is currently zero, and is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Along with several other rural councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 16.29 teacher and head teacher vacancies in Argyll and Bute.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budget for maintenance. The annual cost of the mothballing of the school building is currently around £15,866.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council website:

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

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils 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, deemed to be of suitable age and maturity to be able to communicate a view on the proposal, at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- Argyll and Bute Councillors – Ward 5: Oban North and Lorn
- Connel Community Council
- Ardchattan Community Council

- Dunbeg Community Council
- Community Planning Partnership
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The Constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Chief Superintendent, Police Scotland
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Fire Scotland
- Education Scotland

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Lochnell Primary School, Benderloch, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1QS
- Dunbeg Primary School, Dunbeg, Argyll, PA37 1QF
- Connel Village Hall, Lora Rd, Connel, Argyll PA37 1PA
- Oban Library, 77 Albany Street, Oban PA34 5AL

This document is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English.

If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please apply to the Executive Director, Argyll and Bute Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 10th June 2021 Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Achaleven Primary School. The Council agreed that in the event there are no registered pupils by the commencement of session 2022/23 the school be considered for formal closure through the statutory process.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=14218&Ver=4>

- 1.2 On 25th August 2022, the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an Options Appraisal for Achaleven Primary School.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=14784&Ver=4>

- 1.3 The Community Services Committee received a report on 9th March 2023 providing details of the Options Appraisal for Achaleven Primary School; carried out in accordance with the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010, as amended. The Committee agreed to note the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements and requested that officers formulate a draft proposal for consideration at the meeting of the Community Services Committee on 24th August 2023 which, if approved, would subsequently trigger the formal consultation process under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=15032&Ver=4>

- 1.4 The statutory process for the closure of a rural school is laid out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Act, as amended, introduced a presumption against closure of a rural school and details specific requirements which the education authority is required to follow if they are formulating a proposal to close a rural school. This includes the introduction of certain preliminary requirements which must be satisfied prior to the formulation of a proposal.

- 1.5 In addition, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out a new right for community organisations to request the transfer of local assets into local community ownership/management. This may be something that the Community wish to consider as part of or as a consequence of this process. Public bodies including Councils must

consider such requests and make a decision within six months of receiving a valid request.

- 1.6 Achaleven Primary School has had zero pupils enrolled since August 2021.
- 1.7 There is a requirement to have special regard to the rural schools factors prior to formulating a proposal to close a rural school. In particular it is necessary to consider any reasonable alternatives before considering closure. It is also necessary to consider the impact on the wider community of a potential closure and the impact of any different travel arrangements. These factors have been considered in the preliminary requirements which were undertaken prior to this proposal being written. A full assessment of the preliminary requirements is set out in the Options Appraisal, which is attached as **Appendix 5**
- 1.8 A new Corporate Plan (2023-2027) was agreed by the Council 29th June 2023. The Plan contains a new set of Council Priorities. The Argyll and Bute Corporate Plan 2023-2027 states its vision of a successful and vibrant Argyll and Bute with a growing population and thriving economy. The area has a rich mix of remote, rural and island communities. The Council will use its strong track record in partnership working, at all levels, to secure the best possible outcomes.

In the Corporate Plan for 2023-2027 through the agreed priorities, the will ensure:

- Children and young people will attain and achieve at all stages. We will improve outcomes for our children and young people.
- Our schools are effective, sustainable learning environments.
- Continued support for all of our children and young people with additional support needs across Argyll and Bute, within our schools and other service areas.
- We will support connections to, from and within Argyll and Bute.
- Recognition of the importance of marine connections to and from our island and mainland communities and our role in maintaining these links.
- We will reduce our carbon emissions.
- We seek to increase availability of all types of housing, including affordable homes.
- We build up and strengthen our communities as attractive, vibrant places to live, work and do business.
- We make assets work now while we plan for and invest in the future.
- We commit to working in partnership wherever we need to as well as calling on others, with responsibility, to take action that is required to safeguard Argyll and Bute's success.

- 1.9 The Council, as an Education Authority, has a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand. This is reflected in “Our Children, Their Future” which is the Education Vision and Strategy for Argyll and Bute Council.

2 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 It is proposed that education provision at Achaleven Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Achaleven Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

- 2.2 This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposal, which are:
- Achaleven Primary School has been mothballed for 2 years. The school roll is currently zero, and is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
 - Along with several other rural councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 16.29 fte teacher and head teacher vacancies in Argyll and Bute.
 - Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budget for maintenance. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is currently £15,866.

Additional Considerations

- The Council needs to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services;
- This proposal will bring educational benefits and assist in ensuring that the Education budget is more sustainable into the future. This proposal document contains an Educational Benefits Statement;
- 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 the educational attainment of pupils; and
- There is no realistic possibility at present of the Council being able to bring its whole school estate up to a satisfactory condition. The present

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

3 PRELIMINARY REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 The Council is required to consider the future of Achaleven Primary School, as it has been mothballed for 2 years. The Council have considered the reasons for making this proposal, and have also considered other viable alternatives, the likely effects on the community and the likely effects of different travelling arrangements as a consequence of this proposal. Financial implications were also considered. Some of these figures have been recalculated since the Options Appraisal was produced.
- 3.2 The Council considered how the implementation of this proposal would impact on the education of the children affected. The Council also considered the impact on the children who currently live in the catchment area but attend other schools, as well as children who may potentially live in the catchment area in the future.
- 3.3 The place of the school in the community was also considered, in terms of the impact this proposal would have on the sustainability of the community itself. Since its mothballing, the school premises has not been used for any meetings or events, as these tend to be held in Connel Village Hall, a short distance (approximately 300 yards) from the school.
- 3.4 Impact on the environment was taken into account during the initial pre-consultation process. This included a consideration of the transport implications if this proposal was to be implemented.
- 3.5 Four options were presented to the local community by the Council for consideration during the pre-consultation phase, as required by section 12A of the 2010 Act.
- 3.6 Of the four options which were considered by the community and the Council; (d) is the option favoured by the Council, as it was considered it most adequately addressed the reasons for the proposal.
 - a) Re-open Achaleven Primary School,
 - b) Continued Mothballing of Achaleven Primary with pupils zoned to either Lochnell or Dunbeg Primary School,
 - c) Close Achaleven Primary School and realign its catchment area to Dunbeg Primary School.
 - d) Close Achaleven Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School (The Proposal).

When considering the above options; the positive educational benefits of Lochnell Primary School alongside the factors of projected low pupil

numbers, the challenges in recruiting teaching staff and the considerable expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard at Achaleven Primary School; in addition the lack of local support for reopening Achaleven Primary School; option (d) was considered the most appropriate response to the underlying reasons behind consideration of this proposal.

- 3.7 Following from an initial Options Appraisal which was presented to the Council's Community Services Committee on 9th March 2023, it was agreed that the preliminary requirements were satisfied enabling the draft proposal to be formulated, with the option to close Achaleven Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School being identified as the most adequate means of addressing the reasons for the possible proposal.
- 3.8 During the preliminary consultation regarding the future options for Achaleven Primary School, there were a range of viewpoints gathered from parents, young people and members of the community.
- 3.9 The majority of the community were in agreement that the low numbers of children did not make the re-opening of the school realistic. There was a small percentage of people in support of continued mothballing in order to retain the building in case of future need. The majority of the community felt that it would be disappointing if the building lay empty and became derelict and were keen to explore other options for the building should the school close permanently. Parents of very young children expressed concern that the school may be closed, but agreed this may be the best option when projected numbers were clarified.
- 3.10 Closing the school would have no impact on staff or pupil travel from the current arrangement. There would be no alteration to the current travelling arrangements or environmental impact.

Alternatives to the Proposal

- 3.11 The community engagement process prior to the drafting of this proposal considered the views of members of the community and also considered any other alternatives to the closure of Achaleven Primary School. Full details from the community engagement and the findings from the preliminary requirements, to include the alternative proposals are attached as **Appendix 5**.
- 3.12 In conclusion, after the pre-consultation with the community, the Council feels that the proposal to close Achaleven Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School is the most reasonable means to address the underlying reasons for considering the future of Achaleven Primary School. Further detail is provided in relation to educational benefits, travel, environmental impact, community impact and financial impact below.

4 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 It is proposed that education provision at Achaleven Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Achaleven Primary School. (See **Appendix 3.**)
- 4.2 Achaleven Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school condition will deteriorate with limited budgets for maintenance. The school roll is currently zero and is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building has increased to £15,866 since the Options Appraisal was produced.
- 4.3 Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 16.29 fte teacher and head teacher vacancies in Argyll and Bute.
- 4.4 The Council needs to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services.
- 4.5 This proposal will bring educational benefits and assist in ensuring that the Education budget is more sustainable into the future.
- 4.6 The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high.
- 4.7 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 the educational attainment of pupils.
- 4.8 There is no realistic possibility at present of the Council being able to bring its whole school estate up to a satisfactory condition. The present condition is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate.
- 4.9 As part of the preliminary requirements in the drafting of this proposal, the Council considered four options. The option favoured by the Council is (d), as it was considered it most adequately addressed the reasons for the proposal.
- a) Re-open Achaleven Primary School,
 - b) Continued Mothballing of Achaleven Primary with pupils zoned to either Lochnell or Dunbeg Primary School,
 - c) Close Achaleven Primary School and realign its catchment area to Dunbeg Primary School.
 - d) Close Achaleven Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School (The Proposal).

4.10 Having considered these alternatives the Council has made an initial assessment that these are not viable alternatives to the proposal, and will proceed to consult on the proposal to close Achaleven Primary School and extend the catchment area of Lochnell Primary School.

4.11 The Council has undertaken an appraisal on impact if this proposal was to be implemented. This includes an assessment of:

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

4.12 The Council has carefully considered and reviewed the steps it has taken to address the underlying reasons for the proposal (as outlined at Section 2.2, above), prior to formulating this Proposal Paper.

4.12.1 In relation to the decline in the school roll, and no material increase being predicted in the forthcoming years, the School was mothballed two years ago as a result of a change to the School's circumstances – i.e. the school roll falling to zero as of August 2021. The Education Authority therefore decided to mothball the school as a temporary measure – in order to monitor the situation and assess whether there was any likelihood of the school roll increasing to the extent that the School became viable again in the near future. The mothballing was subject to review at least annually and the Education Service undertook to review the position should any further school age pupils move into the catchment area and/or if they demonstrated a sufficient level of demand for the School to justify its re-opening. As mentioned above, the School has been mothballed for two years, and its roll is not predicted to rise in the forthcoming years to a level which would make the School suitable for re-opening. As there has been no material change in circumstance evidenced, and having kept the position under review via mothballing for two years, the Education Service are of the view that matters should now move forward in the form of a statutory closure consultation in order to determine the future of Achaleven Primary School. This approach aligns with that suggested by the Statutory Guidance for the 2010 Act, and Paragraphs 63-65 in particular. Further details in relation to the School roll are set out at Section 5 of this Proposal Paper.

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

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

4.12.3 In relation to the underlying reason for this proposal concerning the condition of the school premises, the school property will continue to deteriorate whilst it remains mothballed. As mentioned at Paragraph 4.12.1, above, there is currently no evidence to suggest that the School will become viable for re-opening in the near future. Whilst the School remains mothballed, it costs the Council £15,866 annually. Accordingly, the Education Service are now seeking approval to proceed with a statutory closure consultation which, if subsequently implemented, will allow the Education Service to use any savings generated to the benefit of the other occupied schools and pupils within the Education Authority's area. It may also allow for any plans for other uses of the School property to be progressed, as it will need to be permanently discontinued as an educational establishment in the first instance. Further information about the condition of the School building and premises can be found at Section 7 of this Proposal Paper

4.13 The council has also undertaken an assessment of likely educational benefits or effects which this proposal may have if implemented on:

- The pupils of any affected school;
- Any other users of the school's facilities;
- Any children who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school; and
- The pupils of any other schools in the Council area.

4.14 In addition, the Council has also considered how to minimise or avoid any adverse educational effects that may arise from the implementation of this proposal.

4.15 The Council has also had special regard to the following factors if this proposal was to be implemented, as Achaleven Primary School is classified as a remote rural school.

- Likely effect on the local community to be assessed by reference to:

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

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

5 SCHOOL ROLL

5.1 The information in relation to the school roll as shown below is drawn from the yearly pupil census, which takes place in September each year. School rolls by their very nature may fluctuate slightly on an ongoing basis due to changes in pupil numbers as a result of pupils moving to and from the catchment area.

The school roll of Achaleven Primary School has seen a steady decline since 2008:

Table 2:	Achaleven	Dunbeg	Lochnell
Capacity	41	174	147
	Roll	Roll	Roll
2008-2009	39	80	92
2009-2010	27	81	87
2010-2011	8	79	92
2011-2012	0	76	96
2012-2013	4	73	101
2013-2014	5	76	112
2014-2015	9	81	109
2015-2016	10	82	114
2016-2017	12	78	124
2017-2018	9	99	130
2018-2019	13	88	124
2019-2020	9	98	114
2020-2021	7	90	112
2021-22	0	88	119

2022-23	0	89	118
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Predicted Roll

Table 3:	Achaleven	Dunbeg	Lochnell
Capacity	41	174	147
	Roll	Roll	Roll
2023 -2024	0	125	116
2024 -2025	4	128	114
2025-2026	4	130	122

* A prediction based on information available June 2023.

- 5.2 In 2022 - 2023 there are 52 school aged children who live in the Achaleven Primary School catchment area and who attend other schools. This includes children within a cross boundary area with Achaleven Primary School and those children who attend the denominational primary school (St Columba's Primary School) in Oban.
- 5.3 There are currently 16 school aged pupils who live in the Achaleven catchment area who attend Lochnell Primary School and 13 who attend Dunbeg Primary School.
- 5.4 Whilst there is a slight rise in the predicted school roll for the forthcoming years, the historical trend has been for parents to make placing requests to neighbouring schools. Those in the cross boundary area of Achaleven and Lochnell Primary tend to send their children to Lochnell. This coming school year there are 7 children (as at July 2023) from Achaleven catchment due to start school in August 23. However, all of those families in the cross boundary area have chosen Lochnell, and the remaining children will attend other local schools by virtue of placing requests.
- 5.5 The school roll is not predicted to rise significantly in the future. The area around Achaleven is a small settlement and is not identified for growth in the Local Development Plan: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/ldp>
- 5.6 There is currently only one residential development within the Achaleven catchment area.

6 TEACHER NUMBERS

- 6.1 Teacher numbers are improving nationally, with a 6.3% increase in the number of teachers nationally from 2016 - 2022. In Argyll and Bute there has been a 3.1% reduction in the fte number of teachers from 2016- 2022
- 6.2 As the school has been mothballed for two years, the issue of recruitment of staff has not improved. At the time of writing there are 16.29 fte teacher and head teacher vacancies in Argyll and Bute. Despite a sustained effort to secure permanent staff, there is no reason to think that staffing would not continue to be a considerable challenge for Achaleven Primary School.
- 6.3 At the current time, if the proposal was to be implemented, there would be no impact on staffing levels at Lochnell Primary School.

7 CONDITION OF THE BUILDING

- 7.1 Argyll and Bute Council's School Estate Management Planning process identified in 2022 that the condition of Achaleven Primary School was satisfactory and graded a B.
- 7.2 The original costs for re-opening the building remain the same as the Option Appraisal (See **Appendix 5**), the running costs of continuing to retain the building whilst mothballed have considerably increased (See **Appendix 4**).
- 7.2 As part of the consultation process the Council would be open to discussion with the community in regard to the future of the building. This might involve the transfer of the property to a recognised community group through the provisions of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 or some other agreed mechanism. This may provide the community with an opportunity to utilise the building as a driver for community benefit and potential regeneration that could also enhance the sustainability of the community.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

8 Assessment of likely educational benefits on pupils

- 8.1 If this proposal is implemented, the Council believes that there will be considerable educational benefits arising from this. These centre around;
 - Learning and teaching;
 - Meeting learners needs;
 - Broadening the range of opportunities; and
 - The environment for learning.

- 8.2 This statement focusses on Lochnell Primary School, which is the school the majority of pupils from the Achaleven Primary School catchment area currently attend.
- 8.3 The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. There are no specific educational benefits from reopening Achaleven Primary School as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children. Continued attendance of pupils at other schools allows children to experience a curriculum which is matched to their needs.
- 8.4 Achaleven and Lochnell Primary Schools are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Although there are 52 school aged children in the Achaleven Primary School catchment area, children from the Achaleven Primary School catchment area who attend Lochnell Primary School continue to benefit from education in a locality familiar to them, and still relatively close to home.
- 8.5 The co-location of the Early Learning Centre (ELC) and the primary classes at Lochnell Primary School enables a strong transition process between the ELC and school and includes joint early level learning every week.

9 Learning and Teaching

- 9.1 The curriculum includes a broad range of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, to help every child and young person to develop knowledge, skills and attributes for success in learning, life and work. In Lochnell 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.
- 9.2 The learning environment encourages high level of achievement, providing a wide range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential within the four contexts of learning. In Lochnell Primary School children may be taught in classes composed of children from more than one year group. 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, take part in team activities and move with their peers to secondary school.

- 9.3 There is a continual challenge for all schools to deliver a school improvement agenda and deliver effectively the principles and outcomes of curriculum for excellence. The National Improvement Framework priorities include raising attainment for all, and closing the gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.
- 9.4 The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community.
- 9.5 At Lochnell 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. Lochnell Primary School is part of the Oban, Lorne and the Isles Cluster, which means that staff can be supported together, moderation and tracking of pupil progress is enabled and staff work across stage appropriate groups. Colleagues within Lochnell 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.
- 9.6 Lochnell Primary School encourages nurturing and positivity. One aspect of this work is a successful Buddy System. Children from different stages work and learn together. This vertical support is particularly evident through events such as sports day and during breaks and lunch when groups of children are together in a social context. This system develops and benefits both the 'buddy' and the 'buddied'. This system works well and benefits the wide range of children in the school.

10 Meeting learners' needs

- 10.1 Through the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), practice model, meeting the needs of every child continues to be a priority and teachers carefully plan and assess to ensure each child has the opportunity to reach their potential. Careful tracking and monitoring procedures are in place to evidence pupil progress. This includes professional dialogue with teachers, learning discussions with children, classroom observations, assessment and looking at pupil work.
- 10.2 The school also has planned meetings and discussions with parents. These discussions between home and school improve parental engagement whilst focussing on next steps for learning. Where appropriate, intervention is put in place, while working effectively with other agencies and parents to ensure the needs of each child are met. In the primary classes, standards of attainment have been maintained over the last three years. Majority of children are achieving national

expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy. Health and Wellbeing continues to develop within the Emotion Works programme which supports positive behaviours and relationship within the school.

- 10.3 The staff, parent body and partner groups also bring opportunities for increased collaborative working. 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, STEM, expressive arts teaching.
- 10.4 A 'Respect Me' policy is built into class lessons and permeates the whole school ethos through assemblies and class work on rights and responsibilities. The school has achieved its Bronze Nurture Award and is working towards the Silver Award, it is also working towards Rights Respecting School accreditation

11 Broadening the Range of Opportunities

- 11.1 Children are offered a range of active, planned experiences which help them develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing both now and in the future.
- 11.2 There is also a strong transition planning process between Lochnell Primary School and Oban High School, which involves increased opportunities for children to participate and to make new connections.
- 11.3 Children are provided with a variety of experiences to develop their sense of responsibility, independence, confidence and enterprising attitude. The school has an active Pupil Council and ECO Group.
- 11.4 Across the school children are engaged with learning and contribute well in lessons. Staff promote positive relationships at all levels and also through the Young Sports Leaders programme, the impact of this being that children enjoy good relationships with their peers, young leaders feel confident and entrusted to take these developments forward.

12 Environment for Learning

- 12.1 Lochnell Primary School is a suitably-equipped and well supported school, situated in Lochnell. The entire building is well maintained and along with the surrounding scenery provides attractive accommodation for the Lochnell Primary School. The school has an all-weather pitch adjacent to the school, which is well utilised. The building has facilities for pupils and visitors with special access needs.

12.2 Any mitigating effects around the adverse weather and transport issues are outweighed by the benefits of this proposal.

12.3 In summary, there are a range of educational benefits for pupils if this proposal was to be implemented, as summarised in the paragraphs above. There are benefits for the development of social and emotional skills, as well as the educational benefits resultant from access to a more diverse curriculum. The learning environment in Lochnell Primary School also offers children the opportunity to participate in a wider range of active learning strategies.

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

Implications for staff

13.1 If this proposal is implemented, there will be no new implications for teaching and ancillary staff in Lochnell Primary School.

13.2 If this proposal is implemented, the Council does not envisage any adverse effects from the proposal in respect of staffing. Should issues arise however, these will be mitigated through the Council Educational Management Team support structure.

Early Learning Centre Users – Pre Five Children

13.3 The co-location for the Early Learning Centre (ELC) and the primary classes at Lochnell Primary School enables a strong transition process between the ELC and the school and includes joint early level learning every week.

14 Assessment of likely educational benefits on any children who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school.

Existing and future pupils

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

14.2 There would be positive educational benefits associated with this proposal. The management arrangements of the school would be strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies.

14.3 The proposal could increase the roll of Lochnell Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future.

The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities.

- 14.4 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Achaleven Primary School, would benefit from daily interaction in a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described above. Pupils in the combined school will have more shared experiences and opportunity for friendships. This will enhance their confidence and make the transition to secondary easier. Larger year groups make the provision of specialist services more viable and provide enhanced opportunities for school trips. Lochnell Primary School meets all the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

15 Assessment of likely educational benefits on the pupils of any other schools in the Council area

- 15.1 The current mothballing of the school has had an indirect effect on other pupils in Argyll and Bute. The reduction in the running costs for the school means that this is a saving to the Council, which is not taken from elsewhere. If Achaleven Primary School was to close, the current mothballing costs being incurred would be re-directed and therefore indirectly benefit other school pupils in Argyll and Bute.
- 15.2 There are no other significant impacts from this proposal on other pupils in the authority or who attend other schools, in either a positive or a negative way.

Placing requests

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

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

- 16.1 The main adverse effect from this proposal would be the length of the journey to school for children who live in the Achaleven Primary School catchment area. However, children who live in this catchment area and attend Lochnell Primary School make this journey, and families in the area engaged with thus far do not feel this is a major consideration. Funded school transport would also continue to be provided for pupils should this proposal be implemented.

17 Summary of educational benefits statement

- 17.1 Educational benefits of this proposal, such as the ability for children to participate in a broad range of experiences, the development of the strategic leadership of the head teacher in taking forward improvements in learning and teaching, and the ability to meet the educational, social and emotional needs of the children are significant benefits to this proposal. During the pre-consultation phase, these benefits were explored in detail and details from the community engagement and the findings from the preliminary requirements, to include the alternative proposals and the authority's assessment of other likely effects of the proposal and the reasons for that assessment are attached as **Appendix 5** Options Appraisal.
- 17.2 Whilst the positive educational benefits are numerous, there is one negative aspect identified which arises from the children attending Lochnell Primary School. This negative aspect is principally around the fact that children have to travel by either bus or car to school. However it is considered that the positive aspects of this proposal outweigh the negative aspect of some travelling for children.

18 FACTORS FOR RURAL SCHOOL CLOSURES

- 18.1 The Council has had special regard to the following factors in relation to this proposal, as Achaleven Primary School is classified as a remote rural school:

The likely effect on the local community if this proposal is implemented

- 18.2 The Council has made an assessment on the sustainability of the community should this proposal be implemented and considers that this may have a positive impact.
- 18.3 The Scottish Government focuses on four key areas of importance to rural communities;
- a strong and diverse rural economy, harnessing traditional strengths and with an appetite for change,
 - thriving rural communities where everyone can enjoy a decent quality of life, where the young are not forced to leave their communities to get on and where the vulnerable are no longer excluded,
 - strong, community focused public services that are accessible, of the highest possible quality and with the greatest possible choice,
 - a rural Scotland whose natural and cultural heritage flourishes in all its diversity

- 18.4 In rural communities, the challenges and opportunities are largely defined by the local area and can often best be met by a bottom-up, community-led response. Strong community leadership is vital to articulating local priorities and driving forward change and growth.
- 18.5 There is the potential if this proposal is implemented to capitalise on the existing will and drive in this community, with opportunities for local leaders to enable them to organise, motivate and inspire their neighbours. The opportunity for the local community to acquire this building would have a positive impact on the sustainability for the village.
- 18.6 Research¹ has shown that when communities feel empowered, there is:
- greater participation in local democracy;
 - increased confidence and skills among local people;
 - more people volunteering in their communities; and
 - greater satisfaction with quality of life in the neighbourhood.
- 18.7 The majority of people who attended the preliminary engagement event stated that they would be in favour of preliminary work to investigate whether the school building could be retained for community use and not allowed to fall into further disrepair, as that would adversely impact on the visual impact of the village.
- 18.8 It is considered that formal closure of this school could have a positive impact on the wider community, and might have potential to lead to an increase in other users of the facility, which may lead to an improvement in economic growth.
- 18.9 Indeed, the school closure may help to empower the local community should the community wish to undertake an asset transfer process for the building. This could have a positive impact on community sustainability. Formal closure would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community, some of whom are already contemplating ideas for future uses for the building. This may enhance community life by giving a community enterprise focus.

On the availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community

- 18.10 During the pre-consultation phase, almost all members of the community supported closure of the school with the suggestion that the building and adjoining grounds could potentially be retained for community use. As previously stated, Connel Village Hall is situated

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/>

approximately 300 yards from Achaleven Primary School and is used for village events. All people who attended the pre-consultation meeting felt that the school building should be retained for community use and not allowed to fall in to further disrepair, as that would adversely impact on the aesthetic of the community.

- 18.11 It is accepted that a school closure may have an adverse effect on a community, but a community hub could be an asset to the community. If any of the local community's plans for the building were to progress, this could have a positive impact on the sustainability of the community and in particular the availability of the school's premises and other facilities for use by the community. Formal closure of the school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements

- 18.12 The travel distance from Achaleven Primary to Lochnell Primary is 3.6 miles via the A85 and the A828. Travel time is approximately 8 minutes. Travel arrangements have been in place for 2 years since the school was mothballed. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Achaleven community.
- 18.13 Implementation of the proposal would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Achaleven Primary School, in terms of current travel arrangements would have a neutral effect. There is no current annual transport cost for pupils to travel to Lochnell Primary School as it is part of an existing West Coast Motors service bus route, and therefore would not incur additional costs in the immediate future.
- 18.14 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.

Environmental impact

- 18.15 Currently pupils travel to Lochnell Primary School from the Achaleven Primary School catchment area, and there is a pre-existing West Coast Motors service bus. Therefore, implementation of the proposal would have a neutral environmental impact on the current position, and would have no environmental impact on the current travel arrangements for staff.
- 18.6 If this proposal was to be implemented there would be little or no further impact on the natural environment.

19 FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 19.1 The full breakdown of the financial analysis is detailed in **Appendix 4**. This information gives details on the estimated cost if Achaleven Primary School was still to be an occupied and operational establishment. However, as Achaleven Primary School is currently mothballed, the cost for the mothballing is now estimated to be £15,866 per year. Should the school be reopened, occupied and operational, the running costs per year are estimated at £165,867 with the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is £25,465. These latter two costs have not changed significantly since the Options Appraisal (**Appendix 5**) was produced.
- 19.2 Column 2 of Table 1 at **Appendix 4** shows the projected annual running costs of Achaleven whilst Column 3 shows the additional impact on Lochnell Primary as the receiving school. The annual recurring savings (or costs) are shown in Column 4.
- 19.3 The main elements included within a school budget are teacher employment costs (i.e. basic salary costs plus related employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions 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.
- 19.4 In line with the national priority of maintaining teacher numbers, the Education Service operates on the basis that supernumerary teachers are redeployed and therefore their salary costs still exist with an increase to the receiving school's budget. Some of the costs noted in column 3 of Table 1 will not directly impact on Lochnell Primary School but they will be a cost to the Authority as a whole, for example the costs of maintaining the teachers employed in Achaleven Primary School.
- 19.5 There are currently no annual transport costs for pupils to attend Lochnell Primary School.
- 19.6 Table 2 contains the notional 30 year lifecycle costs that would arise based on the GIA of the various schools irrespective of the number of pupils accommodated. Lifecycle costs are representative of the cost needed to keep the building in a good state of repair. The cost over the next thirty years therefore to maintain Achaleven Primary School is £327,885 and for Lochnell Primary School this is £1,060,969.

- 19.7 Table 3 contains the annual running costs during mothballing of Achaleven Primary School. This estimate has increased to £15,866 per year. 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 to a third party or local community.
- 19.8 The transfer of pupils from Achaleven to Lochnell Primary School would impact on the council's Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) allocation for Achaleven Primary School Teaching Staff as there would be a reduction in the Percentage of Primary Pupils in Small Schools. This reduction is estimated at £15,798. However Argyll and Bute Council is supported through the floor mechanism so would not see a reduction in their overall funding.

20 EQUALITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

- 20.1 The Council as a public authority has a duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, the Fairer Scotland Duty (Part one of the Equality Act) and the Islands (Scotland) Act (2018) to have due regard to their provisions when making strategic financial decisions. This is done through assessing the potential impact of the decision on equality through Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (EQSEIAs).
- 20.2 The Council will undertake the process of assessment during the consultation process in respect of this proposal to ensure that due regard is given to such matters in the decision making process.

21 CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 21.1 Prior to formulating a rural school closure proposal under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* (the 2010 Act), as amended, the Education Authority must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act. The Authority has previously identified its reasons for formulating a possible proposal, considered whether there were any reasonable alternatives to the possible proposal as a response to those reasons, and assessed each of the options in accordance with Section 12A(2)(c) of the 2010 Act. After considering a paper addressing these preliminary requirements, the Education Authority decided on 9th March 2023 that, having specific regard to the reasons for formulating a prospective closure proposal, the option to close Achaleven Primary School and redraw its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School is the most appropriate response to the specific reasons for the potential proposal.
- 21.2 This document was considered by the Council as Education Authority on 24th August 2023 when it was agreed that it should be adopted as a

relevant proposal and 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.

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

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

- 21.4 As part of a consultation process, the Education Authority must publish the proposal paper, advertise it and notify Education Scotland and all of the relevant consultees as prescribed by Schedule 2 of the 2010 Act, inviting them to make representations on the proposal. The consultation period will be from 31st August 2023 until the close of business on 27th October 2023 which lasts for a minimum of 6 weeks and includes at least 30 school days.

- 21.5 A public meeting will be held at Achaleven Primary School on Wednesday 4th October 2023 at 6.00pm. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting and participate is welcome to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Education Authority and the Education Authority will present reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions to be asked and comments to be made. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered. However, the Education Authority will also consider written responses which should be sent to Education Services, School Consultations, Argyll & Bute Council, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 5.00pm on 27th October 2023.

- 21.6 Written representations may be made on the proposal and the alternatives to the proposal. Written representations may also suggest other alternatives to the proposal.

- 21.7 Following the close of the consultation, the Education Authority will provide Education Scotland with copies of the written representations submitted, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting and any other relevant documentation. This will allow Education Scotland to prepare a report on the proposal within a period of 3 weeks.

- 21.8 After receiving Education Scotland's report, the Education Authority will then prepare and publish a Consultation Report in accordance with Sections 9, 10 and 13 of the 2010 Act. The Education Authority will thereafter make its final decision on whether to implement the proposal. The decision will be made a minimum of 3 weeks after publication of

the Consultation Report. If the Education Authority makes a closure decision, it shall notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and publish the fact that the Scottish Ministers have been notified, and that representations can be made to them. The Education Authority would also be required to publish a notice on its website of the decision to implement the proposal and why it has been satisfied that closure is the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal.

- 21.9 The Scottish Ministers will have a maximum of 8 weeks to call in any closure decision made by the Education Authority in certain circumstances. This 8 week timeframe would consist of an initial 3 weeks from the date of decision, during which representations can be made to the ministers, and a further 5 weeks for the Scottish Ministers to decide whether to issue a call in notice. During this period the Education Authority will not proceed to implement any closure decision.
- 21.10 If the Scottish Ministers call in a closure proposal, it is referred to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels. The Convener must constitute a School Closure Review Panel within 7 days for determination. The Education Authority may not implement a closure decision in whole or in part until the Panel has made its determination. It will usually issue a decision within 8 weeks of the Panel being constituted.
- 21.11 If the School Closure Review Panel refuses to consent to the closure decision, or following publication of the Consultation Report the Education Authority decides not to implement the closure proposal, the Education Authority cannot publish a further closure proposal in relation to the school for 5 years, unless there is a significant change in the school's circumstances.

22 CONCLUSION

- 22.1 It is proposed that education provision at Achaleven Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Achaleven Primary School.
- 22.2 It has been assessed that the proposal is the most appropriate means of addressing the underlying reasons for formulating it, which are:
- Achaleven Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is currently zero, and is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
 - Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 16.29 fte teacher and head teacher vacancies in Argyll and Bute.

- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for maintenance. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is currently £15,866.

Other Considerations

- The Council needs to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services.
- This proposal will bring educational benefits to all present and future users of the affected schools and assist in ensuring that the Education budget is more sustainable into the future;
- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high;
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate;
- Retaining unnessecary accomodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect the 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 condition is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate.

DOUGLAS HENDRY

Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

Policy Lead for Education

For further information, contact:

Wendy Brownlie

Head of Education: Performance and Improvement

Wendy.Brownlie@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Rachel Binnie

Education Manager (Acting)

Rachel.Binnie@argyll-bute.gov.uk

9th August 2023

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Consultation Letter

Appendix 2 - Response form

Appendix 3 - Maps

Appendix 4 - Financial template

Appendix 5 - Options Appraisal

APPENDIX 1

Argyll and Bute Council

Comhairle Earra Ghàidheal agus Bhòid



Executive Director: Douglas Hendry

Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA318RT

Telephone: 01631 700045

Fax:

Our Ref:

Ref:

e-mail: Rachel.Binnie@argyll-bute.gov.uk

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

Achaleven Primary School

Dear Consultee,

Review of Education Provision

**Notice and Summary of Proposal for closing Achaleven Primary School
Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010**

Background

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

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

The Council is conducting a public consultation process. This will commence on 31st August 2023 and will conclude on 27th October 2023. This is the period within which you will be able to make written representations to the Council in respect of the proposal. If you wish your view to be taken account of in the consultation exercise you must submit your written representation within this period. This notice and summary provides further information on where a full copy of the proposal may be obtained or referenced and also advises on how you can make written representations to the Council.

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

It is important that everyone we are consulting tells us what they think of the proposal. Please read this notice and summary and then consider the contents of the proposal document. You can then tell us what you think of the

proposal by making written representation and/or by attending the public meeting. This notice and summary tell you how to do that.

The Proposal

It is proposed that education provision at Achaleven Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Achaleven Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

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

- Achaleven Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is currently zero, and is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 16.29 fte teacher and head teacher vacancies in Argyll and Bute.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for maintenance.

The Council's education strategy - Our Children Their Future

Together we will realise ambition, excellence and equality for all.

- Raise educational attainment and achievement for all,
- Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people,
- Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed,
- Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life,
- Ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement,
- Strengthen leadership at all levels.

Alternatives to the Proposal

The following alternatives to the proposal were considered at the preliminary pre-consultation stage of this process;

- a) Re-open Achaleven Primary School,
- b) Continued Mothballing of Achaleven Primary with the pupils zoned to either Lochnell or Dunbeg Primary Schools,
- c) Close Achaleven Primary School and realign its catchment area to Dunbeg Primary School,

- d) Close Achaleven Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School, (the Proposal).

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

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

What will we do?

We will consult with people by:

- Providing a notice of the consultation and a summary of the proposal to the relevant consultees **this is that notice and summary**
- Placing an advert in the local press
- Putting information on our website <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/school-consultations-and-proposals>
- Holding a public meeting to explain the proposal
- Ask parents, carers, children, young people, teachers, support staff and others to tell us what they think of the proposals.

What to do now?

- Please read the full proposal document
- Please attend the Public Meeting which will be held on Wednesday 4th October 2023 at 6.00pm in Achaleven Primary School.
- Let us know what you think by:
 - Letter to: Education Services
School Consultations
Argyll & Bute Council
Argyll House
Alexandra Parade
Dunoon
PA23 8AJ

Returning the attached response sheet by post or by;

Email to: argyllhoureception@argyll-bute.gov.uk

What next?

Whilst the Council is engaging in a consultation process in relation to this proposal that does not mean that the proposal will go ahead. It does mean that the Council is engaging in a consultation process to seek your views on the proposal.

All the points raised during the consultation will be carefully considered and Elected Members will then decide if the plan should go ahead.

If the suggestion goes ahead, any children from Achaleven Primary School catchment area would be educated at Lochnell Primary School. Children already attending Dunbeg Primary School would be able to continue at this school.

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

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Lochnell Primary School, Benderloch, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1QS
- Dunbeg Primary School, Dunbeg, Argyll, PA37 1QF
- Connel Village Hall, Lora Rd, Connel, Argyll PA37 1PA
- Oban Library, 77 Albany Street, Oban PA34 5AL

It is also available electronically via our website:

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

Yours faithfully,

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director with responsibility for Education

APPENDIX 2



**Argyll and Bute Council
Education**

RESPONSE FORM

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

<u>Proposal</u>	
It is proposed that: Education provision at Achaleven Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31 st May 2024. The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Achaleven Primary School.	
This part of the form must be completed for a valid response:	
Name: (please print)	Address:
	Post Code:
I agree/do not agree (delete which does not apply) that my response can be made publicly available	
Signature:	Date:

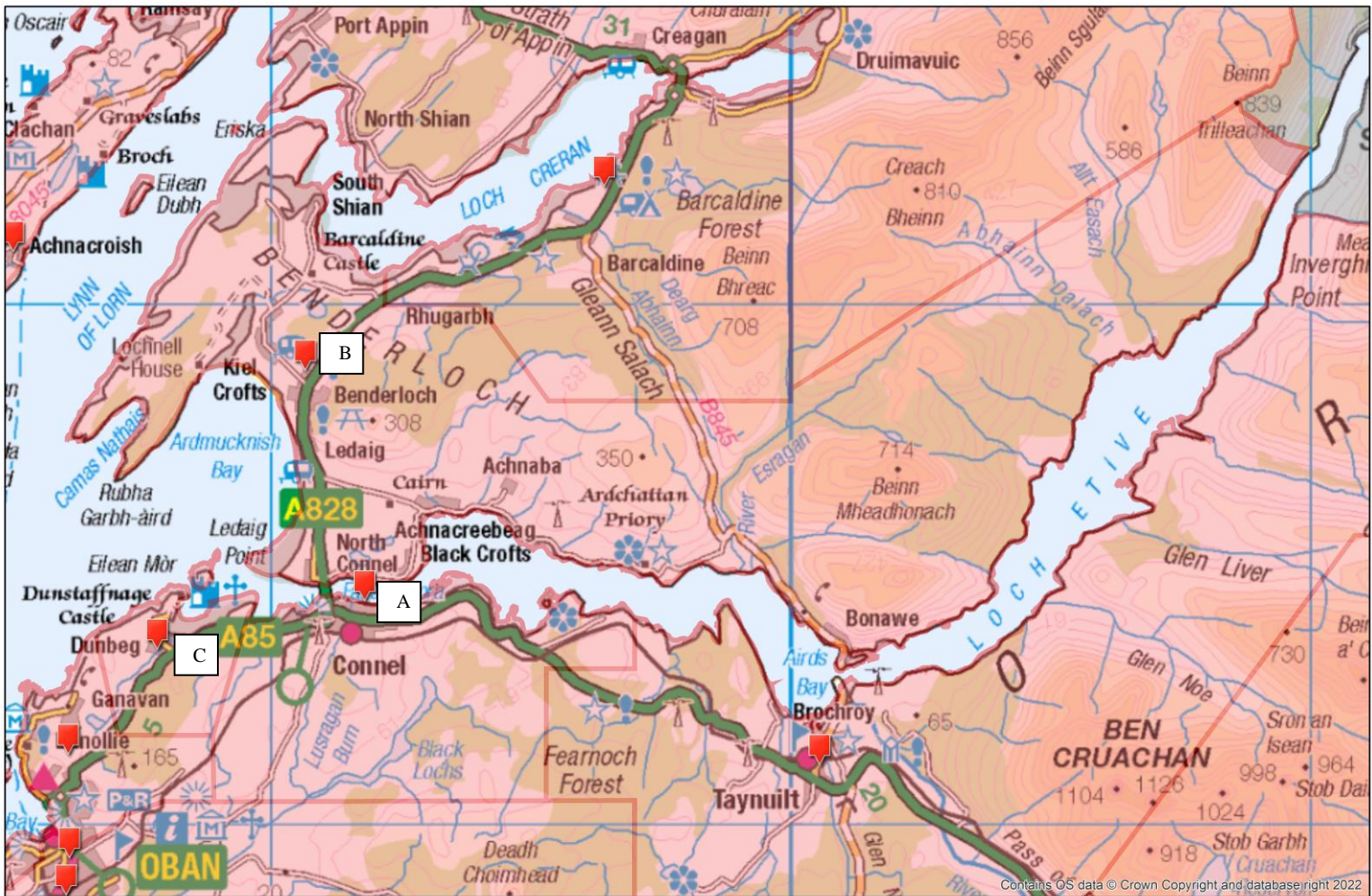
YOUR INTEREST: (please tick)

Parent <input type="checkbox"/>	Child / Young Person <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Other * <input type="checkbox"/>
Elected Member / MSP / MP <input type="checkbox"/>	Member of Community Council <input type="checkbox"/>		
*Other: (please specify)			
Please state your views on the proposal (continue overleaf if necessary)			

APPENDIX 3 - MAPS

MAP OF CURRENT PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA

The Map below shows the adjoining catchment areas of Achaleven and Lochnell and Dunbeg Primary Schools:



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- A – Achalaven Primary School**
- B- Lochnell Primary School**
- C – Dunbeg Primary School**

APPENDIX 4 – FINANCIAL TEMPLATE

Table 1²

	Projected annual costs for full financial year 2023/24	Additional financial impact on receiving school Lochnell Primary School	Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)
Name of School Achaleven Primary			
School costs			
<i>Employee costs -</i>			
teaching staff	106,927		106,927
support staff	23,355		23,355
teaching staff training (CPD etc.)			0
support staff training			0
Supply costs	3,030		3,030
<i>Building costs:</i>			
property insurance	1,948		1,948
non domestic rates	605		605
water & sewerage charges	142		142
energy costs	13,478		13,478
cleaning (contract or in-house)	549		549
building repair & maintenance	2,650		2,650
grounds maintenance	211		211
facilities management costs	0		0
revenue costs arising from capital			0
other - refuse collection; telephones	1,480		1,480
<i>School operational costs:</i>			
learning materials	2,911	44	2,867
catering (contract or in-house)	9,055	361	8,694
SQA costs			0
other school operational costs (e.g. licences)	544		544
<i>Transport costs:</i>			
home to school			0
other pupil transport costs	0	0	0

² These figures have been calculated based on Achaleven Primary school roll the last full year prior to mothballing.

staff travel			0
SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL	166,884	405	166,479

Income:			
Sale of meals	-1,017	-291	-726
Lets			0
External care provider			0
Other			0
SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL	-1,017	-291	-726
TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL	165,868	114	165,754

UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR	23,695	14	20,719
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Table 2

Capital costs	School proposed for closure	Receiving school
	Achaleven Primary	Lochnell Primary
Capital Life Cycle cost	352,885	1,060,969
Third party contributions to capital costs		

Table 3

Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal	
property insurance	1,948
non domestic rates	605
water & sewerage charges	142
energy costs	7,412
cleaning (contract or in-house)	0
security costs	0
building repair & maintenance	1,950
grounds maintenance	211
facilities management costs	3,422
other	177
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL	15,866

Table 4

Non-recurring revenue costs	
	£3,800
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	

Table 5

Impact on GAE - note 5	
<p>The Primary Indicator determining the GAE allocation for Primary School Teaching Staff is based on the number of primary school pupils with the Secondary Indicator being the percentage of pupils in small schools (roll < 70 pupils averaged over 2 years). The additional pupils from Achaleven will maintain the rolls of both Dunbeg and Lochnell above the small school threshold. There will be a loss of small school GAE for those pupils attending Achaleven equating to approximately £16k.</p> <p>Argyll and Bute Council, however, is supported by the floor mechanism therefore any calculated reduction in GAE would not have an actual impact on the overall GAE allocation.</p>	15,798
GAE IMPACT	15,798



EDUCATION

OPTIONS APPRAISAL

ACHALEVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 10th June 2021, Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Achaleven Primary School. The Council agreed that in the event that there are no registered pupils by the commencement of session 2022/23 the school be considered for formal closure through the statutory process.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=149205>

On 25th August 2022, the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an options appraisal, for Achaleven Primary School. The Community Services Committee received a report presenting and outlining details of a potential formal consultation under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* (as amended) and a broad timeline of this process.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/g14780/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2025-Aug-2022%2010.00%20Community%20Services%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

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.

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

On 25th August 2022, the 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 Achaleven 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 all of

the reasonable alternatives) and the impact of any different travel arrangements. These factors have been considered in this options appraisal.

2. 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 are as follows:

1. Achaleven Primary School has been mothballed since August 2021. There were no pupils registered at the school for session 2021/22 and the roll was not predicted to rise in the near future. This continues to be the situation.
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 Achaleven Primary School. The various options are explored within this paper.

3. 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.

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.

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

Achaleven Primary School is situated in the village of Connel, 5 miles north of Oban. Connel is a small and picturesque village situated on the southern shore of Loch Etive and sits at the end of Connel Bridge, a striking cantilever bridge which spans the sea-mouth of the Loch and was built in 1903 to take the railway line to Fort William. Today it supports the main A828 into Benderloch. Achaleven Primary School sits within grounds between the A85 and Loch Etive.

3.4 The School within the Community

Achaleven Primary School was at one time, active within the community. The pupils invited the community to attend events during the year. However, as the school roll diminished, attendance at events decreased. Whilst being mothballed, the school is not used for any meetings or events, as these tend to be held in Connel Village Hall, a short distance (330 yards) from the school.

3.5 Previous Mothballing and Re-Opening

In April 2011, two papers proposing the amalgamation of Achaleven Primary School with either Dunbeg Primary School or Lochnell Primary School were taken to a special meeting of Argyll and Bute Council. This resulted from the fact that Achaleven Primary School had suffered a decrease of 52 pupils in its roll over the period (2005 – 2011), this was a decline of 83% in the occupancy rate over the same period and the projected roll for 2011/12 was 8 pupils. Following this, Achaleven Primary School was mothballed from June 2011 to August 2012. Achaleven Primary School re-opened with four Primary 1 pupils in August 2012, as a result of the Education Authority determining that the school had become viable again, following a review of the mothballing.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=257&MID=4611>

3.6 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 Achaleven area showing the changing population from census 2001 to census 2011:

Table 1: Population Information

Achaleven Area Census			
2001		2011	
Total Resident Population	135	Total Resident Population	129
% under 16	17.77	% under 16	21.7
% 16 – 64 (pensionable age)	54.81	% 16 – 64 (pensionable age)	62.0
% pensionable age and over	27.41	% pensionable age and over	16.2

It is recognised that the census area and the catchment area of Achaleven Primary School differ slightly.

3.7 Development and House Building

The current Local Development Plan (LDP2) was adopted in 2019. This sets out planning and development proposals for the next 10 years from 2020 and a vision for 20 years. The Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan provides the local planning framework for the Council area, excluding the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park area. The Plan is divided into the written statement and proposals maps. The written statement provides the general policy context against which planning applications for new development proposals should be assessed. This is supported by the proposals maps which show the range of development opportunities and constraints within the area, for example:

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

Appendix 1 shows the LDP for Achaleven/Connel.

Appendix 2 provides the key for Local Development Plans.

3.8 Achaleven Primary School

Achaleven Primary School, in Connel, is a non-denominational school situated on the main A85 Glasgow to Oban road, by the Connel Bridge. The school serves the village of Connel and its surrounding area from Achnacloch in the east to Dunstaffnage House in the west. The main accommodation, which is over 100 years old, contains two classrooms, toilets, staffroom, office, two resource storage areas, and display areas. There is a detached annexe, which is used as a third classroom and a dining room where School meals are served. Pupils have access to either a grass or a tarmac play area.

Appendix 3 shows the Achaleven Primary School Floor Plan.

Achaleven Primary School is 2.8 miles from Dunbeg Primary School and 3.6 miles from Lochnell Primary School.

The Scottish Government's Rural School List (October 2021) classifies Achaleven 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. Achaleven Primary is one of 21 primary schools associated with Oban High School.

3.9 Dunbeg and Lochnell Primary Schools

Following the mothballing of Achaleven Primary School, parents/carers have the choice to send their children to either Lochnell or Dunbeg Primary Schools.

Appendix 3 shows the Achaleven Primary Floor Plan

Appendix 4 shows the Lochnell Primary and ELC Floor Plan

Appendix 5 shows the Dunbeg Primary and ELC Floor Plan

Lochnell Primary School is a non-denominational and co-educational school situated in the village of Benderloch on the main Oban to Fort William road. The building is single storey and was opened in 1992. The teaching bays in the original building are semi open plan. The new extension teaching bays are open plan. The entire building is well maintained and along with the surrounding scenery provides attractive accommodation for the primary school. Lochnell Primary School has capacity for 147 pupils.

A joint school and community project was completed to provide and maintain an all-weather pitch adjacent to the school. The pitch is used very well by the school every day. The community have access to the pitch out-with school times and the public can book it at the local garage.

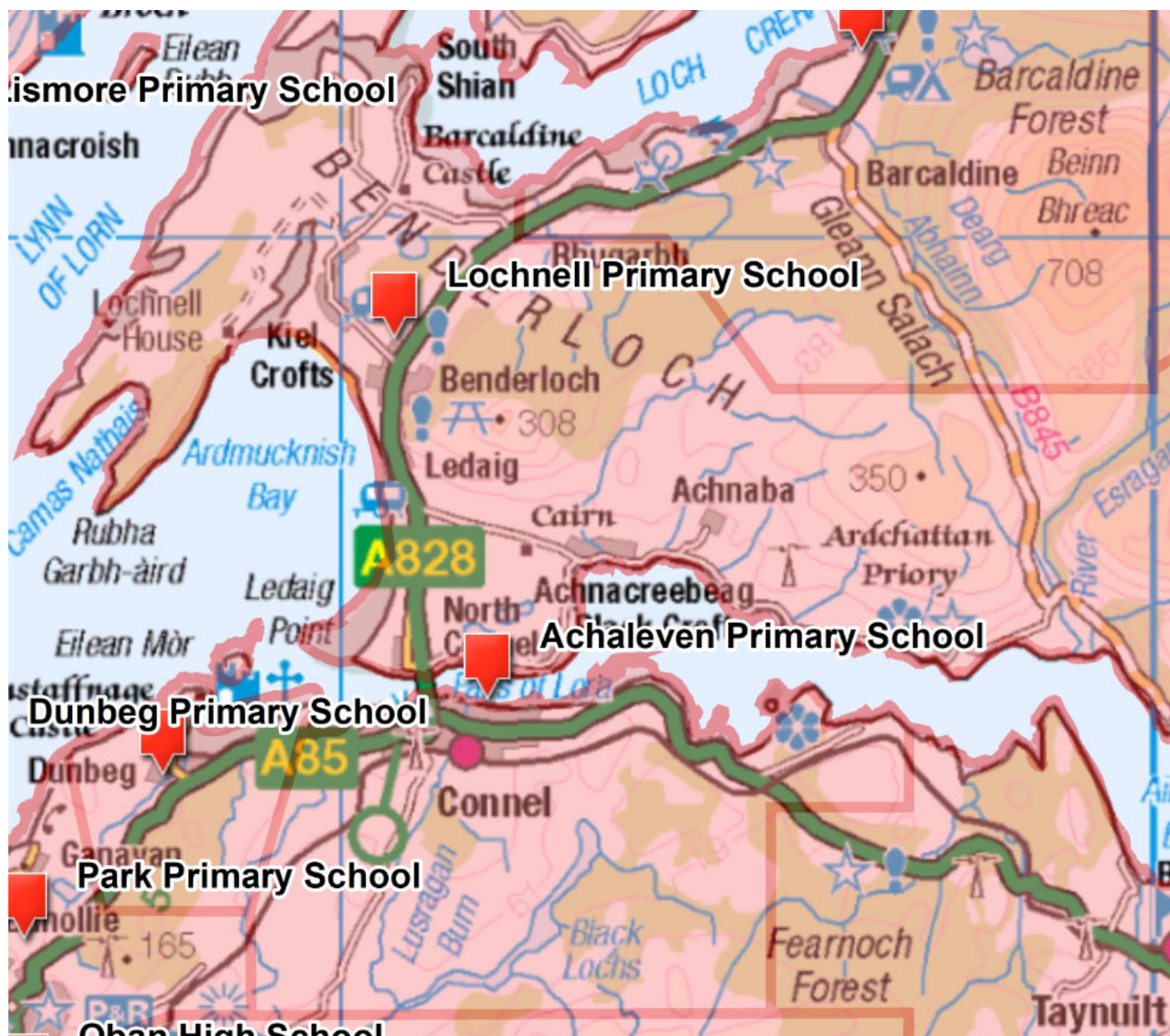
The building has facilities for pupils and visitors with special access needs. The school has very good links with Oban High School as their associated secondary school. Lochnell Primary has a Pre5 Unit within the school for 3 and 4 year olds.

Dunbeg Primary School is a non-denominational and co-educational school situated in the village of Dunbeg approximately three miles from the town of Oban. It is a single storey building originally opened in 1960 and has an extension to facilitate community activities. Recent additions include toilet/shower facilities for children with additional needs. Facing west are five classrooms and hall with large windows that provide a bright and pleasant working atmosphere. In front is a split-level play area with garden and netball court.

To one side is a games field and to the other a well-equipped play park for younger children. With capacity for 174 children of all denominations from P1-7, it also provides preschool education with spaces for 20 3–5 year olds. The school has very good links with Oban High School as their associated secondary school.

The Scottish Government's Rural School List 2021 classifies Achaleven, Dunbeg and Lochnell Primary Schools as 'very remote rural'. Oban High School is the associated Secondary School for all three primary schools.

The Map below shows the adjoining catchment areas of Achaleven and Lochnell and Dunbeg Primary Schools Catchment Areas:



3.10 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 for future P1 intakes are currently based on the 3 year average intake figure. Historical data shows that from 2014-2020, an average of 5 placing requests were made to schools out-with the Achaleven Primary School catchment area. This had a significant impact on the roll of Achaleven Primary School. There are currently 36 primary aged children residing in the Achaleven Primary School catchment. 20 of these children currently attend Lochnell Primary School and 16 currently attend Dunbeg Primary School.

Table 2 shows the historic and current pupil numbers for both Achaleven, Dunbeg and Lochnell Primary schools:

Table 2:	Achaleven PS	Dunbeg PS	Lochnell PS
Capacity	41	174	147
	Roll	Roll	Roll
2008-09	39	80	92
2009-2010	27	81	87
2010-2011	8	79	92
2011-2012	0	76	96
2012-2013	4	73	101
2013-2014	5	76	112
2014-2015	9	81	109
2015-2016	10	82	114
2016-2017	12	78	124
2017-2018	9	99	130
2018-19	13	88	124
2019-20	9	98	114
2020-21	7	90	112
2021-22	0	88	119
2022-23	0	89	118

Table 3 shows projected rolls for Achaleven, Dunbeg and Lochnell Primary Schools according to figures held by Argyll and Bute Council:

Table 3:	Achaleven PS	Dunbeg PS	Lochnell PS
Capacity	41	174	147
2023 -2024	1	125	116
2024 -2025	0	128	114
2025-2026	0	130	122

* A prediction based on information available date

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Meetings

A Community Engagement Meeting was held in Achaleven Primary School, on December 1st, 2022 from 13:00-19:00 hours. This was to seek the views of the community on the future of Achaleven School. This meeting was attended by 5 people from 3 households.

There are currently no primary aged children in Lochnell Primary who previously attended Achaleven Primary School, and there are currently 2 primary aged children in Dunbeg Primary who previously attended Achaleven Primary School.

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, financial information, development information and local services and facilities.

The questions were as follows:

Over the last year and a half, what has been the effect of mothballing Achaleven 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*

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 Achaleven School:

- **Community and Parents**

The majority of the community were in agreement that the low numbers of children did not make the re-opening of the school realistic. There was a small percentage of people in support of continued mothballing in order to retain the building in case of future need. The majority of the community felt that it would be disappointing if the building lay empty and became derelict and were keen to explore other options for the building should the school close permanently. Parents of children with very young children expressed concern that the school may be closed but agreed this may be the best option when projected numbers were clarified.

- **Staff**

Staff members acknowledged that without a significant number of pupils, re-opening the school is not viable.

General Comments:

'I don't think I would send my children to Achaleven if there were only a few other children in the school.'

'I already send my children to Lochnell as there is also Pre 5 provision there and transport is easy'

'Continued mothballing would mean further deterioration to the building and it may end up beyond repair which would be a shame'

'Mothballing could be beneficial if there are a viable number of children due to start at Achaleven in the next few years but it wouldn't be good for the children if there were going to be very low numbers in classes and across the school'

'Is there enough capacity at other local schools to accommodate pupils from Achaleven in the future?'

'It would be beneficial to have a safe cycle route to Dunbeg'

'If projected numbers are very low or non-existent then it makes more sense to close'

Pupil comments

'I was worried and optimistic. The old school was small. We are a lot happier at Dunbeg than we were at Achaleven.'

'I was worried about moving from a small to a really big school. I was not used to it. I was pretty ok afterwards. If I had to go back to a small school I'd feel pretty confused and I'd not be used to it.'

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

Achaleven Primary School has been mothballed since August 2021. The school roll was very low and there were no pupils projected to attend in August 2021 or August 2022. The roll is not predicted to rise above 1 pupil in the near future. There is very little community support for the reopening of the school.

Whilst the building is mothballed it continues to deteriorate. The community is keen to ensure a future for the building if possible. 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.

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

- a) Re-open Achaleven Primary School.
- b) Continued Mothballing of Achaleven Primary with the pupils zoned to either Lochnell or Dunbeg Primary Schools.
- c) Close Achaleven Primary School and realign its catchment area to Dunbeg Primary School

- d) Close Achaleven Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School.

6. OPTION A: RE-OPEN ACHALEVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

6.1 Community Feedback

Of the 5 community members that attended the Options Appraisal engagement event, no one was in support of re-opening the School because the lack of feasibility due to low pupil numbers.

Pupil comment

'Over all closing it was a healthy decision. It was really small and you couldn't really make friends.'

6.2 Pupil Numbers

If the school were to reopen in August 2023, the maximum Primary 1 intake in terms of catchment pupils would be one. It has been stated that without a viable number of pupils for the School, parents would not be considering placing their children to attend Achaleven Primary School if it were to re-open. In the six years from 2014-2020 (before the school was mothballed in August 2021), an average of 5 placing requests were made to schools out-with the catchment each year. Currently, there are 36 primary school aged children residing within the catchment area for Achaleven Primary School. 20 of these pupils attend Lochnell Primary School and 16 attend Dunbeg Primary School.

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.

Table 4: Pupil Numbers

Achaleven Primary	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Approved Capacity	41	41	41	41
Roll Projection	1	0	0	0

6.3 Financial Information

The total amount including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration to re-open the school is **£140, 660¹**

The annual cost of mothballing Achaleven Primary School is **£5,400**.

¹ Annual costs for running a comparative school for Achaleven Primary School.

The cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£25,465**.

6.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons why the future of Achaleven Primary School is being considered are as stated at Section 2 of this report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Achaleven Primary School to increase. Achaleven Primary School is currently mothballed and there were no pupils enrolled to start Primary 1 in either August 2021 or August 2022. To reopen the school would not increase the pupil numbers.

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, as they did in the past. The presence of a school and the facilities/activities that may be offered could make the area a more attractive place to live although it is recognised that two other primary schools are nearby. 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 no wish for the school to reopen. Almost all who attended the community engagement event indicated that it would be worthwhile to explore the repurposing of the school building to become a facility for the community to use rather than an educational establishment.

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 considerable expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard. There would also be costs relating to staffing, and ongoing maintenance. Maintenance and building costs would also have to be met by the community if the school were to reopen as a community hub. 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 (sourced from Google maps) from Achaleven Primary to Dunbeg Primary is 2.8 miles via the A85. Travel time is approximately 6 minutes by car/bus. The travel distance from Achaleven Primary to Lochnell Primary is 3.6 miles via the

A85 and A828. Travel time is approximately 8 minutes by car/bus. The travel arrangements have been in place for 18 months. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Achaleven community. If Achaleven 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. 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.

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

5 people attended the consultation and the majority were not in favour of reopening Achaleven Primary as a school. If the school reopened, projected P1 pupil numbers for August 2023 would be one, and this is predicted to decrease over the next three years. There are currently 36 children residing in the Achaleven Primary School catchment area, 20 of these pupils attend Lochnell Primary School and 16 attend Dunbeg Primary School. An average of 5 placing requests to schools out-with the Achaleven catchment area have been made each academic session from 2014 until the school was mothballed in 2021. This has had a significant impact on the school roll and the Primary 1 intake.

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 **£140,660²**, with the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£25, 465**.

If the School was to be reopened, the premises would be able to be used by the community out-with school hours as a hub, in addition to its use as an educational facility. However, Connel Village Hall is a short distance from the school and is

² Annual costs for running a comparative school for Achaleven.

currently used for community events. 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 Google maps) from Achaleven Primary to Dunbeg Primary is 2.8 miles via the A85. Travel time is approximately 6 minutes by car/bus. The travel distance from Achaleven Primary to Lochnell Primary is 3.6 miles via the A85 and A828. Travel time is approximately 8 minutes by car/bus. The travel arrangements have been in place for 18 months. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Achaleven community. If Achaleven 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. 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.

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, the considerable expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard and the lack of local support for reopening Achaleven Primary School this is not considered to be a reasonable option.

7. OPTION B: CONTINUED MOTHBALLING OF ACHALEVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS ZONED TO LOCHNELL AND DUNBEG PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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.”* Achaleven Primary School has been mothballed since August 2021.

7.1 Community Feedback

There are some ideas for the future of the building which may be taken forward by the community as a hub for community life, although it was noted that Connel Village Hall is only 330 yards from the school. There was a significant view at the community meeting that mothballing the school over a long period is wasteful due to deterioration of the property and should not be prolonged:

‘We are concerned that the building falls into disrepair and becomes derelict or an eyesore’

'It would be good to discuss potential future use of the building at a Community Council Meeting'

'It would be good if the building could house a nursery provision but understand that low numbers may mean that this is not viable'

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 Achaleven Primary School is **£5,400**. This includes electricity, heating oil, and ground maintenance but does not include building maintenance and repair costs. Neither does it take account of the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school which is **£25,465**. Pupils living in the Achaleven Primary School catchment area are currently transported to Lochnell Primary and Dunbeg Primary through parental choice. A Council minibus transports the pupils to Dunbeg Primary at a cost of approximately **£19,009** per annum and a West Coast Motors service bus transports the pupils to Lochnell Primary. Due to the fact that the West Coast Motors service operates on an existing route and is part of a larger contract, there is no additional cost to transport pupils from Achaleven to Lochnell Primary School.

7.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons why the future of Achaleven Primary School is being considered are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation that the pupil numbers at Achaleven Primary School will increase. Achaleven Primary School is currently mothballed and although there are currently no registered pupils, pupils would be rezoned to another local school. To reopen the school would not increase the pupil numbers.

7.4.1 Community Impact

If pupils are to continue their education in Lochnell and Dunbeg Primary Schools there would be no change to the current impact on the community. If the mothballing of Achaleven was to continue the building would deteriorate further and eventually become unavailable. This could have a detrimental effect on the sustainability of the Achaleven community. At present the school grounds are available for community use. The small number of community residents who attended the meeting view the buildings and grounds as a potential opportunity to develop a community hub and there were some suggestions for possible usage. This may make the area a more attractive place to live, and in turn, may positively impact community sustainability.

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 (sourced from Google maps) from Achaleven Primary to Dunbeg Primary is 2.8 miles via the A85. Travel time is approximately 6 minutes. The travel distance from Achaleven Primary to Lochnell Primary is 3.6 miles via the A85 and A828 and travel time is approximately 8 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for 18 months. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Achaleven community. Continued mothballing of Achaleven 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. Pupils living in the Achaleven Primary School catchment area are currently transported to Lochnell Primary and Dunbeg Primary through parental choice. Currently, a Council minibus transports the pupils to Dunbeg Primary and a West Coast Motors service bus transports the pupils to Lochnell Primary.

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.

Achaleven, Dunbeg and Lochnell are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a very remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from Achaleven area, attending Lochnell and Dunbeg Primary Schools are benefitting from the broader rural environment, whilst not moving their learning to a school that is completely different to their home environment. High quality outdoor learning is currently provided at both primary schools.

The co-location of the nursery and the primary classes at Dunbeg and Lochnell Primaries enhances the transition process for the children moving from Nursery into Primary one, through joint educational processes and liaison between the settings. Transition to secondary school is enhanced through joint planning and educational experiences.

7.6 **Summary**

The majority of people who attended the consultation were not in favour of continuing the mothballing of Achaleven Primary School if projected pupil numbers were not expected to rise. There was a 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 Achaleven Primary School is **£5,400**. This includes electricity, heating oil, and ground maintenance but does not include building maintenance and repair costs. Neither does it take account of the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school which is **£25,465**. There is no current annual transport cost for taking pupils to an alternative school.

The travel distance (sourced from Google maps) from Achaleven Primary to Dunbeg Primary is 2.8 miles via the A85. Travel time is approximately 6 minutes. The travel distance from Achaleven Primary to Lochnell Primary is 3.6 miles via the A85 and A828 and travel time is approximately 8 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for 18 months. Adverse weather can be a factor, however this is the same for other local schools and areas. Pupils living in the Achaleven Primary School catchment area are currently transported to Lochnell Primary and Dunbeg Primary through parental choice. A Council minibus transports the pupils to Dunbeg Primary and a West Coast Motors service bus transports the pupils to Lochnell Primary. The travel arrangements have been in place for 18 months. Should the school continue to be mothballed these travel arrangements would continue.

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

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

8. OPTION C: CLOSE ACHALEVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA FOR DUNBEG PRIMARY SCHOOL TO INCLUDE THE CURRENT ACHALEVEN CATCHMENT AREA

8.1 Community Feedback

The majority of people who attended the Options Appraisal meeting were not in favour of reopening Achaleven Primary as a school given the very low/ no projected pupil numbers. They commented that there were not enough children to support re-opening the School. Additionally, with respect to very low/ non-existent numbers in future school roll projections, the sustainability of the School did not support re-opening of the School. Comments in relation to the closure of Achaleven Primary School and attendance at Dunbeg Primary School were generally positive:

'It would be beneficial if there was a safe walk or cycling route to Dunbeg'

'I would prefer that my child was able to walk or cycle to school but appreciate that in a more rural setting, this isn't always possible'

Pupil comments

'I wouldn't mind it (Achaleven) staying open but I would be upset to have to go back. I'd like to stay here. I like a big school.'

8.2 Pupil Numbers

Table 5: Schools Occupancy:

<i>Primary</i>	<i>2023/2024</i>	<i>2024/25</i>
<i>Dunbeg Approved Capacity</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>174</i>
<i>Dunbeg Projected Roll</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>128</i>
<i>Achaleven Projected Roll</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Total Roll Projection</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>128</i>
<i>Occupancy</i>	<i>72.4%</i>	<i>73.5%</i>

Pupils from Achaleven Primary catchment area would attend Dunbeg Primary School, as there are currently no pupils attending Achaleven there is no significant projected addition to school roll at Dunbeg Primary School. The current occupancy rate for Dunbeg Primary School is 51%. There is a projected roll of one pupil for Achaleven Primary for August 2023. This coupled with an increase in projected pupil numbers within the catchment area will take the roll for Dunbeg Primary from 89 in session 2022/23 to 126 in session 2023/24. The significant increase forecast is due to new house building taking place in the area. The projected school roll for Dunbeg Primary School is expected to increase incrementally over the next 9 years. By 2030, Dunbeg Primary School is expected to have an occupancy rate of 90%.

8.3 Financial Information

If the existing council minibus was to be used, this would cost approximately **£19,009** per annum. If Achaleven Primary School were to be closed it would generate savings of **£5,400** - the current annual cost of mothballing (2022/23) to the Council. This includes electricity, heating oil, and ground maintenance but does not include building maintenance and repair costs.

8.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons why the future of Achaleven Primary School is being reviewed are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Achaleven Primary School to increase. Achaleven 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.

8.4.1 Community Impact

The community supported the proposed closure of the school with the building and adjoining grounds being retained for community use where viable. All people who attended the consultation stated that they would be in favour of preliminary work to investigate whether the school building could be retained for community use and not allowed to 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 a community, a community hub could be an asset to a community. However, as previously stated, Connel Village Hall is situated 330 yards from Achaleven Primary School and is used for village events. If the Community wished to create a community hub, they would require to find a mechanism to acquire the property from the Council and deliver that aspiration. The buildings forming the school premises are situated within walking distance of the village. If the local plans for the building progress, this may have a positive impact on the sustainability of the village. Formal closure of the school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community.

8.4.2 Travel Arrangements

The travel distance (sourced from Google maps) from Achaleven Primary to Dunbeg Primary is 2.8 miles via the A85. Travel time is approximately 6 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for 18 months. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Achaleven community. This option would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Achaleven Primary School, in terms of travel would have a neutral effect on the environment. There is currently an annual transport cost of approximately **£19,009** per annum for pupils to travel to Dunbeg Primary School on a council mini bus. Going forward, this cost would continue to be incurred annually.

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 as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

Both Dunbeg and Achaleven are very remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from Achaleven area who would attend Dunbeg Primary School are benefitting from the broader rural environment, whilst not moving their learning to a school that is completely different to their home environment. High quality outdoor learning is currently provided at

Dunbeg Primary. The pupils would then be transitioning to Oban High School with an established friendship group.

In Dunbeg Primary School children are taught in classes composed of children from more than one year group. 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.

8.6 Summary

The majority of people who attended the Community Engagement event were in favour of closing Achaleven Primary as a school. They also commented on the potential for the school premises to be used as a community asset.

The current capacity for Dunbeg Primary School is 51%, however, due to house building within the catchment, there is expected to be a significant increase in the school roll and therefore a significant increase in the occupancy rate of the school. This is projected to be 72.4% by August 2023 and 90% by August 2030. The additional annual cost to transport pupils to Dunbeg Primary school on a council mini bus is approximately £19,009 per annum. Going forward, this cost would continue to be incurred annually.

The travel distance (sourced from Google maps) from Achaleven Primary to Dunbeg Primary is 2.8 miles via the A85 and this option would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Achaleven Primary School would therefore have a neutral effect on the environment. Dunbeg Primary currently accommodates pupils from Achaleven School and pupil numbers travelling from the current Achaleven catchment area are not projected to increase significantly. However, Dunbeg Primary has limited capacity to continue to accommodate the projected pupil numbers due to the projected increase in the roll through an increase in pupils residing within the catchment area.

On the basis, as detailed previously, that the school roll at Dunbeg Primary is projected to increase significantly and therefore the school capacity rate will also increase annually for the foreseeable future, the closure of Achaleven Primary School and realignment of the Dunbeg Primary School catchment area to include the current Achaleven Primary School catchment is not viewed as a reasonable option.

9. OPTION D: CLOSE ACHALEVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA FOR LOCHNELL PRIMARY SCHOOL TO INCLUDE THE CURRENT ACHALEVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA

9.1 Community Feedback

The majority of people who attended the Options Appraisal meeting were not in favour of reopening Achaleven Primary as a school given the very low/no projected pupil numbers. They commented that there were not enough children to support re-

opening the School. Additionally, with respect to very low/ non-existent numbers in future school roll projections, the sustainability of the School did not support re-opening of the School. Comments in relation to the closure of Achaleven Primary School and attendance at Lochnell Primary School were generally positive:

'I already send my children to Lochnell Primary School and transport is easy'

'I would prefer that my child was able to walk or cycle to school but appreciate that in a more rural setting, this isn't always possible'

Community members commented on the school premises and potential for this to become a community asset:

'The building to be used for a purpose to benefit the community for example a community hub with a nursery and café.'

Community members discussed potentially pursuing options for use of the building as a community hub.

9.2 Pupil Numbers

Table 5: Schools Occupancy:

<i>Primary</i>	<i>2023/2024</i>	<i>2024/25</i>
<i>Lochnell Approved Capacity</i>	<i>147</i>	<i>147</i>
<i>Lochnell Projected Roll</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>114</i>
<i>Achaleven Projected Roll</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Total Roll Projection</i>	<i>117</i>	<i>114</i>
<i>Occupancy</i>	<i>79.6%</i>	<i>77.6%</i>

Pupils from Achaleven Primary catchment area would attend Lochnell Primary School. As there are currently no pupils attending Achaleven there is no projected addition to school roll at Lochnell Primary School. The current occupancy rate for Lochnell Primary School is 80%. There is a projected roll of one pupil for Achaleven Primary for August 2023, this would take the projected roll for Lochnell Primary to 117.

9.3 Financial Information

An existing West Coast bus means that there would be no additional annual transport costs. If Achaleven Primary School were to be closed it would generate savings of **£5,400** - the current annual cost of mothballing (2022/23) to the Council.

This includes electricity, heating oil, and ground maintenance but does not include building maintenance and repair costs.

9.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons why the future of Achaleven Primary School is being reviewed are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Achaleven Primary School to increase. Achaleven 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

The community supported the proposed closure of the school with the building and adjoining grounds being retained for community use where viable. All people who attended the consultation stated that they would be in favour of preliminary work to investigate whether the school building could be retained for community use and not allowed to 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 a community, a community hub could be an asset to a community. However, as previously stated, Connel Village Hall is situated 330 yards from Achaleven Primary School and is used for village events. If the Community wished to create a community hub, they would require to find a mechanism to acquire the property from the Council and deliver that aspiration. The buildings forming the school premises are situated within walking distance of the village. If the local plans for the building progress, this may have a positive impact on the sustainability of the village. Formal closure of the school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community.

9.4.2 Travel Arrangements

The travel distance (sourced from Google maps) from Achaleven Primary to Lochnell Primary is 3.6 miles via the A85 and the A828. Travel time is approximately 8 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for 18 months. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Achaleven community. This option would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Achaleven 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 Lochnell Primary School as it is part of an existing West Coast Motors service bus and therefore 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.

Both Lochnell and Achaleven are very remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from Achaleven area who would attend Lochnell Primary School are benefitting from the broader rural environment, whilst not moving their learning to a school that is completely different to their home environment. High quality outdoor learning is currently provided at Lochnell Primary. The pupils would then be transitioning to Oban High School with an established friendship group.

In Lochnell Primary School children are taught in classes composed of children from more than one year group. 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.

9.6 Summary

The majority of people who attended the Community Engagement event were in favour of closing Achaleven Primary as a school. They also commented on the potential for the school premises to be used as a community asset.

Current capacity for Lochnell Primary School is 80%, with no significant increase to the school roll predicted in forthcoming years. There is no additional annual cost to transport pupils to Lochnell Primary school as this is part of an existing route and wider contract with West Coast Motors and use of the existing West Coast Motors service bus would not incur additional costs.

The travel distance (sourced from Google maps) from Achaleven Primary to Lochnell Primary is 3.6 miles via the A85 and the A828 and this option would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Achaleven Primary School would therefore have a neutral effect on the environment. Lochnell Primary currently accommodates pupils from Achaleven Primary School's catchment area, and pupil numbers are not projected to increase significantly. Lochnell Primary has capacity to continue to accommodate the projected pupil numbers.

In Lochnell Primary School, children benefit from a very positive learning environment with learning and teaching which is well matched to the needs of the young people who attend the school. In addition there is a clear focus on nurturing the health and wellbeing of pupils.

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

9. OVERVIEW OF OPTIONS

Option	Option Description	Outcome
A	Re-open Achaleven Primary School with the existing catchment area	Not a reasonable option.
B	Continued Mothballing of Achaleven Primary School with the pupils zoned to Dunbeg and Lochnell Primary Schools	Not a reasonable option.
C	Close Achaleven Primary School and realign the catchment area of Dunbeg Primary School to include the current catchment area for Achaleven Primary School.	Not a reasonable option.
D	Close Achaleven Primary School and realign the catchment area of Lochnell Primary School to include the current catchment area for Achaleven Primary School.	A reasonable option with some representation that the school becomes a facility the community can develop if viable.

10. DETAILED ANALYSIS OF REASONABLE OPTION: CLOSE ACHALEVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA FOR LOCHNELL PRIMARY SCHOOL TO INCLUDE THE CURRENT ACHALEVEN CATCHMENT AREA

10.1 Pupil Projections

<i>Primary</i>	<i>2023/2024</i>	<i>2024/25</i>
<i>Lochnell Approved Capacity</i>	<i>147</i>	<i>147</i>
<i>Lochnell Projected Roll</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>114</i>
<i>Achaleven Projected Roll</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Total Roll Projection</i>	<i>117</i>	<i>114</i>
<i>Occupancy</i>	<i>79.6%</i>	<i>77.6%</i>

10.2 Educational Benefits

This statement focusses on Lochnell Primary School which is one of the schools that parents/carers within the Achaleven Catchment can currently choose to send their

child to, and the school which would subsume Achaleven's current catchment area as part of Option D.

10.2.1

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.

The school are committed to providing appropriate opportunities for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural values through both the ethos and the curriculum. This is undertaken in partnership with parents/carers and takes account of the individual needs of pupils and the views of parents/carers.

The aim of Lochnell Primary School and Early Years is to ensure each child feels safe and happy so that they may achieve their potential. To do this, the school follow the principles of being Ready, Respectful and Safe (RRS). These principles sit alongside their core values which were reviewed and refreshed in January 2020. The core school values are: Kind, ambitious, fun, inclusive and curious.

The aims of Lochnell Primary are to:

- Inspire curiosity and creativity through rich learning experiences.
- Encourage ambition by opening minds, aiming high and celebrating achievements.
- Develop kindness through an ethos of inclusion and mutual respect.
- Enable appreciation and consideration of our local community and the wider world.
- Create a calm, purposeful and fun learning environment where learners feel valued.
- Continue to evaluate, evolve and excel!

Children know that their views are sought, valued and acted upon. The learning environment encourages high level of achievement, providing a wide range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential within the four contexts of learning.

In Lochnell Primary School children may be taught in classes composed of children from more than one year group. 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

varying sizes and composition, 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. The general aim of the school is to provide an atmosphere of mutual respect and collective responsibility. Pupils, parents/carers and staff all have an important part to play in producing and sustaining this positive ethos.

Lochnell Primary School welcomes and encourages diversity and individuality, while emphasizing their common commitment to moral values such as honesty, respect for others, compassion and justice. Fundamental principles of the school are that all who are involved in the life of the school have the right to be respected as individuals and carry the responsibility to act in a considerate and respectful manner towards others. The school are firmly committed to the elimination of any form of discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, gender or disability.

Lochnell has a working partnership with the village church and enjoy visits to church (virtual or in person) to celebrate special events throughout the year. The pupils also enjoy visits to the school and early years setting by the local minister. They welcome connections to other faiths and have linked with members of different faiths to provide a context for their curriculum and enhance understanding. Lochnell School, its resources and activities provide a focal point for the community. The involvement of parents/carers and other members of the community in school activities is highly valued and increases the range of experiences on offer for learners.

Parents are kept informed of school activities and the school are currently reviewing how best to do this. Parents/carers are always welcome to call at the school for further information and/or to arrange to see the Head Teacher.

Having an early years setting alongside the school has improved transition and liaison. However, the school are careful to maintain links

with the other pre-5 groups in the area to ensure a smooth transition process into P1 for all.

Links with other Oban and Lorn Primary schools are strong and when possible, the pupils enjoy activities throughout the year to share their learning and skills. Active Schools provide many opportunities for the pupils and there is an ongoing programme to train Young Leaders, ensuring additional leadership opportunities within the school.

Lochnell School has very strong links with Oban High and this makes the transition from P7 to S1 smooth and productive, ensuring that all pupils are well supported as they move to High School.

Both Lochnell and Achaleven are very remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from Achaleven area, who would attend Lochnell Primary School would benefit from the broader rural environment, whilst not moving their learning to a school that is completely different to their home environment.

10.2.2

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 the primary classes, standards of attainment have been maintained over the last three years. Most children are achieving national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy.

10.2.3

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. Throughout the school session there are opportunities for the children to take part in wider – curricular activities and after school clubs.

The variety, frequency and nature of the clubs depends on the availability of staff and senior pupils and parents to run and supervise them. More information is available from the school office.

Educational visits are an important part of the learning process and it is crucial to use our environment as a learning resource. The number and scope of these visits is governed by our financial situation and the opportunities available. Parents and carers help us supervise these outings and we are grateful for the enthusiastic help. Groups from the school compete in local festivals and competitions

10.2.4 *Environment for Learning*

Lochnell Primary School is situated in the village of Benderloch on the main Oban to Fort William road. The building is single storey and was opened in 1992. The teaching bays in the original building are semi open plan. The new extension teaching bays are open plan. The entire building is well maintained and along with the surrounding scenery provides attractive accommodation for the primary school.

A joint school and community project was completed to provide and maintain an all weather pitch adjacent to the school. The pitch is used very well by the school every day. The community have access to the pitch out with school times and the public can book it at the local garage.

The building has facilities for pupils and visitors with special access needs. They enjoy good links with Oban High School as the associated secondary school. Lochnell Primary has a Pre5 Unit within the school for 3 and 4 year olds.

10.3 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons why the future of Achaleven 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. Achaleven Primary School is mothballed with no current pupils. Having considered all the alternatives above, the option to close Achaleven Primary School and realign the catchment area for Lochnell Primary School to include the former Achaleven Primary School catchment area is considered the most reasonable means to address the reasons identified at Section 2 of this report.

10.3.1 *Community Impact*

The community overwhelmingly supported closure of the school with the suggestion that the building and adjoining grounds could potentially be retained for community use. Within Achaleven there is a Village Hall which houses community events. All people who attended the Options Appraisal Meeting stated that if possible they would prefer to see the

school building retained for community use and not allowed to fall in to further disrepair, as that would adversely impact on the community's access to the premises and the visual impact of the village. It is accepted that a school closure may have an adverse effect on a community. Formal closure of the school would mean that future plans for the building could potentially be progressed by the community.

10.3.2 Travel Arrangements

The travel distance (sourced from Google maps) from Achaleven Primary to Lochnell Primary is 3.6 miles via the A85 and A828. Travel time is approximately 8 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for 18 months. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Achaleven community. Pupils will travel on the existing West Coast Motors service bus and eventually all the pupils will travel to Lochnell Primary School. The environmental impact of travel will be minimal, as these arrangements are currently in place due to the mothballing of Achaleven Primary School. The closure of Achaleven Primary School, in terms of travel, would have a neutral effect on the environment. There is currently no additional annual transport cost of taking pupils to Lochnell Primary School and the continued use of the existing West Coast Motors service bus would mean there are no future cost implications.

10.4 Financial Impact

The main elements included within a school budget are Teacher employment costs (ie 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 Achaleven Primary School are a total of **£5,400**.

Annual savings generated through closing Achaleven Primary School would be **£5,400**.

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 to a third party or the local community.

10.5 Environmental Impact

Currently some pupils travel to Lochnell Primary. 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. Eventually all pupils will attend Lochnell Primary School, a relatively short journey. Travel is an accepted aspect of rural life.

13. CONCLUSION

Four alternative options have been reviewed in considering the future of Achaleven 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.

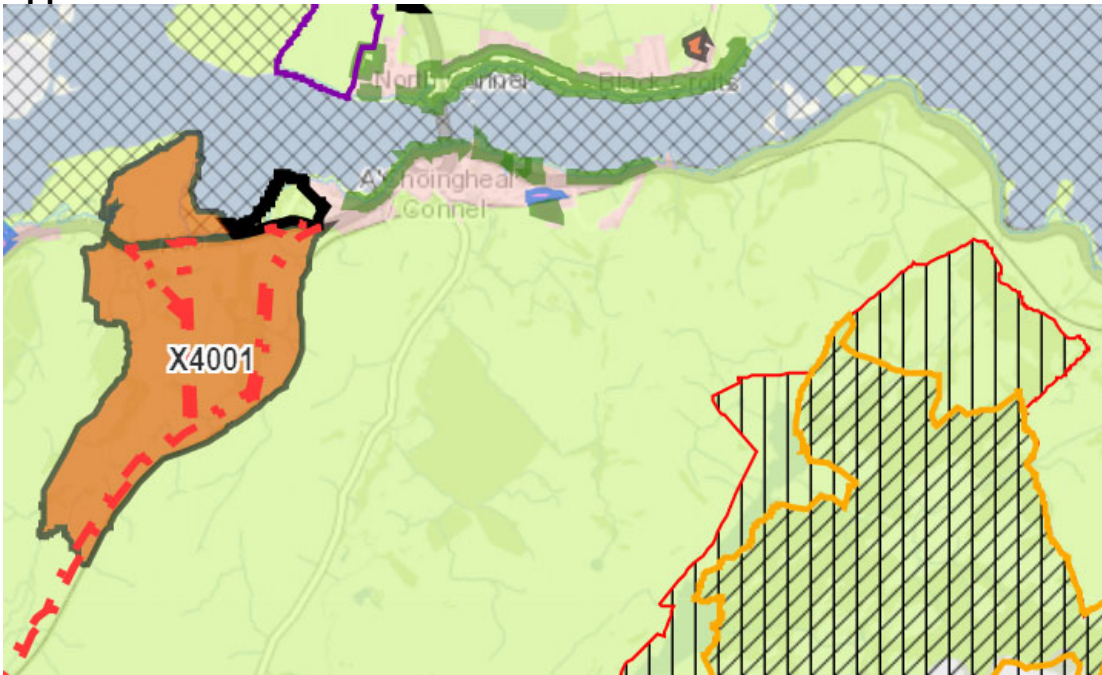
An authority that is contemplating a rural school closure proposal must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act before formulating a proposal.

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 Achaleven Primary School and realigning the catchment area of Lochnell Primary School to include the current catchment area for Achaleven Primary School is 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 in August 2023 for approval by Members which would subsequently trigger the formal consultation process under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

Appendix 1

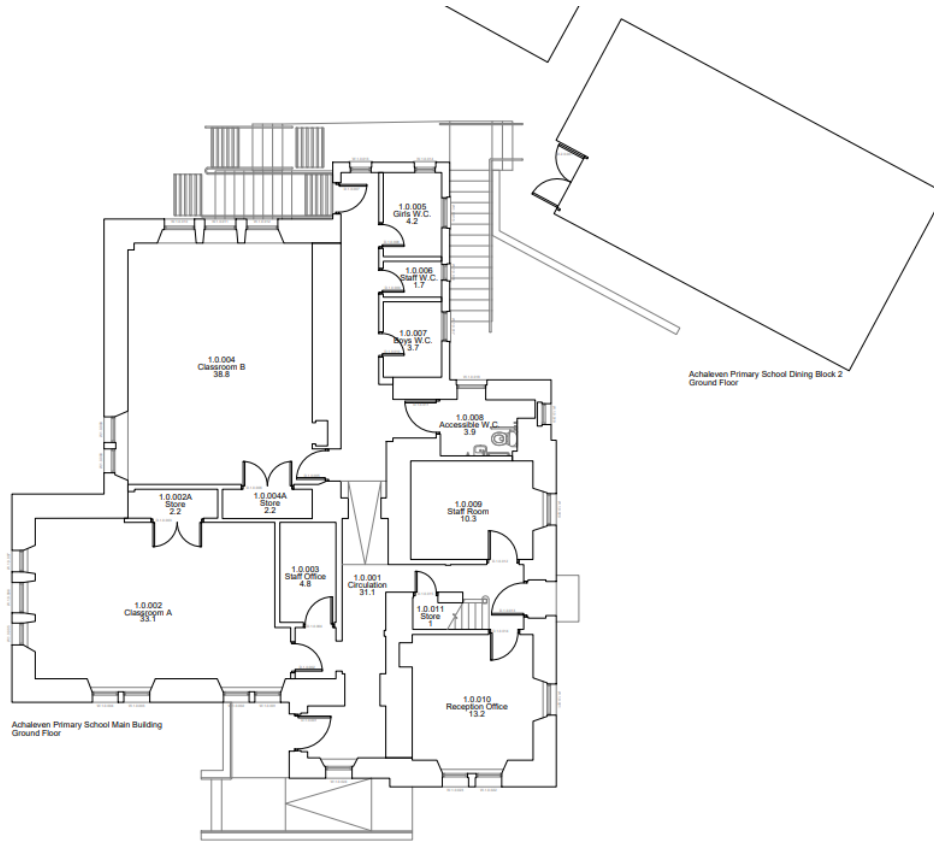


Appendix 2

Development Management Zones

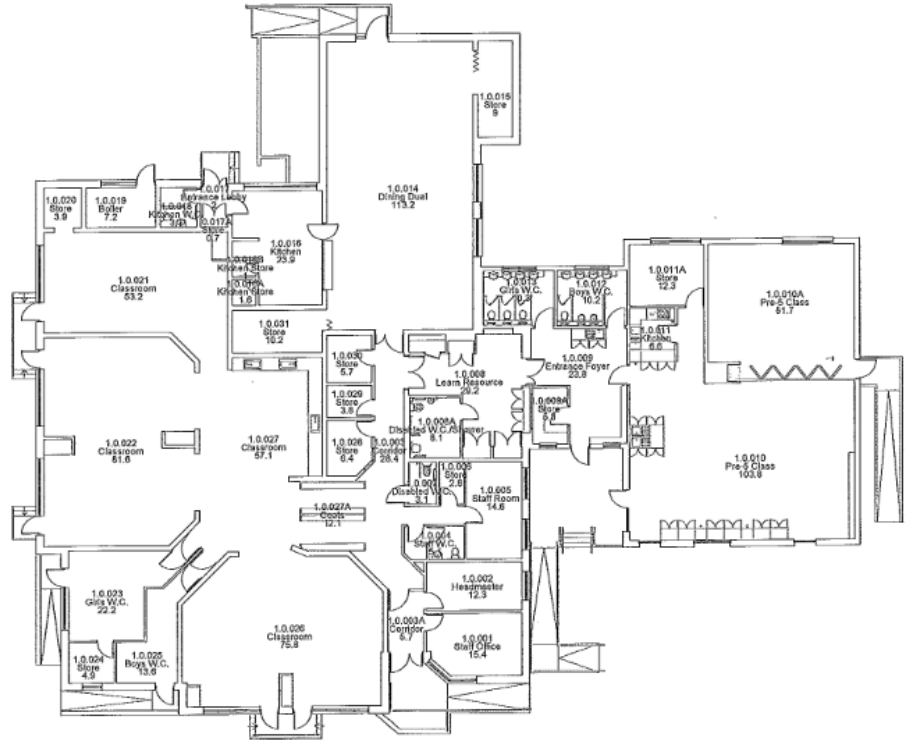
-  Countryside Zone
-  Greenbelt
-  Rural Opportunity Area
-  Settlement Zone - Main Town
-  Settlement Zone - Key Settlement
-  Settlement Zone - Key Rural Settlement
-  Settlement Zone - Village / Minor Settlement
- Very Sensitive Countryside

Appendix 3: Floorplan Achaleven Primary School



Current Main Block GFA Jan 2016 = 170.6m ²	
Site	Drawn By
Customer Services Property Design Team	
Phone: 01546 602127 http://www.argyll.gov.uk	
Site Achaleven Primary School	
Location Connell	Postcode PA37 1PH
Project --	
Drawing Current Ground Floor Plan	
Site UPRN PE12000010001	Project No. --
Drawing No. AEL(00)001	Revision --
Drawn By rmm	Date Jan 2016
Scale @ A0 1:50	

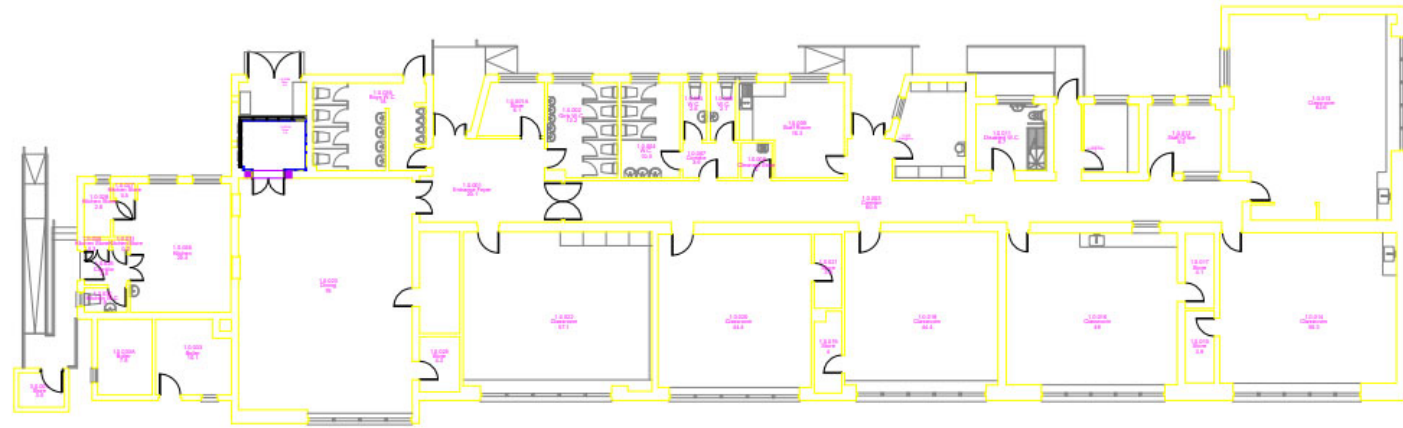
Appendix 4: Floorplan Lochnell Primary School



Lochnell Primary School Main Building
Ground Floor Plan

Lochnell School 014 on 28.01.14 - 817sqm			
Rev	Date	Description	Drawn By
-	01/01/14	-	-
Customer Services Property Design Team			
Phone: 01546 601127 http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk			
Site Lochnell Primary School			
Location Ledaig		Postcode PA37 1RZ	
Project ---			
Drawing Current Ground Floor Plan			
Site UO/SL PED4705860001		Project No. ---	
Drawing No. AEL(00)001		Revision ---	
Drawn By RTH	Date January 2014	Scale @ A1 1:100	

Appendix 5: Floorplan Dunbeg Primary School and ELC



Proposed Plan
Scale: 1:100

No.	Date	Description	Drawn By
Customer Services Property Design Team			
Argyll & Bute COUNCIL			
Phone: 01546 652 127 http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk			
Site Dunbeg Primary School			
Location ---	Postcode PA37 1QF		
Project 1140 Hours			
Drawing Proposed Plan			
Site UPRN PE05502850001	Project No. 00321		
Drawing No. APL-00-002	Revision ---		
Drawn By P.J.H.	Date Feb 2020	Scale @ A1 As Shown	

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
EDUCATION

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
24TH AUGUST 2023

SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 – SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides details of a draft proposal for Southend Primary School, formulated in accordance with the requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, as amended (the 2010 Act).

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee agrees to adopt the draft proposal, as set out in **Appendix A**, as a “relevant proposal” that is now to proceed to statutory consultation under the 2010 Act.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****EDUCATION****24TH AUGUST 2023**

SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 – SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 On 10th June 2021, Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Southend Primary School. No pupils had been attending the School since then.
- 3.2 On 22nd August 2022, the Community Services Committee also agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an Options Appraisal for Southend Primary School. The Community Services Committee received a report on 9th March 2023 providing details of the Options Appraisal for Southend Primary School; carried out in accordance with the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act. The Committee agreed to note the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements, and requested that officers formulate a draft closure proposal, which is attached as **Appendix A**. If the draft proposal is adopted, it will subsequently trigger a formal consultation process under the 2010 Act.
- 3.3 The statutory process for the closure of a rural school is laid out in the 2010 Act, as amended by the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. Those amendments to the 2010 Act introduced, amongst other things, a presumption against closure of a rural school and detailed specific preliminary requirements which the education authority is required to follow prior to formulating a rural school closure proposal.
- 3.4 There is a requirement to have special regard to the rural schools factors and it is necessary to consider and assess any reasonable alternatives to 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 as part of the preliminary requirements, and Options Appraisal, which were undertaken prior to the Proposal Paper being drafted.
- 3.5 The Council, as an Education Authority, has a statutory duty in terms of the *Education (Scotland) Act 1980* to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across its entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand. This is reflected in “Our Children, Their Future” which is the Education Vision and Strategy for Argyll and Bute Council.

3.6 The Proposal Paper, attached as **Appendix A** of this report, addresses the various requirements in terms of the 2010 Act and recommends that Members agree to now move to a formal statutory consultation on the proposal to close Southend Primary School.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee agrees to adopt the draft proposal, as set out in **Appendix A**, as a “relevant proposal” that is now to proceed to statutory consultation under the 2010 Act.

5.0 DETAIL

5.1 Southend Primary School has been mothballed since June 2021, and has had no pupils attending since its mothballing. Southend Primary School has been designated as a rural school, in accordance with Section 14 of the 2010 Act.

5.2 The statutory process for the closure of a rural school is laid out in the 2010 Act, as amended by the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. Those amendments to the 2010 Act introduced, amongst other things, a presumption against closure of a rural school and specific requirements that the Education Authority is required to follow if they are considering formulating a proposal to do so. This includes consideration of certain preliminary requirements and this exercise has been previously undertaken and reported to the Community Services Committee on 9th March 2023. The draft Proposal Paper at **Appendix A** will, if accepted, allow officers to proceed to a statutory consultation on the proposal, in line with the process as required by the 2010 Act, and detailed within Section 21 of the Proposal Paper.

5.3 The draft Proposal Paper at **Appendix A** includes an assessment of:

- the school roll and predicted school roll;
- teacher numbers; and
- the condition of the school premises.

5.4 The Council has also undertaken an assessment of likely educational benefits and effects which this proposal may have if implemented on:

- the pupils of the affected schools;
- any other users of the school’s facilities;
- any children who would (in the future but for implementation of the proposal) be likely to become pupils of the School; and
- the pupils of any other schools in the Council’s area.

5.5 The Council has also had special regard to the following factors if this proposal was to be implemented, given that Southend Primary School is classified as a rural school:

- likely effect on the local community;
- availability of the School's premises and other facilities for use by the community;
- likely effect caused by different travelling arrangements;
- environmental impact; and
- financial impact.

5.6 In addition, the Council has also considered how to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that might arise from implementation of the proposal.

5.7 Further details of the proposal for Southend Primary School are contained within **Appendix A**.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Attached as **Appendix A** to this report is a draft Proposal Paper in respect of Southend Primary School which sets out details of a draft closure proposal, recommended for adoption in order that it can now proceed to a statutory consultation exercise, conducted in accordance with the 2010 Act.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Policy – Preparation of this draft proposal for statutory consultation is in accordance with previous decisions of the Community Services Committee.

7.2 Financial – The financial implications are detailed within the draft Proposal Paper and will be subject to consultation, if agreed.

7.3 Legal – The Proposal Paper for Southend Primary School has been prepared following satisfaction of the preliminary requirements (Section 12A), and in compliance with the general requirements of the 2010 Act.

7.4 HR - None within this report.

7.5 Fairer Scotland Duty – None within this report.

7.5.1 *Equalities - protected characteristics* – See Section 20 of the Proposal Paper.

7.5.2 *Socio-Economic Duty* – See Section 20 of the Proposal Paper.

7.5.3 *Islands* – See Section 20 of the Proposal Paper.

7.6 Climate Change – Environmental impacts in regard to different travelling arrangements are outlined within Section 18 of the Proposal Paper.

7.7 Risk – None within this report.

7.8 Customer Service – None within this report.

DOUGLAS HENDRY

Executive Director with responsibility for Education

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9th August 2023

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Proposal Paper, Southend Primary School

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Argyll and Bute Council
Education



Review of Education Provision

Southend Primary School

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: August 2023

Proposal for the closure of Southend Primary School

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that education provision at Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024.

The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

This is the best option to address the reasons for the proposal which are;

- Southend Primary School has been mothballed for 2 years. The school roll is very low and not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 16.29 fte vacancies for both teachers and headteachers in Argyll and Bute.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budget for maintenance. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £27,270.

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

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council website:

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

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils 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, deemed to be of suitable age and maturity to be able to communicate a view on the proposal, at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- Argyll and Bute Councillors – Ward 1 (South Kintyre)

- Campbeltown Community Council and Southend Community Council
- Community Planning Partnership
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The Constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Chief Superintendent, Police Scotland
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Fire Scotland
- Education Scotland

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Campbeltown Public Library, Kinloch Road, Town Centre, Campbeltown, PA28 6EG
- Lochgilphead Service Point, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD
- Castlehill Primary School, Ralston Road, Campbeltown, PA28 6LE
- Dunaverty Hall, Southend, Campbeltown, Argyll & Bute, PA28 6RF

This document is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English.

If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please apply to the Executive Director, Argyll and Bute Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 10th June 2021, Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Southend Primary School. The council agreed that officers would prepare a review of the school's mothballing for the Committee's June 2022 meeting at which members could decide on a continued period of mothballing or request Officers begin a preliminary exercise with a view to starting the pre-consultation process to consider the future options for Southend Primary School.

Southend Primary School Mothballing Decision: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=14218&Ver=4>

- 1.2 On 22nd August 2022, the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an Options Appraisal for Southend Primary School.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=14784&Ver=4>

- 1.3 The Community Services Committee received a report on 9th March 2023 providing details of the Options Appraisal for Southend Primary School; carried out in accordance with the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended. The Committee agreed to note the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements and requested that officers formulate a draft proposal for consideration at the meeting of the Community Services Committee on 24th August 2023 which, if approved, would subsequently trigger the formal consultation process under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=15032&Ver=4>

- 1.4 The statutory process for the closure of a rural school is laid out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Act, as amended, introduced a presumption against closure of a rural school and details specific requirements which the education authority is required to follow if they are formulating a proposal to close a rural school. This includes the introduction of certain preliminary requirements which must be satisfied prior to the formulation of a proposal.

- 1.5 In addition, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out a new right for community organisations to request the transfer of local assets into local community ownership/management. This may be something that the Community wish to consider as part of or as a consequence of this process. Public bodies including Councils must consider such requests and make a decision within six months of receiving a valid request.

- 1.6 Southend Primary School has had zero pupils enrolled since elected members approved its mothballing.
- 1.7 There is a requirement to have special regard to the rural schools factors prior to formulating a proposal to close a rural school. In particular it is necessary to consider any reasonable alternatives before considering closure. It is also necessary to consider the impact on the wider community of a potential closure and the impact of any different travel arrangements. These factors have been considered in the preliminary requirements which were undertaken prior to this proposal being written. A full assessment of the preliminary requirements is set out in the Options Appraisal, which is attached as **Appendix 5**.
- 1.8 A new Corporate Plan (2023-2027) was agreed by the Council on 29th June 2023. The Plan contains the new set of Council Priorities. The Argyll and Bute Corporate Plan 2023-2027 states its vision of a successful and vibrant Argyll and Bute with a growing population and thriving economy. The area has a rich mix of remote, rural and island communities. The Council will use its strong track record in partnership working, at all levels, to secure the best possible outcomes.

In the Corporate Plan for 2023-2027, through the agreed priorities, the Council will ensure:

- Children and young people will attain and achieve at all stages We will improve outcomes for our children and young people
 - Our schools are effective, sustainable learning environments
 - Continued support for all of our children and young people with additional support needs across Argyll and Bute, within our schools and other service areas
 - We will support connections to, from and within Argyll and Bute
 - Recognition of the importance of marine connections to and from our island and mainland communities and our role in maintaining these links
 - We will reduce our carbon emissions
 - We seek to increase availability of all types of housing, including affordable homes
 - We build up and strengthen our communities as attractive, vibrant places to live, work and do business
 - We make assets work now while we plan for and invest in the future
 - We commit to working in partnership wherever we need to as well as calling on others, with responsibility, to take the action that is required to safeguard Argyll and Bute's success
- 1.9 The Council, as an Education Authority, has a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand. This is reflected in "Our Children, Their Future" which is the Education Vision and Strategy for Argyll and Bute Council.

2 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 It is proposed that education provision at Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024; and that the catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.

Reasons for the Proposal

- 2.2 This is the best option to address the underlying reasons for the proposal which are:
- Southend Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll fell to zero as parents were choosing to place their children in schools outwith the Southend catchment area. The school roll is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
 - Along with several other rural councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 16.29 fte vacancies for both Head Teachers and Teachers in Argyll and Bute.
 - Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budget for maintenance. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is **£27,270**.

Additional Considerations

- The Council needs to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services;
- This proposal will bring educational benefits and assist in ensuring that the Education budget is more sustainable into the future. This proposal document contains an Educational Benefits Statement;
- 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 the educational attainment of pupils; and
- There is no realistic possibility at present of the Council being able to bring its whole school estate up to a satisfactory condition. The present condition is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate.

3 PRELIMINARY REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 The Council is required to consider the future of Southend Primary School, as it has been mothballed for two years. The Council have considered the

reasons for making this proposal, and have also considered other viable alternatives, the likely effect on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements as a consequence of this proposal. Financial implications have also been considered. Some of these figures have been recalculated since the Options Appraisal was produced.

- 3.2 The Council considered how the implementation of this proposal would impact on the education of the children affected. The Council also considered the impact on the children who currently live in the catchment area but attend other schools, as well as children who may potentially live in the catchment area in the future.
- 3.3 The place of the school in the community was also considered, in terms of the impact this proposal would have on the sustainability of the community itself. Since the mothballing of the School, the community has not used the school or the school grounds. Dunaverty Village Hall is used as the community hub and is situated more centrally within Southend village.
- 3.4 Impact on the environment was taken into account during the initial pre-consultation process. This included a consideration of the transport implications if this proposal was to be implemented, as children would have to travel by bus to attend Castlehill Primary School.
- 3.5 Four options were presented to the local community by the Council for consideration during the pre-consultation phase, as required by section 12A of the 2010 Act.
- 3.6 Of the four options which were considered by the community and the Council; (d) is the option favoured by the Council, as it was considered it most adequately addressed the reasons for the proposal.
 - a) Re-open Southend Primary School,
 - b) Continued Mothballing of Southend Primary with 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 (The Proposal).

When considering the above options; the positive educational benefits of Castlehill Primary School; alongside the factors of projected low pupil numbers, the challenges in recruiting teaching staff and the considerable expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard at Southend Primary School; in addition the lack of local support for reopening Southend Primary School - option (d) was considered the most appropriate response to the underlying reasons behind consideration of this proposal.

- 3.7 Following from an initial Options Appraisal which was presented to the Council's Community Services Committee on 9th March 2023, it was agreed that the preliminary requirements were satisfied enabling the draft proposal to be formulated, with the option to close Southend Primary School and realign

its catchment area to Castlehill Primary School being identified as the most adequate means of addressing the reasons for possible proposal.

- 3.8 During the preliminary consultation regarding the future options for Southend Primary School there were a range of viewpoints gathered from parents, young people and members of the community.
- 3.9 The community reflected that Southend Primary School had been an integral part of the community, and there were contrasting views on the options for the future of Southend Primary School. However, it was felt that the mothballing of the school and the building not being used at all was having a bigger negative impact on the community. Southend community felt that they benefitted greatly from vibrant use of their local hall. A re-purposing of the school building could potentially have a very positive impact on the sustainability of the community if the proposal were to progress.
- 3.10 Closing the school would have no impact on staff or pupil travel from the current arrangements since mothballing. There would be no alteration to the current environmental impact.

Alternatives to the Proposal

- 3.11 The community engagement process prior to the drafting of this proposal considered the views of members of the community and also considered any other alternatives to the closure of Southend Primary School. Full details from the community engagement and the findings from the preliminary requirements, are set out in **Appendix 5**.
- 3.12 In conclusion, after the pre-consultation with the community, the Council feels that the proposal to close Southend Primary School and realign its catchment area to Castlehill Primary School is the most reasonable means to address the underlying reasons for considering the future of Southend Primary School. Further detail is provided in relation to educational benefits, travel, environmental impact, community impact and financial impact below.

4 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 It is proposed that education provision at Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.
- 4.2 Southend Primary School has been mothballed for 2 years. The school condition is deteriorating with limited budgets for maintenance. The school roll is currently zero and is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is **£27,270**.

- 4.3 Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 16.29 fte vacancies for Head Teachers and Teachers in Argyll and Bute.
- 4.4 The Council needs to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services.
- 4.5 This proposal will bring educational benefits and assist in ensuring that the Education budget is more sustainable into the future.
- 4.6 The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high.
- 4.7 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 the educational attainment of pupils.
- 4.8 There is no realistic possibility at present of the Council being able to bring its whole school estate up to a satisfactory condition. The present condition is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate.
- 4.9 As part of the preliminary requirements in the drafting of this proposal, the Council considered four options. The favoured option by the Council is (d), as it was considered it most adequately addressed the reasons for the proposal.
- 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 (The Proposal).
- 4.10 Having considered these other alternatives the Council does not consider them to be viable alternatives to the closure proposal, and will proceed to consult on the proposal to close Southend Primary School and extend the catchment area of Castlehill Primary School to include the current catchment area for Southend Primary School.
- 4.11 The Council has undertaken an appraisal on impact if this proposal was to be implemented.
- 4.12 This includes an assessment of:
- The school roll and predicted school roll;
 - Teacher numbers; and
 - The condition of the building.
- 4.13 The Council has carefully considered and reviewed the steps it has taken to address the underlying reasons for the proposal (as outlined at Section 2.2, above), prior to formulating this Proposal Paper.

- 4.13.1 In relation to the decline in the school roll, and no material increase being predicted in the forthcoming years, the Council mothballed the school two years ago as a result of a change to the School's circumstances – i.e. the school roll falling to zero as of April 2021. The Education Authority therefore decided to mothball the school as a temporary measure – in order to monitor the situation and assess whether there was any likelihood of the school roll increasing to the extent that the School became viable again in the near future. The mothballing was subject to review at least annually and the Education Service undertook to review the position should any further school age pupils move into the catchment area and/or if they demonstrated a sufficient level of demand for the School to justify its re-opening. As mentioned above, the School has been mothballed for two years, and its roll is not predicted to rise in the forthcoming years to a level which would make the School suitable for re-opening. As there has been no material change in circumstance evidenced, and having kept the position under review via mothballing for two years, the Education Service are of the view that matters should now move forward in the form of a statutory closure consultation in order to determine the future of Southend Primary School. This approach aligns with that suggested by the Statutory Guidance for the 2010 Act, and Paragraphs 63-65 in particular. Further details in relation to the School roll are set out at Section 5 of this Proposal Paper.
- 4.13.2 In relation to the underlying reason for this proposal in regards to recruitment of teachers, the issues that have been faced by the Education Service regarding the recruitment of teachers to Southend Primary School are detailed at Section 6 of this Proposal Paper. Since 2020, in order to address this particular issue, and prior to formulating this proposal, the Education Service have offered a number of posts across the Authority area on a permanent basis to a locality, rather than to a temporary school, as an attempt to increase the likelihood of attracting a permanent post. The Council has also entered into a strategic housing agreement with social housing partners to support staff with sourcing accommodation (which is a particular pressure in remote areas of Argyll and Bute), as well as offering relocation packages. Furthermore, the Education Service continues to work with UHI Argyll to recruit more local candidates for teacher training. Notwithstanding these efforts, the recruitment of teaching staff within Argyll and Bute remains a considerable challenge, hence why it is still a main underlying reason for this closure proposal.
- 4.13.3 In relation to the underlying reason for this proposal concerning the condition of the school premises, the school property will continue to deteriorate whilst it remains mothballed. As mentioned at Paragraph 4.13.1, above, there is currently no evidence to suggest that the School will become viable for re-opening in the near future. Whilst the School remains mothballed, it costs the Council £27,270 annually. Accordingly,

the Education Service are now seeking approval to proceed with a statutory closure consultation which, if subsequently implemented, will allow the Education Service to use any savings generated to the benefit of the other occupied schools and pupils within the Education Authority's area. It would also allow for any plans for other uses of the School property to be progressed, as it will need to be permanently discontinued as an educational establishment in the first instance. Further details about the condition of the school building are set out within Section 7 of this Proposal Paper.

4.14 The Council has also undertaken an assessment of likely educational benefits or effects which this proposal may have if implemented on:

- The pupils of any affected school;
- Any other users of the school's facilities;
- Any children who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school; and
- The pupils of any other schools in the Council area

4.15 In addition, the Council has also considered how to minimise or avoid any adverse educational effects that may arise from the implementation of this proposal.

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

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

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

5 SCHOOL ROLL

5.1 The information in relation to the school roll as shown below is drawn from the yearly pupil census which takes place in September each year. Past pupil numbers are historic data from past pupil censuses. Pupil projections are

based on 3/5 years intake and updated post P1 registration. School rolls by their very nature may fluctuate slightly on an ongoing basis due to changes in pupil numbers as a result of pupils moving to and from the catchment area and parents/carers exercising their right to consider placing requests.

The school roll of Southend Primary School has seen a considerable decline since 2017.

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

Predicted Roll

Table 3:	Southend PS	Castlehill PS
	Roll	Roll
Capacity	50	459
2023-2024	0	189
2024 -2025	8	180
2025-2026	8	173

*A prediction based on information available in March 2023. Southend information based on prediction available at December 2019

- 5.2 In 2019-2020 the school roll dropped to 3 as a result of parents choosing to place their children in schools more central to Campbeltown.
- 5.3 There are currently 9 pupils who live within the Southend catchment area who are attending Castlehill Primary School. In addition, 1 pupil within the Southend catchment area attends Dalintober Primary School and 1 pupil attends Drumlemble Primary School. There continues to be no school aged children enrolled for Southend Primary School. Parents of school aged children are continuing to place their children in schools within the Campbeltown area, primarily Castlehill Primary School.
- 5.4 The school roll is not predicted to rise significantly in the future. The area around Southend is a small settlement and is not identified for growth in the Local Development Plan: [Local Development Plan | Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk)
- 5.5 There are no housing allocations and only two live planning permissions for residential development within the Southend catchment area. The adopted 2015 Local Development Plan (LDP) contains one allocation for housing in the Southend Primary School Catchment Area. This allocation is for 14 units and is in Southend itself (reference H-AL 14/8). No planning applications have been approved on this allocation (as at 30/4/2023).
- 5.6 The adopted LDP is due to be replaced by Local Development Plan 2 during 2023. Housing allocation H-AL 14/8 was not included in Proposed Local Development Plan 2 (PLDP2) which was subject to public consultation. The lack of inclusion of this allocation was not objected to during the public consultation and as such it is not subject to the current examination of the plan being carried out by Reporters. It is therefore highly unlikely that it will be included in Local Development Plan 2 once adopted.
- 5.7 The adopted LDP and PLDP2 also contain Potential Development Areas (PDAs) which are areas where specific development opportunities may be supported through the life of the LDP where known constraints can be overcome. There are no PDAs for Housing in the Southend Primary School Catchment Area in the adopted LDP or PLDP2.
- 5.8 Planning consents not on allocated or PDA sites are known as 'windfall' consents. In terms of windfall planning consents for dwellings in the Southend Primary School Catchment Area, there are:
- 0 x Planning consents for dwellings still within the normal 3 year consent lifespan.
 - 2 x Planning consents for 1 dwelling each that are older than the normal 3 year consent lifespan but currently appear to be 'under construction'. These would therefore likely be considered as 'extant' and in which case could be completed (construction timeframes are unknown).

- 5.9 There are no adopted LDP or PLDP2 Business and Industry allocations or PDAs in the Southend Primary School Catchment Area.

6 TEACHER NUMBERS

- 6.1 Teacher numbers are improving nationally, with a 6.3% increase in the number of teachers nationally from 2016 - 2022. In Argyll and Bute there has been a 3.1% reduction in the fte number of teachers from 2016- 2022.
- 6.2 As the school has been mothballed for over 2 years, the issue of recruitment of staff has not improved. At the time of writing this report there are 16.29 fte vacancies for class teachers in Argyll and Bute. Schools within the area have struggled to recruit staff, particularly in relation to Head Teachers and supply staff. Despite a sustained effort to secure staff, there is no reason to think that staffing would not continue to be a considerable challenge for Southend Primary School.
- 6.3 At the current time, if the proposal was to be accepted, there would be no impact on staffing levels at Castlehill Primary School.

7 CONDITION OF THE BUILDING

- 7.1 Argyll and Bute Council's School Estate Management Planning process identified in 2022 that the condition of Southend Primary School was satisfactory and graded a B. Outlined in the Options Appraisal (**Appendix 5** – section 6.3) are the full financial details in reference to costs for the re-opening the building or continuing to retain the building as mothballed.
- 7.2 As part of the consultation process the Council would be open to discussion with the community in regard to the future of the building. This might involve the transfer of the building to a recognised community group through the provisions of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 or some other agreed mechanism. This may provide the community with an opportunity to utilise the building as a driver for community benefit and potential regeneration that could also enhance the sustainability of the community.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

8 Assessment of likely educational benefits on pupils

- 8.1 If this proposal is implemented, the Council believes that there will be considerable educational benefits arising from this. These centre around;
- Learning and teaching;
 - Meeting learners needs;
 - Broadening the range of opportunities; and
 - The environment for learning.

- 8.2 This statement focusses on Castlehill Primary School, which is the school pupils from the Southend Primary School catchment area have previously attended from June 2021.
- 8.3 The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. There are no specific educational benefits from reopening Southend Primary School as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching that is matched to the needs of children, however the closure of the school and continued attendance of pupils at other schools allows children to experience a curriculum that is matched to their needs.
- 8.4 Southend Primary School is set within a very remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Castlehill Primary School is situated within the town of Campbeltown, the central location has allowed the school to benefit from a range of community partners and strong links with Campbeltown Grammar School. Learners benefit from the relationships formed within the school community that helps support their transition to secondary school. Families benefit from education that is close to their place of work and support networks.
- 8.5 Castlehill Primary School is situated next to Campbeltown Nursery Centre. The partnership between Campbeltown Nursery Centre and Castlehill Primary School provides a strong transition process for the children moving from Nursery into Primary one, through liaison between the two settings.

9 Learning and Teaching

- 9.1 The curriculum includes a broad range of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, to help every child and young person to develop knowledge, skills and attributes for success in learning, life and work. In 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 work that has been undertaken in this has been evidenced through the school's Rights Respecting Schools journey, achieving Bronze accreditation.
- 9.2 The learning environment encourages 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 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. Castlehill Primary School has achieved Bronze recognition in its Nurture approach as part of Argyll & Bute's OCTNE strategy. Through the Options Appraisal process, 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.

- 9.3 There is a continual challenge for all schools to deliver a school improvement agenda and deliver effectively the principles and outcomes of curriculum for excellence. The National Improvement Framework priorities include raising attainment for all, and closing the gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.
- 9.4 The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community.
- 9.5 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. Castlehill Primary School is part of the Mid Argyll and Kintyre Cluster and is also part of a shared headship that includes Carradale Primary School and Drumlemble Primary School. This means that staff can be supported 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.
- 9.6 Castlehill Primary School encourages a nurturing environment and positive relationships. This is particularly evident in the playground and in the dining room when groups of children are together in a social context. The school works actively with partners to develop the support offered to pupils. Examples of this includes Active Schools, Bikeability, Roots of Empathy and the Royal Highland Trust.

10 Meeting learners' needs

- 10.1 Through the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), practice model, meeting the needs of every child continues to be a priority and teachers carefully plan and assess to ensure each child has the opportunity to reach their potential. Careful tracking and monitoring procedures are in place to evidence pupil progress. This includes professional dialogue with teachers, learning discussions with children, classroom observations, assessment and looking at pupil work.
- 10.2 The school also has planned meetings and discussions with parents. These discussions between home and school improve parental engagement whilst

focussing on next steps for learning. Where appropriate, intervention is put in place, while working effectively with other agencies and parents to ensure the needs of each child are met. Most children are achieving national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy. Health and Wellbeing continues to develop within the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) programme, which supports positive behaviours and relationship within the school.

- 10.3 The staff, parent body and partner groups also bring opportunities for increased collaborative working. 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 Broadening the Range of Opportunities

- 11.1 Children are offered a range of active, planned experiences which help them develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing both now and in the future.
- 11.2 There is also a strong transition planning process between Castlehill Primary School and Campbeltown Grammar School, which involves increased opportunities for children to participate and to make new connections.
- 11.3 Children are provided with a variety of experiences to develop their sense of responsibility, independence, confidence and enterprising attitude.
- 11.4 Across the school, children are engaged with learning and contribute well in lessons. Staff promote positive relationships at all levels, the impact of this being that children enjoy good relationships with their peers, young leaders feel confident and entrusted to take these developments forward.

12 Environment for Learning

- 12.1 Castlehill Primary School is a suitably-equipped and well supported school, situated in the town of Campbeltown. The entire building is well maintained. The school has a large playground area that wraps around the school building. The building has facilities for pupils and visitors with special access needs.
- 12.2 The children maintain links with friends who live in their own village as well as creating links with children from the town. These relationships also extend into clubs and activities that take place in Campbeltown out-with the school day.
- 12.3 Southend Primary School is 8.7 miles from Castlehill Primary School. Any mitigating effects around the adverse weather and transport issues are outweighed by the benefits of this proposal.

- 12.4 In summary, there are a range of educational benefits for pupils if this proposal was to be implemented, as summarised in the paragraphs above. There are benefits for the development of social and emotional skills, as well as the educational benefits resultant from access to a more diverse curriculum. The learning environment in Castlehill Primary School also offers children the opportunity to participate in a wider range of active learning strategies.

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

Implications for staff

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

Early Learning Centre Users – Pre Five Children

- 13.3 The close location for Campbeltown Nursery Centre and Castlehill Primary School enables a strong transition process between the nursery and the school and includes joint early level learning every week.

14 Assessment of likely educational benefits on any children who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school.

Existing and future pupils

- 14.1 Children who may live in this catchment area in the future will benefit from the broad range of educational opportunities which are presented through this proposal, as detailed above.
- 14.2 There would be positive educational benefits associated with this proposal. The management arrangements of the school would be strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies.
- 14.3 The proposal could increase the roll of Castlehill 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.
- 14.4 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Southend Primary School, which consists of one large open plan classroom, library, active play area and snug, would benefit from daily interaction in a larger peer group and from improved

educational arrangements as described above. Pupils in the combined school will have more shared experiences and opportunity for friendships. This will enhance their confidence and make the transition to secondary easier. Larger year groups make the provision of specialist services more viable and provide enhanced opportunities for school trips. Castlehill Primary School meets all the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

15 Assessment of likely educational benefits on the pupils of any other schools in the Council area

- 15.1 The current mothballing of the school has had an indirect effect on other pupils in Argyll and Bute. The reduction in the running costs for the school means that this is a saving to the Council, which is not taken from elsewhere. If Southend Primary School was to close, the current mothballing costs being incurred would be re-directed and therefore indirectly benefit other school pupils in Argyll and Bute.
- 15.2 There are no other significant impacts from this proposal on other pupils in the authority or who attend other schools, in either a positive or a negative way.

Placing requests

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

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

- 16.1 The main adverse effect from this proposal would be the length of the journey to school for children who live in the Southend Primary School catchment area. However, children who previously lived in this catchment area and attended Castlehill Primary School made this journey, and families in the area do not feel this is a major consideration. Funded school transport would also continue to be provided for pupils should this proposal be implemented. Pupil and parent feedback from the community engagement event provided positive feedback with regards to transport arrangements.

17 Summary of educational benefits statement

- 17.1 Educational benefits of this proposal, such as the ability for children to participate in a broad range of experiences, the development of the strategic leadership of the head teacher in taking forward improvements in learning and teaching, and the ability to meet the educational, social and emotional needs of the children are significant benefits to this proposal. During the pre-consultation phase, these benefits were explored in detail and details from the

community engagement and the findings from the preliminary requirements, to include the alternative proposals and the authority's assessment of other likely effects of the proposal and the reasons for that assessment are attached as **Appendix 5**.

- 17.2 Whilst the positive educational benefits are numerous, there is one negative aspect identified which arises from the children attending Castlehill Primary School. This negative aspect is principally around the fact that children have to travel by either bus or car to school. However it is considered that the positive aspects of this proposal outweigh the negative aspect of some travelling for children. It is worth noting that the broad and very rural area that Southend covers, requires pupils to travel to and from school by bus or car. There is no pavement running from Southend village to Southend Primary School.

18 FACTORS FOR RURAL SCHOOL CLOSURES

- 18.1 The Council has taken special regard to the following factors in relation to this proposal as Southend Primary School is classified as a very remote rural school.

The likely effect on the local community if this proposal is implemented

- 18.2 The Council has made an assessment on the sustainability of the community should this proposal be implemented and considers that this may have a positive impact.
- 18.3 The Scottish Government focuses on four key areas of importance to rural communities;
- a strong and diverse rural economy, harnessing traditional strengths and with an appetite for change,
 - thriving rural communities where everyone can enjoy a decent quality of life, where the young are not forced to leave their communities to get on and where the vulnerable are no longer excluded,
 - strong, community focused public services that are accessible, of the highest possible quality and with the greatest possible choice,
 - a rural Scotland whose natural and cultural heritage flourishes in all its diversity
- 18.4 In rural communities, the challenges and opportunities are largely defined by the local area and can often best be met by a bottom-up, community-led response. Strong community leadership is vital to articulating local priorities and driving forward change and growth.
- 18.5 There is the potential if this proposal is implemented to capitalise on the existing will and drive in this community, with opportunities for local leaders to enable them to organise, motivate and inspire their neighbours. The

opportunity for the local community to acquire this building could be key to helping to make this community an independent, resilient place to live. Management of assets such as Southend Primary School may be an important step in building community confidence, promoting growth and enabling communities to realise their aspirations.

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

- greater participation in local democracy;
- increased confidence and skills among local people;
- more people volunteering in their communities; and
- greater satisfaction with quality of life in the neighbourhood.

18.7 Within Southend there is Dunaverty Village Hall which is used for community events. Almost all people who attended the preliminary consultation strongly stated the school building not be allowed to fall in to further disrepair. There was a strong feeling that the building should be used to support tourism or provide opportunities for outdoor learning for children and young people.

18.8 It is considered that formal closure of this school could have a positive impact on the wider community, and may lead to an increase in other users of the facility which may lead to an improvement in economic growth. It was felt that the building not being in use, reflected negatively on the community.

18.9 Indeed, the school closure may help to empower the local community should the community wish to undertake an asset transfer process for the building. This could have a positive impact on community sustainability. Formal closure would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community who are already considering future uses for the building. This may enhance community life by giving a community enterprise focus.

On the availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community

18.10 During the pre-consultation phase, members of the community had varying opinions on the closure of the school. All members of the community were strongly of the opinion that continuing to mothball the school or extending the catchment area were not options. Within Southend there is Dunaverty Hall which is used for community events. All people who attended the pre-consultation meeting felt that the school building should be retained for community use and not allowed to fall in to further disrepair, as that would adversely impact on the aesthetic of the community.

18.11 It is accepted that a school closure may have an adverse effect on a community, but a community hub could be an asset to the community. If the local plans for the building progress, this could have a positive impact on the sustainability of the community and in particular the availability of the school's premises and other facilities for use by the community. Formal closure of the

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/>

school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements

- 18.12 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.
- 18.13 Implementation of the proposal would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Southend Primary School, in terms of current travel arrangements would have a neutral effect on the environment. There is no current annual transport cost for pupils to travel to Castlehill Primary School.
- 18.14 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.

Environmental impact

- 18.15 Currently nine pupils travel to Castlehill Primary School from the Southend Primary School Catchment area. Therefore, this option would have a neutral environmental impact on the current position and would have no impact on the current travel arrangements for staff and pupils.
- 18.16 If this proposal was to be implemented there would be little or no impact on the natural environment.

19 FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 19.1 The full breakdown of the financial analysis is detailed in **Appendix 4**. Some of this information has been recalculated since the Options Appraisal was prepared. In particular the annual cost of mothballing the school has been recalculated from £5,936 to £27,270. This information gives details on the estimated cost if Southend Primary School was still to be an occupied and operational establishment. However, as Southend Primary School is currently mothballed, the cost for the mothballing is estimated at £27,270 per year. Should the school be reopened, occupied and operational, the running costs per year are estimated at £299,054.
- 19.2 Column 2 of Table 1 at **Appendix 4** shows the projected annual running costs of Southend whilst Column 3 shows the additional impact on Castlehill Primary as the receiving school. The annual recurring savings (or costs) are shown in Column 4.
- 19.3 The main elements included within a school budget are teacher employment costs (i.e. basic salary costs plus related employer's National Insurance and

Superannuation contributions 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.

- 19.4 In line with the national priority of maintaining teacher numbers, the Education Service operates on the basis that supernumerary teachers are redeployed and therefore their salary costs still exist with an increase to the receiving school's budget. Some of the costs noted in column 3 of Table 1 will not directly impact on Castlehill Primary School but they will be a cost to the Authority as a whole, for example school transport, and the costs of maintaining the teachers employed in Southend Primary School.
- 19.5 There are currently no annual transport costs for pupils to attend Southend Primary School. Transport costs per year to attend Southend Primary School, if it were to be reopened, are estimated at £131,238.48 per year. There is no change to the transport costs for pupils to attend Castlehill Primary School due to the service route in place.
- 19.6 Table 2 contains the notional 30 year lifecycle costs that would arise based on the GIA of the various schools irrespective of the number of pupils accommodated. Lifecycle costs are representative of the cost needed to keep the building in a good state of repair. The cost over the next thirty years therefore to maintain Southend Primary School is £465,114 and for Castlehill Primary School this is £3,400,423.
- 19.7 Table 3 contains the annual running costs during mothballing of Southend Primary School and these are estimated at **£27,270** per year. 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 to a third party or local community.
- 19.8 The transfer of pupils from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary School would impact on the council's Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) allocation for Castlehill Primary School Teaching Staff as there would be a reduction in the Percentage of Primary Pupils in Small Schools. This reduction is estimated at £22,569. However Argyll and Bute Council is supported through the floor mechanism so would not see a reduction in their overall funding.

20 EQUALITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Council as a public authority has a duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, the Fairer Scotland Duty (Part one of the

Equality Act) and the Islands (Scotland) Act (2018) to have due regard to their provisions when making strategic financial decisions. This is done through assessing the potential impact of the decision on equality through Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (EQSEIAs).

The Council will undertake the process of assessment during the consultation process in respect of this proposal to ensure that due regard is given to such matters in the decision making process.

21 CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

21.1 Prior to formulating a rural school closure proposal under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* (the 2010 Act), as amended, the Education Authority must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act. The Authority has previously identified its reasons for formulating a possible proposal, considered whether there were any reasonable alternatives to the possible proposal as a response to those reasons, and assessed each of the options in accordance with Section 12A(2)(c) of the 2010 Act. After considering a paper addressing these preliminary requirements, the Education Authority decided on 9th March 2023 that, having specific regard to the reasons for formulating a prospective closure proposal, the option to close Southend Primary School and redraw its catchment area to Castlehill Primary School is the most appropriate response to the specific reasons for the potential proposal.

21.2 This document was considered by the Council as Education Authority on 24th August 2023 when it was agreed that it should be adopted as a relevant proposal and 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.

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

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

21.4 As part of a consultation process, the Education Authority must publish the proposal paper, advertise it and notify Education Scotland and all of the relevant consultees as prescribed by Schedule 2 of the 2010 Act, inviting them to make representations on the proposal. The consultation period will be from 31st August 2023 until the close of business on 27th October 2023 which lasts for a minimum of 6 weeks and includes at least 30 school days.

21.5 A public meeting will be held at Southend Primary School on 27th September 2023 at 6.00pm. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting and participate is welcome to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Education Authority and the Education Authority will present reasons for bringing forward the

proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions to be asked and comments to be made. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered. However, the Education Authority will also consider written comments which should be sent to Education Services, School Consultations, Argyll & Bute Council, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 5.00pm on 27th October 2023.

- 21.6 Written representations may be made on the proposal and the alternatives to the proposal. Written representations may also suggest other alternatives to the proposal.
- 21.7 Following the close of the consultation, the Education Authority will provide Education Scotland with copies of the written representations submitted, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting and any other relevant documentation. This will allow Education Scotland to prepare a report on the proposal within a period of 3 weeks.
- 21.8 After receiving Education Scotland's report, the Education Authority will then prepare and publish a Consultation Report in accordance with Sections 9, 10 and 13 of the 2010 Act. The Education Authority will thereafter make its final decision on whether to implement the proposal. The decision will be published a minimum of 3 weeks after publication of the Consultation Report. If the Education Authority makes a closure decision, it shall notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and publish the fact that the Scottish Ministers have been notified, and that representations can be made to them. The Education Authority would also be required to publish a notice on its website of the decision to implement the proposal and why it has been satisfied that closure is the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal.
- 21.9 The Scottish Ministers will have a maximum of 8 weeks to call in any closure decision made by the Education Authority in certain circumstances. This 8 week timeframe would consist of an initial 3 weeks from the date of decision, during which representations can be made to the ministers, and a further 5 weeks for the Scottish Ministers to decide whether to issue a call in notice. During this period the Education Authority will not proceed to implement any closure decision.
- 21.10 If the Scottish Ministers call in a closure proposal, it is referred to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels. The Convener must constitute a School Closure Review Panel within 7 days for determination. The Education Authority may not implement a closure decision in whole or in part until the Panel has made its determination. It will usually issue a decision within 8 weeks of the Panel being constituted.
- 21.11 If the School Closure Review Panel refuses to consent to the closure decision, or following publication of the Consultation Report the Education Authority decides not to implement the closure proposal, the Education Authority cannot publish a further closure proposal in relation to the school for 5 years, unless there is a significant change in the school's circumstances.

22 CONCLUSION

22.1 It is proposed that education provision at Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.

22.2 It has been assessed that the proposal is the most appropriate means of addressing the underlying reasons for formulating it, which are:

- Southend Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is currently zero and is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 16.29 fte vacancies for teachers and head teachers in Argyll and Bute.
- Whilst vacant, the condition of the school premises will continue to deteriorate, with limited budgets for maintenance. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £27,270.

Other Considerations

- The Council needs to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services.
- This proposal will bring educational benefits to all present and future users of the affected schools and assist in ensuring that the Education budget is more sustainable into the future;
- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high;
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate;
- Retaining unnessecary accomodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect the 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 condition is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate.

DOUGLAS HENDRY

Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

Policy Lead for Education

For further information contact:

Jennifer Crocket

Chief Education Officer/ Head of Education: Wellbeing, Inclusion and Achievement

Jennifer.Crocket@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Rosie Mackay

Education Manager

Rosie.mackay@argyll-bute.gov.uk

9th August 2023

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Consultation Letter

Appendix 2 - Response form

Appendix 3 - Maps

Appendix 4 - Financial template

Appendix 5 - Options Appraisal

APPENDIX 1

Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra Ghàidheal agus Bhòid



Executive Director: Douglas Hendry

Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA318RT
Telephone: 01436 657674 Fax:
Our Ref: Ref:
If phoning or calling please ask for:
e-mail: Rosie.Mackay@argyll-bute.gov.uk
Council Website: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Southend Primary School

Dear Consultee,

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

Background

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

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

The Council is conducting a public consultation process. This will commence on 31st August 2023 and will conclude on 27th October 2023. This is the period within which you will be able to make written representations to the Council in respect of the proposal. If you wish your view to be taken account of in the consultation exercise you must submit your written representation within this period. This notice and summary provides further information on where a full copy of the proposal may be obtained or referenced and also advises on how you can make written representations to the Council.

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

It is important that everyone we are consulting tells us what they think of the proposal. Please read this notice and summary and then consider the contents of the proposal document. You can then tell us what you think of the proposal by making

written representation and/or by attending the public meeting. This notice and summary tell you how to do that.

The Proposal

It is proposed that education provision at Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

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

- Southend Primary School has been mothballed for 2 years. The school roll is very low and not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 16.29 fte vacancies for both teachers and headteachers in Argyll and Bute.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budget for maintenance. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £27,270.

The Council's education strategy Our Children Their Future

Together we will realise ambition, excellence and equality for all.

- Raise educational attainment and achievement for all,
- Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people,
- Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed,
- Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life,
- Ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement,
- Strengthen leadership at all levels.

Alternatives to the Proposal

The following alternatives to the proposal were considered at the preliminary pre-consultation stage of this process;

- a) Re-open 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 (the Proposal).

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

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

What will we do?

We will consult with people by:

- Providing a notice of the consultation and a summary of the proposal to the relevant consultees **this is that notice and summary**
- Placing an advert in the local press
- Putting information on our website <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/school-consultations-and-proposals>
- Holding a public meeting to explain the proposal
- Ask parents, carers, children, young people, teachers, support staff and others to tell us what they think of the proposals.

What to do now?

- Please read the full proposal document
- Please attend the Public Meeting which will be held on 27th September 2023 at 6.00pm in Southend Primary School.
- Let us know what you think by:

Letter to: Education Services
School Consultations
Argyll & Bute Council
Argyll House
Alexandra Parade
Dunoon
PA23 8AJ

Returning the attached response sheet by post or by;

Email to: argyllhoureception@argyll-bute.gov.uk

What next?

Whilst the Council is engaging in a consultation process in relation to this proposal that does not mean that the proposal will go ahead. It does mean that the Council is engaging in a consultation process to seek your views on the proposal.

All the points raised during the consultation will be carefully considered and Elected Members will then decide if the plan should go ahead.

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

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

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Campbeltown Public Library, Kinloch Road, Town Centre, Campbeltown, PA28 6EG
- Lochgilphead Service Point, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD
- Castlehill Primary School, Ralston Road, Campbeltown, PA28 6LE
- Dunaverty Hall, Southend, Campbeltown, Argyll & Bute, PA28 6RF

It is also available electronically via our website:

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

Yours faithfully,

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director with responsibility for Education

APPENDIX 2



**Argyll and Bute Council
Education**

RESPONSE FORM

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

<u>Proposal</u>	
<p>It is proposed that: Education provision at Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.</p>	
<p>This part of the form must be completed for a valid response:</p>	
<p>Name: (please print)</p>	<p>Address:</p>
	<p>Post Code:</p>
<p>I agree/do not agree (delete which does not apply) that my response can be made publicly available</p>	
<p>Signature:</p>	<p>Date:</p>

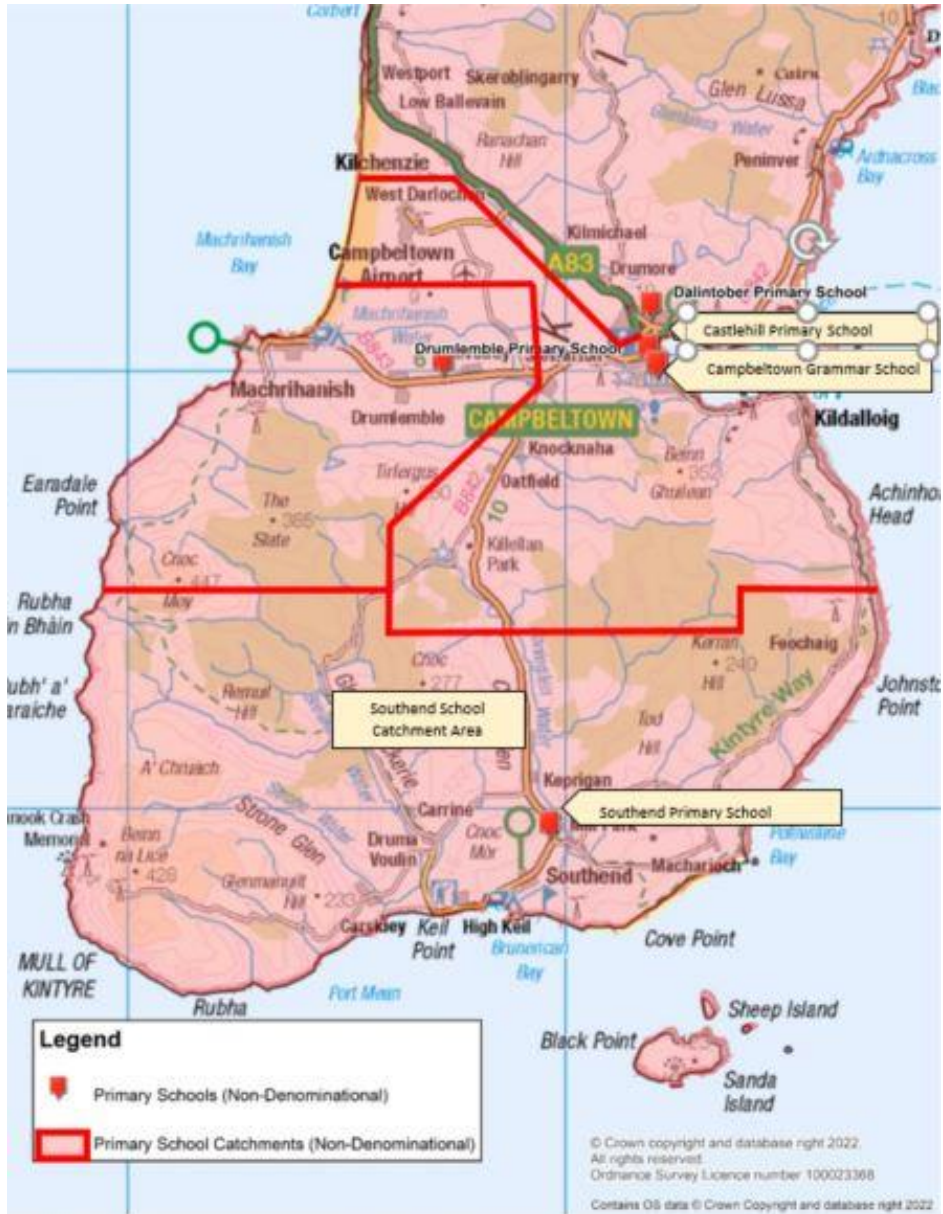
YOUR INTEREST: (please tick)

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

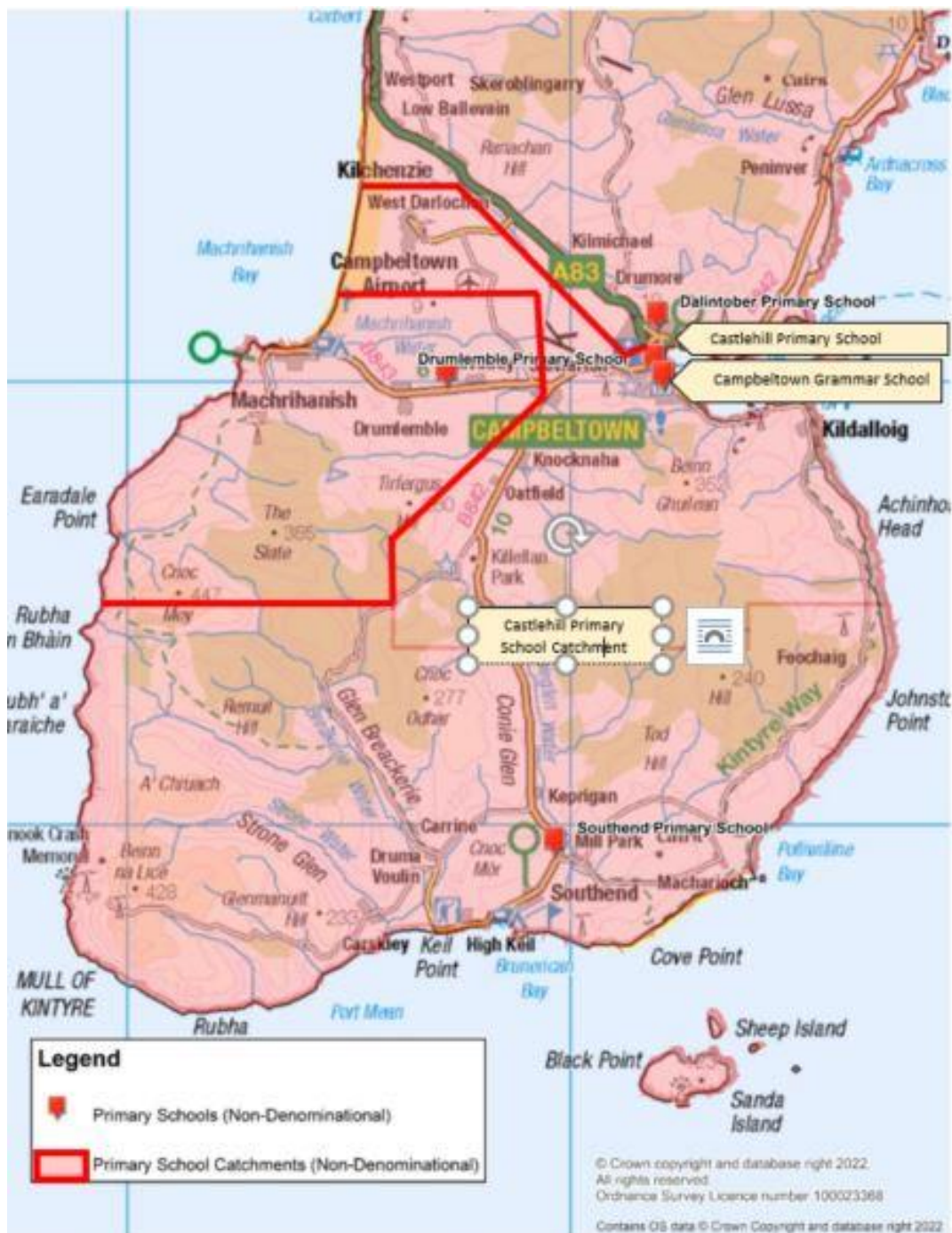
Please state your views on the proposal (continue overleaf if necessary)

APPENDIX 3 - MAPS

MAP OF CURRENT PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA



MAP OF PROPOSED CATCHMENT AREA



APPENDIX 4 – FINANCIAL TEMPLATE

Table 1²

Name of School	Projected annual costs for full financial year 2023/24	Additional financial impact on receiving school	Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)
Southend Primary		Castlehill Primary	
School costs			
<i>Employee costs -</i>			
teaching staff	104,390	0	104,390
support staff	20,272	0	20,272
teaching staff training (CPD etc)	0	0	0
support staff training	0	0	0
Supply costs	3,030	0	3,030
<i>Building costs:</i>			
property insurance	1,062	0	1,062
non domestic rates	1,422	0	1,422
water & sewerage charges	165	0	165
energy costs	18,307	0	18,307
cleaning (contract or in-house)	395	0	395
building repair & maintenance	4,600	0	4,600
grounds maintenance	53	0	53
facilities management costs	0	0	0
revenue costs arising from capital	0	0	0
other - refuse collection; telephones	1,585	0	1,585
<i>School operational costs:</i>			
learning materials	2,911	199	2,712
catering (contract or in-house)	11,062	1,625	9,437
SQA costs	0	0	0
other school operational costs (e.g. licences)			0
<i>Transport costs:</i>			
home to school	131,238.48	0	0
other pupil transport costs	0		
staff travel	0		

² These figures have been calculated based on Skipness Primary school roll the last full year prior to mothballing.

SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL	300,492	1,842	298,407
Income:			
Sale of meals	-1,438	-1,177	-261
Lets	0		0
External care provider	0		0
Other	0		0
SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL	-1,438	-1,177	-261
TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL	299,054	647	298,407
UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR	27,187	72	27,128

Table 2

Capital costs	School proposed for closure	Receiving school
	Southend Primary	Castlehill Primary
Capital Life Cycle cost	465,114	3,400,423
Third party contributions to capital costs	0	0

Table 3

Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal	
property insurance	1,062
non domestic rates	1,422
water & sewerage charges	165
energy costs	1,101
cleaning (contract or in-house)	0
security costs	0
building repair & maintenance	1,950
grounds maintenance	53
facilities management costs	0
Other, employee costs; equipment lease and alarm rental	21,517
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL	27,270

Table 4

Non-recurring revenue costs	
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	12,725

Table 5

Impact on GAE	
<p>The Primary Indicator determining the GAE allocation for Primary School Teaching Staff is based on the number of primary school pupils with the Secondary Indicator being the percentage of pupils in small schools (roll < 70 pupils averaged over 2 years). The additional pupils from Southend will maintain the roll of Castlehill above the small school threshold. There will be a loss of small school GAE for those pupils attending Southend equating to approximately £22,569.</p> <p>Argyll and Bute Council, however, is supported by the floor mechanism therefore any calculated reduction in GAE would not have an actual impact on the overall GAE allocation.</p>	22,569
GAE IMPACT	22,569



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.
-
- *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**

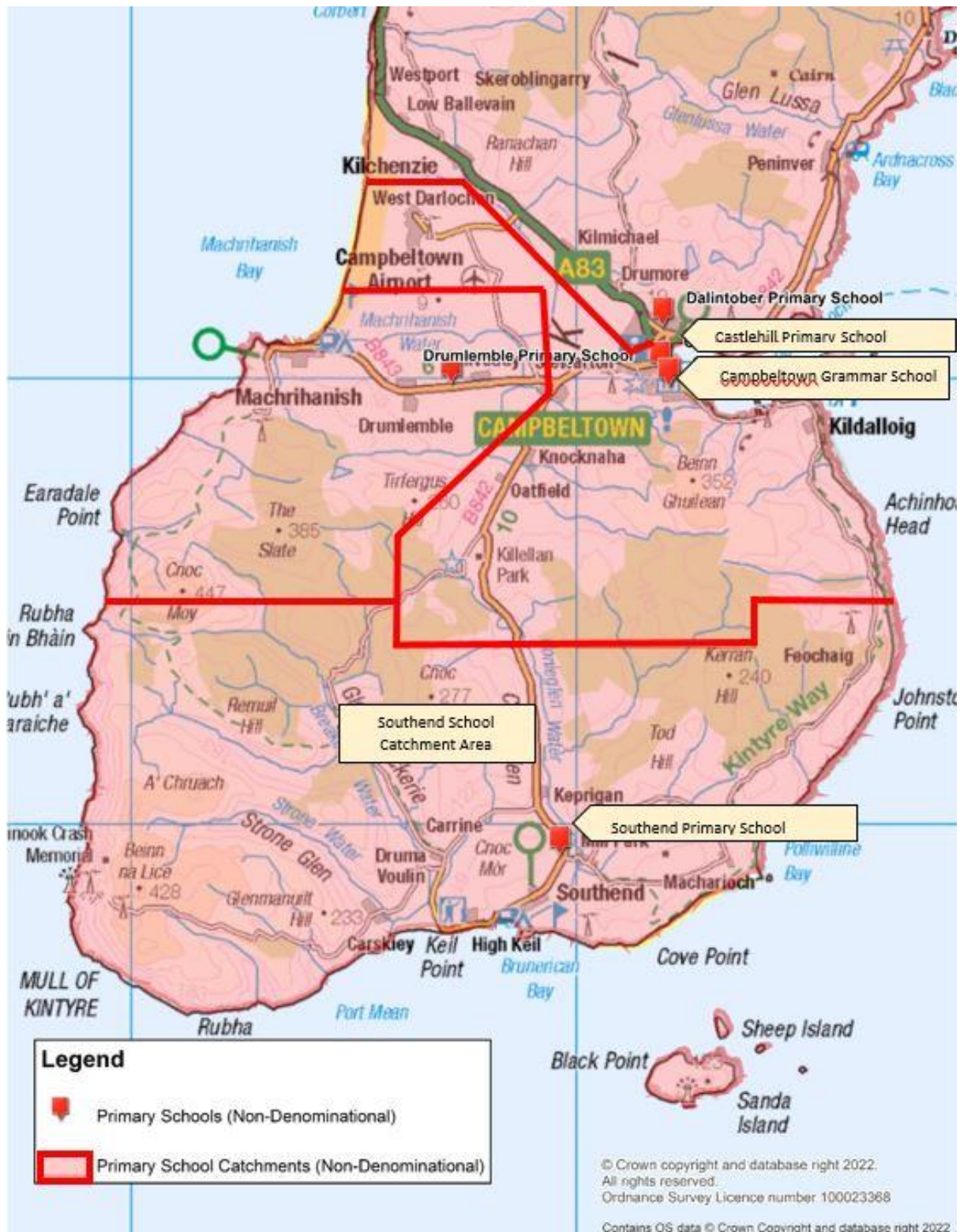
Following the mothballing of Southend Primary School, children from the Southend catchment area attended Castlehill Primary School. Castlehill Primary School is a non-denominational and co-educational school situated in the town of Campbeltown at Ralston Road. Castlehill Primary serves part of the town 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 Drumlemble

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.

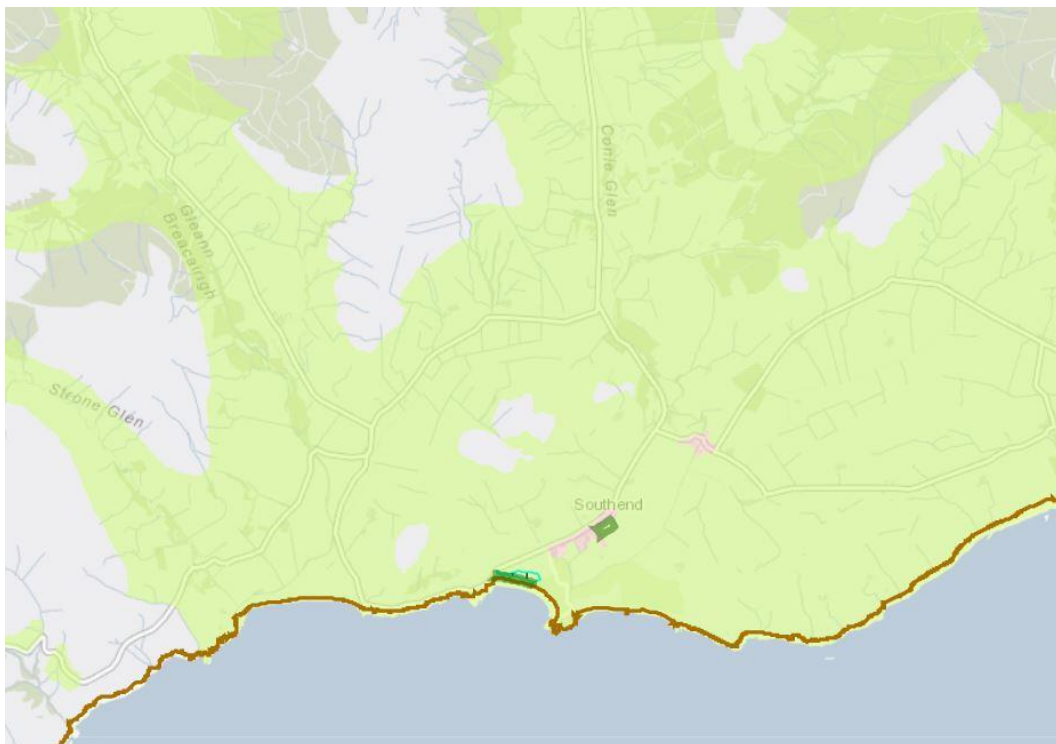
After consideration of the preliminary requirements, as set out in the Act, and the options, and having regard to the specific reasons identified at Section 2 of

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.

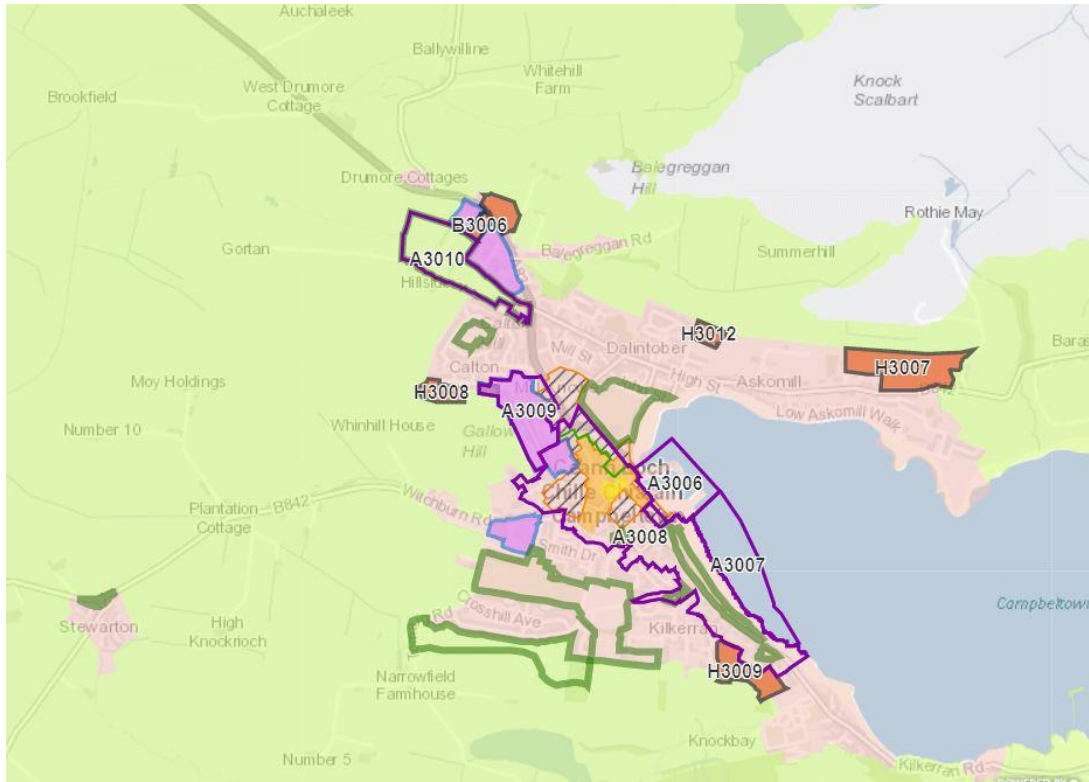
Members are asked to:

- 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		Remotely Countryside Area
	Potential Development Area		Site of Special Scientific Interest		
	Conservation Area		Special Protection Area		
	Local Landscape Area		Established Business and Industry Area		

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****EDUCATION****24TH AUGUST 2023**

SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 – ST JOSEPH’S PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides details of the outcome and findings of the statutory consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the formal proposal to rezone the catchment area for St Joseph’s Primary School so that it is extended to the whole of the Helensburgh and Lomond area, as detailed in the published Consultation Report (Appendix A); and in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended (the 2010 Act).
- 1.2 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:
- a. Notes the contents of the Consultation Report (Appendix A); and
 - b. Approves the implementation of the following proposal:
 - i. That the catchment area of St Joseph’s Primary School is rezoned so that it is extended to include the whole of the Helensburgh and Lomond area, with effect from 24th August 2023.

SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 – ST JOSEPH’S PRIMARY SCHOOL

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 When considering a proposal to rezone a school the Education Authority must meet the requirements of the 2010 Act.
- 2.2 The Council is required to prepare and publish a Proposal Paper which clearly sets out the proposal on which the Council is consulting. The Proposal Paper must include details of the proposed date for implementation, an Educational Benefits Statement, a summary of the consultation process and details of the supporting evidence or information used to formulate the proposal.
- 2.3 The 2010 Act also requires that at the close of the consultation process, Education Scotland must consider the educational aspects of the Council’s proposal and prepare and submit a report for consideration by the Council when preparing its final Consultation Report.
- 2.4 The Council is then required to review the proposal, taking into consideration the report from Education Scotland and all other responses received within the consultation period, and thereafter prepare and publish its final Consultation Report.
- 2.5 The Consultation Report must explain how the Council has reviewed the proposal, a summary of the points raised during the consultation period and the Council’s response to them, and details of any alleged inaccuracies or omissions.
- 2.6 The Council will then make a decision on whether or not to implement the proposal.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:
- a. Notes the contents of the Consultation Report (Appendix A); and
 - b. Approves the implementation of the following proposal:
 - i. That the catchment area of St Joseph’s Primary School is rezoned so that it is extended to include the whole of the Helensburgh and Lomond area, with effect from 24th August 2023.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1 This report provides details of the outcome and findings of the statutory consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the formal proposal to rezone the catchment area of St Joseph's Primary School as detailed in the published Consultation Report (Appendix A); and in accordance with the requirements of the 2010 Act.
- 4.2 In accordance with the 2010 Act, a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal (Appendix 4 of the Consultation Report). The Education Scotland Report supports the proposal in that it has potential educational benefits and will offer greater parental choice for children and families wishing to undertake a faith-based education. Where appropriate, associated school transport will be provided for the duration of a child's primary education if this proposal is implemented.
- 4.3 Having considered the report from Education Scotland and all other responses received within the consultation period, officers carried out a further review of the proposal in light of this information and a Consultation Report was thereafter prepared and published for public scrutiny on the Council's website from 3rd August 2023. This provided a full three week period prior to a final Committee decision on Thursday 24th August 2023, in compliance with Section 9(3) and Section 11 of the 2010 Act.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Consultation Report for St Joseph's Primary School has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the 2010 Act, as amended.
- 5.2 Following the outcome of the statutory consultation exercise detailed in the Consultation Report (Appendix A), having due regard to the consultation responses, and to Education Scotland's Report, it is recommended that the decision is made to implement the proposal that the catchment area of St Joseph's Primary School be rezoned so that it is extended to include the whole of the Helensburgh and Lomond area, with effect from 24th August 2023.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – An authority that is formulating a proposal to change the catchment area of a school must satisfy the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.
- 6.2 Financial – there are financial implications for each option.
- 6.3 Legal – The Consultation Report for St Joseph's Primary School has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.
- 6.4 HR – None
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: None at present

6.5.1 Equalities – An EQSEIA was undertaken as part of the consultation exercise and is attached as Appendix 2 of the Consultation Report.

6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None at present

6.5.3 Islands – None at present

6.6 Climate Change - None

6.7 Risk – None at present

6.8 Customer Service – None at present

Douglas Hendry

Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Yvonne Mcneilly

Policy Lead for Education

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27th July 2023

Appendix A – Consultation Report



Appendix A



Argyll and Bute Council

Education

CONSULTATION REPORT

Report on the outcome of the consultation relating to the proposal to rezone the catchment area of St Joseph's Primary School.

August 2023

This document has been issued by Argyll and Bute Council in regard to a proposal in terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* as amended.

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Appendix 1 – Proposal Paper

Appendix 2 – EQESIA

Appendix 3 – Public Meeting Minutes

Appendix 4 – Education Scotland Report

Appendix 5 – Notes taken from Focus Groups

1. Summary of the Proposal

1.1 The proposal is to rezone the catchment area for St Joseph's Primary School so that it is extended to the whole of the Helensburgh and Lomond area, with effect from 24th August 2023.

2. Introduction

2.1 This is a Consultation Report prepared in compliance with the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, as amended (the 2010 Act), on the above proposal.

2.2 The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide a record of the total number of written responses made during the statutory consultation period;
- Provide a summary of the written responses;
- Provide a summary of oral representations made at the public meeting, held on 25th April 2023.
- Provide a statement of the Council's response to those written and oral representations;
- Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of the Council's response to this report;
- State how the Council reviewed the proposal following the representations received during the statutory consultation period and receipt of the report from Education Scotland; and
- Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Paper and state how the Council acted upon these.

3. Background

3.1 St. Joseph's Primary is a Roman Catholic, co-educational primary school, situated in the upper east end of Helensburgh. St Joseph's is one of four denominational primary schools in Argyll and Bute. It was built in 1977 to replace the old St. Joseph's School and it covers the stages of Primary 1 to Primary 7. The current school roll is 138 as per the table below:

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
St Joseph's Primary School - Helensburgh	18	25	15	24	16	20	20	138

3.2 On 26th October 2022 St Joseph's Primary School Parent Council unanimously agreed at its AGM to make a formal request to the Council to consider rezoning the school's current catchment area.

3.3 In considering all requests to re-align catchment areas, the Council has had due regard to its specific statutory duties as laid out in the 2010 Act, as amended.

- 3.4 St Joseph's Primary School Parent Council feels that the catchment area for their school should include all of the Helensburgh and Lomond area. The current catchment area is a historic boundary legacy, inherited from Strathclyde Regional Council in 1995. At present there are 5 children of primary school age, from 2 families, living in the portion of the Helensburgh and Lomond area which is currently excluded from St Joseph's Primary School's catchment area. They attend St Joseph's Primary School as a result of placing requests. The table below illustrates the current catchment area size for the four denominational primary schools in Argyll and Bute.

School	Size of catchment area in hectares
St Andrew's PS	12,835 (this is the whole island of Bute)
St Columba's PS	153,184
St Mun's PS	24,760
St Joseph's PS	34,632
Proposed rezoned catchment for St Joseph's PS	44,662

- 3.5 The School Roll of the affected schools as per May 2023 is:

Establishment	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
Arrochar Primary School	5	6	5	8	5	8	6	43
Cardross Primary School	16	22	25	25	28	28	22	166
Colgrain Primary School	36	34	20	34	46	43	39	252
Garelochhead Primary School	12	15	15	11	10	19	20	102
Hermitage Primary School	53	55	52	51	55	53	63	382
John Logie Baird Primary School	9	16	12	11	18	10	21	97
Kilcreggan Primary School	9	11	15	10	15	10	12	82
Luss Primary School	2	1	0	1	2	2	1	9
Rhu Primary School	26	25	21	18	21	29	32	172
Rosneath Primary School	7	14	11	13	15	11	8	79
Parklands	5	7	7	5	1	1	3	29

- 3.6 On 9th March 2023, Argyll and Bute Council's Community Services Committee adopted the proposal as a "relevant proposal" in terms of the 2010 Act and agreed to proceed with the statutory consultation process.

[Agenda for Community Services Committee on Thursday, 9 March 2023, 10:30 am - Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

4. Equality and Socio-Economic Impact

4.1 The Council, as a public authority, has a duty under the *Equality Act* 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, the Fairer Scotland Duty and the *Islands (Scotland) Act* 2018 to have due regard to their provisions when making strategic financial decisions. This is done through assessing the potential impact of the decision on equality through Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (EQSEIAs). The full EQSEIA in respect to the proposal to rezone the catchment area for St Joseph's Primary School is attached as **Appendix 2**.

4.2 The EQSEIA identifies no negative impact.

5. The Consultation Process

5.1 Following the Council's decision of 9th March 2023 – where it agreed to adopt the proposal as a “relevant proposal” in terms of the 2010 Act and issue it as a basis for consultation – the Proposal Paper was made available on the Argyll and Bute Council website.

5.2 A copy of the Proposal Paper was made available to the following “relevant consultees” in terms of the 2010 Act:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools;
- The parents of the pupils at the affected schools;
- Early Years Establishments in the local area, which gave access to parents who have children expected to attend the affected schools within two years of the publication of the Proposal Paper;
- The pupils at the affected schools (in so far as the Education Authority considered them to be of suitable age and maturity);
- All Argyll and Bute Council employees at the affected schools;
- Trade union representatives of employees at the affected schools;
- Community Councils within the affected localities;
- Roman Catholic Arch Diocese of Glasgow;
- All relevant users of the affected schools, and
- Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partners.

5.3 A copy of the Proposal Paper was also made available to:

- All Elected Members of Argyll and Bute Council representing the Helensburgh and Lomond area;
- Argyll and Bute Youth Forum;
- Education Scotland (formerly Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, HMIE);
- The Constituency MSP for the area of the affected schools;
- List MSPs for the area of the affected schools;
- The MP for the area of the affected schools;

- Police Scotland;
- NHS Highland;
- Argyll and Bute Council's School Transport Team;
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Services; and
- Care Inspectorate.

5.4 The Proposal Paper was also available at the following locations:

- Council Offices
- All libraries in Helensburgh and Lomond
- All Helensburgh and Lomond area/locality offices
- The schools affected by the proposal

5.5 The steps listed below were also taken to ensure that the proposal was made widely available:

- Notice of the proposal and of publication of the Proposal Paper was placed within local newspapers;
- The Proposal Paper was published on the Argyll and Bute Council website; and
- Notice was given that the Proposal Paper could be made available in alternative forms or translated by contacting Argyll House, Dunoon.

5.6 There were 24 emails sent which contained the notice and summary proposal.

5.7 The consultation period started on 16th March 2023 and ended on 12th May 2023 – a minimum of 6 weeks which included at least 30 school days, as required by Section 6(4) of the 2010 Act. Interested parties wishing to make written responses to the proposal were invited to respond no later than close of business on 12th May 2023

5.8 A public meeting was held on 25th April 2023 in St Joseph's Primary School at 7.00pm. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting and participate was welcome to do so. The meeting was convened by the Education Authority who presented reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There was an opportunity for questions to be asked and comments to be made.

5.9 This Consultation Report is the Council's response to the issues raised regarding the proposal during the consultation period. It will be published on the Council's website for a period of no less than 3 weeks prior to the final consideration of the proposal by the Council's Community Services Committee on 24th August 2023.

6. Pupil Engagement

- 6.1 Officers from the Education Service invited engagement on the proposal from children, staff and parents (and all other relevant consultees) from St Joseph's Primary School and the other affected schools.
- 6.2 The proposal, could have an impact on pupils, parents, communities and schools. In this regard, pupils' views are a significant part of the consultation process and pupils potentially impacted by the rezoning took part in a focus group to identify both positive and negative impacts of the proposal.
- 6.3 The pupils were given information regarding the Council's proposal and asked for their thoughts and ideas through a series of questions which are detailed in **Appendix 5** along with pupil responses which can be summarised as follows:
- Pupils recognised that it is positive for Roman Catholic families to have the choice for their children to go to a Roman Catholic school and learn about their faith.
 - Pupils shared concerns that it is unfair that most families in Helensburgh and Lomond can choose a faith-based education and receive transport to St Joseph's, but a small minority of people within the Helensburgh and Lomond area currently have to put in a placing request and aren't entitled to receive transport to school.
 - Pupils were able to think about the views of others and how parents, families and community members might feel about the proposal but felt that access to denominational education should be freely available to all within a wider catchment area
 - Pupils voiced that they liked being included in the consultation and felt that this was really important.

7. Engagement with Staff and Parents

- 7.1 A further focus group took place on 24th April 2023 with staff and parents at St Joseph's Primary School. A note of what was discussed with this group is also detailed within **Appendix 5**.
- 7.2 The staff and parents attending that session were unanimously of the view that all children should have the right to Catholic Education regardless of postcode, and without financial implications (i.e. transport costs).

8. Responses to the Consultation Exercise

- 8.1 0 written consultation responses were received by the Council during the consultation.

- 8.2 Oral responses to the proposal were gathered at the public meeting held at St Joseph's Primary School on 25th April 2023. One parent attended along with officers from the Education Authority and an Education Scotland inspector. Minutes of the public meeting are attached as **Appendix 3**. The one member of the public present intimated that they were in favour of the proposal.

9. Education Authority Response to Written and Oral Representations

- 9.1 Who has discretionary power to agree transport to St Joseph's Primary School?

9.1.1 **Response:** The Council's School Transport Team (Roads and Infrastructure Services) are responsible for arranging travel to school.

- 9.2 It's been over a year and a half since this matter was originally raised by Councillor Trail. Why has it taken so long to now get to a consultation exercise?

9.2.1 **Response:** Councillor Trail did raise this at a Council meeting and this was referred to the Community Services Committee who, on 16th December 2021 agreed to take forward a statutory consultation to extend the catchment area for St Joseph's Primary. There was a delay in commencing this process, as the Education Service was already involved in another large piece of work at the time, and officers did not have capacity to run both exercises simultaneously.

- 9.3 Is there a timescale which the Council must follow when a parental request is made to change the catchment area of a school, if so what is it?

9.3.1 **Response:** A parental request does not in itself trigger a statutory duty to conduct a review of a catchment area under the 2010 Act.

- 9.4 By what agreement can pupils go to Our Lady and St Patricks High School?

9.4.1 The right for all pupils in the Hermitage Academy catchment area to choose to attend Our Lady and St Patricks High School as a denominational school was established in 1995, at the time of disaggregation.

10. Education Scotland Report

- 10.1 In accordance with the 2010 Act, following the close of the consultation period, the Education Authority provided Education Scotland with a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, and all other relevant documentation. The Education Authority would usually also provide Education Scotland a copy of all written representations, but as detailed above, none were received.

- 10.2 Education Scotland reviewed the Council's proposal with a particular focus on the educational aspects of the proposal. They attended the public

meeting on 25th April 2023 and visited the affected schools to meet with pupils and gather their views.

10.3 Education Scotland thereafter produced their report on the educational aspects of the proposal. This report is produced in full at **Appendix 4**.

10.4 Education Scotland's report supports the proposal and is summarised below:

- Education Scotland note that the Council have set out a clear rationale for the proposal. All stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors were in favour of the proposal.
- Education Scotland's view is that implementation of the proposal would decrease the need for placing requests, and reduce the need for parents to pay for school transport.
- Education Scotland agree that the proposal has potential educational benefits, and will offer greater parental choice.
- If the proposal is to be implemented, Education Scotland recommends that the Council works with schools and communities to mitigate any likely negative impact.
- As part of any implementation of the proposal, Education Scotland recommend that the Council would benefit from working with stakeholders to consider solutions which may alleviate accessibility concerns at Luss Primary School. This could enhance the sustainability of schools in the area.

11. Education Authority Response to Education Scotland Report

11.1 The Council welcomes the report from Education Scotland and accepts its findings.

11.2 However, the Council notes Education Scotland's recommendation (as per the final bullet point at Paragraph 10.4, above) that the Council would benefit from working with stakeholders to consider solutions which may alleviate concerns raised about accessibility at Luss Primary School (one of the affected schools). Officers agree that addressing any issues which may be identified could enhance the sustainability of schools in the area. However, this particular issue has, until now, not been raised with the Council. Therefore, the Education Service will now undertake to work with the Luss Primary School community to address the particular issue that has been raised. However, given that it is a distinct matter from the proposal being considered, it will be taken forward by the Education Service as a matter separate from this consultation exercise.

12. Compliance with Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

12.1 After the Education Authority received Education Scotland's report, officers carried out a further review of the proposal following the close of the consultation, having regard (in particular) to:

- a) Representations made by the focus groups
- b) Oral representations made at the public meeting, and
- c) Education Scotland's report.

12.2 The Education Authority has listened carefully to the points made at by focus groups, those made at the public meeting, and have considered equally carefully the Education Scotland report. The proposal was reviewed to consider whether any of the representations made led the Council to reconsider the proposal. None of the representations led the Council to conclude that there are any viable alternatives to implementation of the proposal. The Educational Benefits Statement was also reviewed in respect of the Education Scotland report and representations made. There were no factors included in the Education Scotland report or representations made requiring any aspect of the Educational Benefits Statement to be reconsidered. Having reviewed the Education Scotland report and feedback from consultees, the Council has concluded that implementation of the proposal continues to be the most appropriate response to the underlying reasons for formulating it.

12.3 Therefore, the Council has had regard to the points made at, the focus groups, the public meeting and those within Education Scotland's report. Thereafter, a review of the proposal was carried out, which has concluded that implementation of the proposal will provide greater equity for children and families. It will make clear children's right to a place in St Joseph's Primary School and, where appropriate, associated transport for the duration of their primary education. This would offer additional educational choice to these pupils, without the need for them to make a placing request.

13. Alleged Omissions or Inaccuracies

13.1 Section 10(3) of the 2010 Act places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission in the Proposal Paper which has either been identified by the Council or raised by consultees. This provision also requires the Council to provide a statement on the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, or if no action was taken, to state that fact and why.

13.2 In the course of the statutory consultation, there were no areas identified by the respondents or the Council as being inaccurate or omitted from the Proposal Paper.

14. Conclusion

14.1 There are currently five pupils, from two families attending St Joseph's Primary School who live outwith the catchment area and, as such, are not entitled to free school transport.

14.2 Should the catchment area be rezoned as proposed, there would be increased accessibility to denominational education for children in the rezoned catchment area. There may be future implications in terms of staffing and transport costs should there be an increase in the school roll of St Joseph's Primary School should this proposal be implemented, but they would be addressed by the Education Service at the relevant point. The need to possibly address any future implications is far outweighed by the likely educational benefits that implementation of this proposal would produce.

15. Recommendation

15.1 On the basis of the oral representations made in response to this consultation exercise, Education Scotland's report, and taking into account the educational benefits for the children involved, it is recommended that the catchment area for St Joseph's Primary School be rezoned so that it is extended to the whole of the Helensburgh and Lomond area, with effect from 24th August 2023.

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Appendix 1



Education

PROPOSAL PAPER

**We are looking for your views on a
*proposal to rezone the catchment area
of St Joseph's Primary School.***

Closing date for responses: 12th May 2023

A public meeting will be held on:

**25/4/2023 at St Joseph's Primary School
at 7.00 pm**

This document has been issued by Argyll and Bute Council for consultation under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs.

Phone: 01369 708576

Email: argyllhouwereception@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Contents

- 1. The proposal and consultation process**
- 2. Implementation date for the proposal**
- 3. Background to the proposal and overview of pupil population trends**
- 4. Educational benefits – assessment of the effects of the proposal**
- 5. Assessing the impact on the local community affected by this proposal**
- 6. Employee implications**
- 7. Financial implications**
- 8. Responding to the proposal**
- 9. Appendices**
 - Appendix 1** Distribution list
 - Appendix 2** Map detail of current boundary and proposed boundary
- 10. Consultation response form**

1.0 THE PROPOSAL AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

1.1 Proposal

Argyll and Bute Council is seeking views on the following proposal, namely:
“To rezone the catchment area for St Joseph’s Primary School so that it is extended to the whole of the Helensburgh and Lomond area”.

1.2 Decision to undertake the consultation

On 16th December 2021, Argyll and Bute Council’s Community Services Committee agreed to note the terms of a referral from the full Council relating to St Joseph’s Primary School’s catchment area. The Committee further agreed to take forward a statutory procedure (in terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, to extend the catchment area for St Joseph’s Primary School to cover the whole of the Helensburgh and Lomond area; noting that a report on the statutory procedure to be undertaken would be presented to Committee in due course once resource pressures on the Education Service were eased.

1.3 Consultation on the proposal

Under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, if a local authority proposes to alter the catchment area of a school, it must undertake a statutory consultation with the ‘relevant consultees’ affected by this proposal. In this instance;

- Arrochar Primary School
- Cardross Primary School
- Colgrain Primary School
- Garelochhead Primary School
- Hermitage Primary School
- John Logie Baird Primary School
- Kilcreggan Primary School
- Luss Primary School
- Parklands Primary School
- Rhu Primary School
- Rosneath Primary School

would be the ‘affected schools’.

The formal consultation on the proposal within this document will be undertaken under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* (“the Act”). The consultation period will start on **16th March 2023** (with due written notice of the proposal issued to the relevant consultees listed in Appendix 1) and end on **12th May**

2023. Written representations must be received by the close of business on the closing date in order to be taken into account.

1.4 Public meeting

A public Meeting will be held on Tuesday 25th April at 19.00 in St Joseph's Primary School to discuss the proposal. Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so. The meeting will provide those in attendance with an opportunity to:

- Hear about the proposal;
- Ask questions about the proposal, and
- Express views about the proposal.

A note will be taken of the views expressed during the public meeting and of any questions asked so that they can be taken into account as part of the consultation process. In addition to the public meeting, written representations will be able to be made during the consultation period. A copy of the Consultation Response Form can be found at the end of this Proposal Paper.

1.5 Pupil views

Pupils will be invited to comment during the consultation process, through a session facilitated by a Council Officer, ensuring that they have an opportunity to contribute their views.

1.6 Education Scotland (formerly HM Inspectorate of Education, HMIE)

At the start of the consultation period the Council will provide Education Scotland with this proposal paper. When the consultation period has ended, the Council will collate all of the written and oral representations. Thereafter, this information will be provided to Education Scotland and include;

- A copy of written representations made to the Council on the proposal (or summary of them if agreed with Education Scotland);
- A summary of oral representations made at the public meeting, and
- Other relevant documentation, so far as is practicable.

Education Scotland will prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal taking account of the above, and in so far that Education Scotland considers them relevant, any written representations made directly to them. Education Scotland may also visit the schools affected by the proposal and make any other enquiries as they consider appropriate. Education Scotland require to send their report to the Council no later than 3 weeks (or longer if agreed with the Council) after having received the information from the Council.

1.7 Consultation Report

After receiving Education Scotland’s report, the Council will review the proposal taking account of written representations received during the consultation period, oral representations made during the public meeting and Education Scotland’s report. The Council will then prepare and publish a Consultation Report which will include a recommendation on the proposal and make it available for inspection. The Consultation Report will be published no later than three weeks before it is formally considered by the Council.

1.8 **Inaccuracies or omissions**

Where inaccuracies or omissions are discovered within this Proposal Paper, the Council will determine whether relevant information has been omitted or, if there has been an inaccuracy. Appropriate action will then be taken by the Council which may include issuing corrections, reissuing a corrected proposal paper or an extension of the consultation period. In any of these events all relevant consultees (and where applicable the notifier(s) of any omissions or inaccuracies) and Education Scotland will be advised of the appropriate action.

2.0 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE FOR THE PROPOSAL**

2.1 The proposal, if accepted, would be implemented from **24th August 2023**.

3.0 **DETAIL**

3.1 St. Joseph’s Primary is a Roman Catholic, co-educational primary school, situated in the upper east end of Helensburgh. St Joseph’s is one of four denominational primary schools in Argyll and Bute i.e. St Columba’s Primary School is in Oban; St Mun’s Primary School is in Dunoon; and St Andrew’s Primary school is situated on the Isle of Bute. It was built in 1977 to replace the old St. Joseph’s School and it covers the stages of Primary 1 to Primary 7. The current school roll is 136 as per the table below:

St Joseph's Primary School - Helensburgh	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Grand Total
	21	15	23	17	20	20	20	136

3.2 On 26th October 2022 St Joseph’s Primary School Parent Council unanimously agree at its AGM to make a formal request to the Council to consider rezoning the school’s current catchment area

3.3 In considering all requests to re-align catchment areas, the Council will have due regard to its specific statutory duties as laid out in the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, as amended.

3.4 The existing catchment area of St Joseph’s Primary School is shown in Appendix 2. The request by St Joseph’s Primary School Parent Council, and by

the referral from the full Council as detailed at Paragraph 1.2, above, is for the catchment area to be increased to include all of the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

- 3.5 St Joseph's Primary School Parent Council feels that the catchment area for their school should include all of the schools within Helensburgh and Lomond. The current catchment area is a historic boundary legacy, inherited from Strathclyde Regional Council in 1995. At present there are 2 children of primary school age living in the portion of the Helensburgh and Lomond area which is currently excluded from St Joseph's Primary School's catchment area. They attend St Joseph's Primary School as a result of placing requests. The table below illustrates the current catchment area size for the denominational primary schools in Argyll and Bute.

School	Size of catchment area in hectares
St Andrew's PS	12,835 (this is the whole island of Bute)
St Columba's PS	153,184
St Mun's PS	24,760
St Joseph's PS	34,632
Proposed rezoned catchment for St Joseph's PS	44,662

- 3.6 The School Roll of the affected schools as per September 2022 is:

School	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Grand Total
Arrochar Primary School	6	6	9	5	9	5	10	50
Cardross Primary School	19	25	26	26	28	21	28	173
Colgrain Primary School	35	17	32	47	43	39	44	257
Garelochhead Primary School	12	15	9	10	19	21	21	107
Hermitage Primary School	55	49	51	54	51	59	50	369
John Logie Baird Primary School	16	13	10	19	11	20	14	103
Kilcreggan Primary School	11	15	11	15	10	13	10	85
Luss Primary School	1	0	1	1	2	1	5	11
Parklands Primary School	5	7	4	1	1	3	2	23
Rhu Primary School	24	19	17	21	28	32	30	171
Rosneath Primary School	15	10	10	14	11	7	13	80

4.0 EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT – ASSESSMENT OF THE LIKELY EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Benefits for present pupils of St Joseph’s Primary School

Should the catchment area be rezoned, there may be benefits for current pupils such as additional opportunities for personal and social development through an increased roll. From a curricular perspective, there would be no particular changes, however an increased school roll may well bring additional opportunities for children to develop socially and emotionally, particularly in developing them as confident individuals.

4.2 Benefits for future pupils of St Joseph’s Primary School

If the catchment area was rezoned it would mean that pupils from a wider geographical location would be able to attend a denominational school without their parents having to make a specific placing request. These pupils would also benefit from additional opportunities for personal and social development in St Joseph’s Primary School. From a curricular perspective, there would be no particular changes, however an increased school roll may well bring additional opportunities for children to develop socially and emotionally, particularly in developing them as confident individuals.

4.3 Effects on other users of the school’s facilities

Effects on any other users of the school’s facilities would be negligible.

4.4 Pupils of other schools in the area

Currently, pupils who live in the proposed rezoning area are able to make a placing request to attend St Joseph’s Primary School if they wish. However, the cost of transport is met by the family, not the local authority. If the proposal was to be implemented, then parents of children who currently attend other schools in the area may now be able to send their children to St Joseph’s Primary School for a Catholic education should they wish, without having to make a placing request, or pay for travel.

If the catchment area for St Joseph’s Primary School was rezoned it would mean that pupils from a wider geographical area would be able to attend a denominational school without their parents having to make a specific placing request.

There would be the following benefits to pupils:

- the increased opportunity for children to experience a faith based curriculum which works in partnership with the Catholic Church to provide spiritual growth and to celebrate faith in Jesus Christ; and

- potentially an increased number of prospective pupils – thereby adding to the diversity, strength and vibrancy of the school community.

If this proposal was to be implemented there would be a positive effect on children who currently do not attend St Joseph's Primary School and who wish to have a denominational education. There could also be a benefit to current and future children who attend the school.

If this proposal was implemented, all pupils who reside in the proposed rezoning area would fall within the new catchment area for St Joseph's Primary School as well as their local non-denominational school. This would offer additional educational choice to these pupils, which would not be subject to a placing request.

4.5 Implications for pupils if the proposal was not implemented

If this proposal is not implemented the children who currently live in the rezoning area, and who may move into the rezoning area, who wish to attend St Joseph's Primary School will continue to have to make a placing request should they wish to attend. They would also have to pay the cost of transport to and from school. This may also be a potential barrier for parents who wish to provide a denominational education for their children and be educated in accordance with their faith.

5.0 ASSESSING THE IMPACT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AFFECTED BY THESE PROPOSALS

5.1 There may be implications for the local communities of the affected primary schools. Potentially, children who attend these schools may opt to attend St Joseph's Primary School. This may lead to a reduction in school rolls for pupils in these schools. Currently there is one school which has a school roll of less than twenty, and a reduction in their roll could have an impact on the ethos of these schools in their own communities.

6.0 EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Staffing arrangements will continue to be consistent with the Argyll and Bute Council Staffing Standards and other local arrangements.

6.2 If many children choose to go to St Joseph's Primary School instead of their non-denominational catchment school, this may also have an impact on staffing in both schools. If the school roll of St Joseph's Primary School increases it may require more staff, and if the other non-denominational schools sustain a corresponding drop in their school rolls, they may require to review their staffing arrangements. The Education Authority do not anticipate the numbers of pupils involved as a result of this proposed catchment extension to hugely impact other non-denominational schools.

7.0 OTHER ISSUES

- 7.1 There will most likely be increased transport costs for the Council should this rezoning take place. Any additional transport requests could may well incur additional costs. It is not considered that the proposal would be likely to incur a large cost to transport.
- 7.2 It is not a requirement that all pupils who attend denominational schools must be of that particular religious persuasion. Every school under the management of the Education Authority must be open to pupils of all denominations.
- 7.3 Religion and belief is a protected characteristic under the *Equality Act 2010*, which the Council, as a public authority, must have regard to when making decisions of this nature. If the Council were to rezone the catchment area for St Joseph's Primary School so as to increase the availability of denominational primary school education for children in the Helensburgh and Lomond area whose parents so wish to opt for it, this would be in accordance with the spirit of the 2010 Act. Denominational schools are afforded further statutory protections in terms of the *Education (Scotland) Act 1980*, and associated Education legislation.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This is a proposal to rezone the catchment area of St Joseph's Primary School, following requests to that effect from the previous Council (in December 2021) and the school's Parent Council. It is recommended that a statutory consultation exercise take place in respect of this under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. There are currently 2 pupils who attend the school who live out with the catchment area, who are not entitled to free school transport. Should the catchment area be rezoned, there would be increased accessibility to denominational education for children in the rezoned catchment area (i.e. the Helensburgh and Lomond area). There may be implications in terms of staffing and transport costs should there be an increase in the school roll of St Joseph's as a result of any rezoning.

Members are invited to adopt the draft proposal and proceed to a statutory consultation exercise under the 2010 Act to consider extending the catchment area of St Joseph's Primary School.

9.0 RESPONDING TO THE PROPOSAL

- 9.1 Interested parties are invited to respond to the proposal by making written or electronic submissions on the proposal using the form attached no later than close of business on **12th May 2023**.

Responses can be submitted to:

Argyll and Bute Council
Customer Services: Education
Argyll House
Alexandra Parade
Dunoon, PA23 8AJ
Email: argyllhoureception@argyll-bute.gov.uk

- 9.2 Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically should be aware that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it.
- 9.3 If they do not wish their response to be publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: "I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to elected members and council officers of Argyll and Bute Council." Otherwise, it will be assumed that the respondent agrees to their response being made publicly available.

Appendix 1

Distribution list and how to access a copy of the proposal document

A copy of this proposal document will be provided to the following 'relevant consultees' in terms of the Act:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools;
- The parents of the pupils at the affected schools;
- A copy of the proposal will be provided to all Early Years Establishments in the local area, giving access to parents who have children expected to attend the affected schools within two years of the publication of this proposal paper;
- The pupils at the affected schools (in so far as the Education Authority considers them to be of suitable age and maturity);
- All Argyll and Bute Council employees at the affected schools;
- Trade union representatives of employees at the affected schools;
- Community Councils within the affected localities;
- Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Glasgow;
- All relevant users of the affected schools, and
- Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partners.

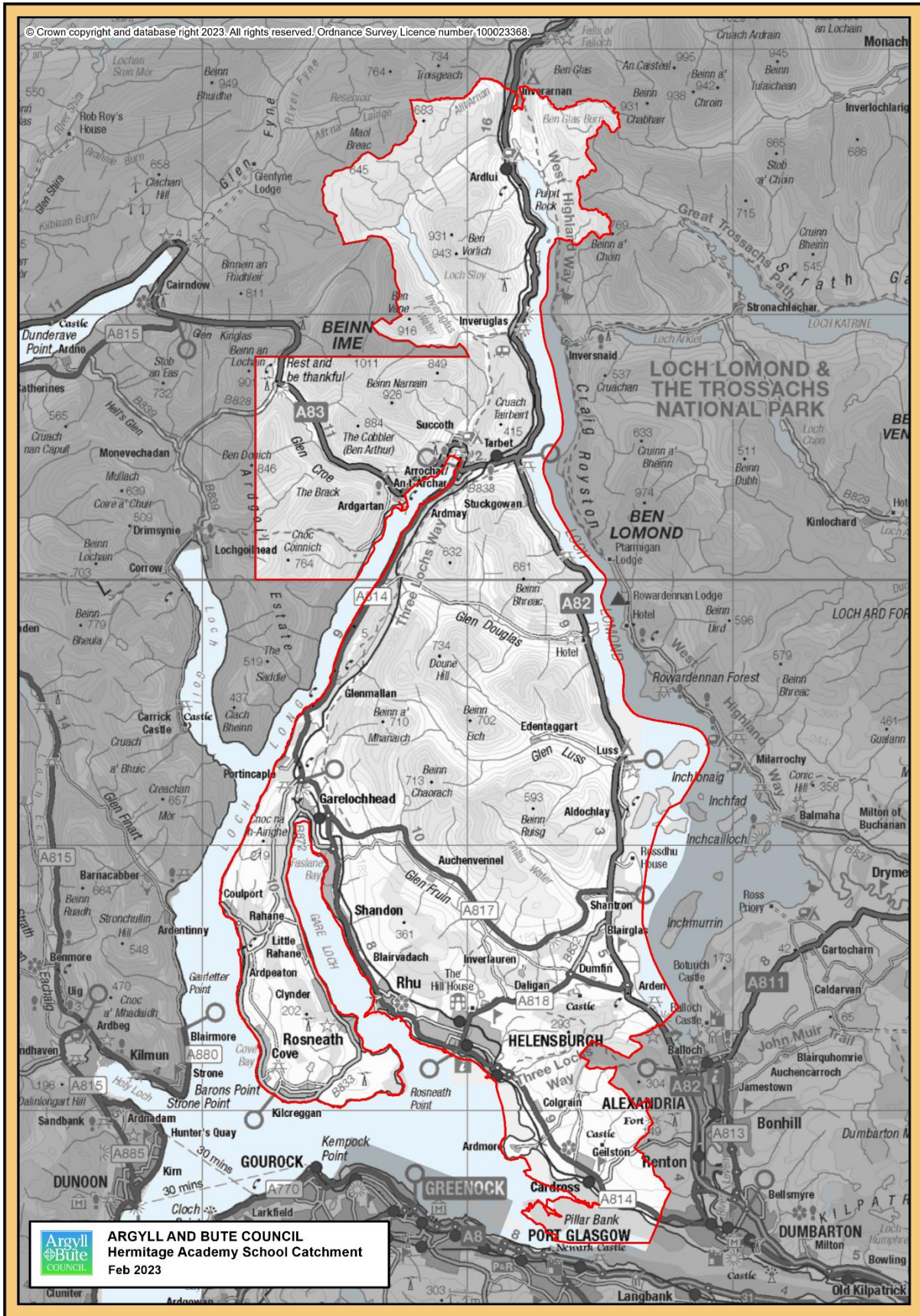
A copy of this proposal document will also be made available to:

- All Elected Members of Argyll and Bute Council representing the Helensburgh and Lomond area;
- Argyll and Bute Youth Forum;
- Education Scotland (formerly Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, HMIE);
- The Constituency MSP of the affected schools;
- List MSPs for the area of the affected schools;
- The MP for the area of the affected schools;
- Police Scotland;
- NHS Highland;
- Argyll and Bute School Transport;
- Senior Local Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Services, and
- Care Inspectorate

The steps listed below have also been taken to ensure that the proposal is widely available:

- The proposal document will also be published on the Argyll and Bute Council website;
- This document can be made available in alternative forms or translated by contacting Argyll House, Dunoon, telephone: 01369 708576 or argyllhouse@argyll-bute.gov.uk;
- The proposal paper will also be available at the following locations:
 - a) Council Offices
 - b) All libraries in Helensburgh and Lomond
 - c) All Helensburgh and Lomond area/locality offices
 - d) The schools affected by the proposal

Map detailing proposed catchment area for St Joseph's Primary School:



10. CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Education Service



Please use this form to let us know what you think about the proposal

You can complete this feedback form in Adobe Acrobat and print it out, or print and complete it by hand, using block capital letters. Return the form to: Customer Services: Education, Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon, PA23 8AJ
Or as an e-mail to argyllhouseception@argyll-bute.gov.uk.

The closing date for comments is **12th May 2023**.

Proposal

Argyll and Bute Council is seeking the views on the following proposal, namely:

- To rezone the catchment area of St Joseph's Primary School to cover the whole of the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

Name	
Address	

I agree with the proposal(please tick) Yes No Undecided

If you wish to comment on the proposal please use the space below, or attach another sheet

I am responding in my capacity as a (please indicate by ticking the appropriate box)

Parent/ carer of child at St Joseph's Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade Union	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent/ carer of child at affected primary school (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Elected representative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
St Joseph's PS Parent Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of the public/ community	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affected PS Parent Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Church	
Other Group	<input type="checkbox"/>	Details: _____	

Handling your response - Please note that:

- We will use the information you provide for the purpose(s) of this consultation, including statistical and analytical purposes;
- We will pass a full copy of your written response to Education Scotland or a summary of it if agreed with them; and
- We are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and therefore would have to consider any request made under that Act for information relating to written responses/ records of oral representations made to us relating to this consultation.

Electronic publication and additional copies

This consultation, and all other consultation exercises, can be viewed online on the consultation web pages of the Council website at:

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/consultations


Public internet can be accessed at your local library.

Thank you for taking time to respond.

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Argyll and Bute Council: Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

Section 1: About the proposal

Title of Proposal	
Proposal to extend the catchment area of St Joseph's Primary School	
Intended outcome of proposal	
The change to the catchment area that is proposed will result in St Joseph's Primary School's catchment area covering the whole of the Helensburgh and Lomond area.	
Description of proposal	
Implementation of the extended catchment area will ensure equity of access to denominational education to all within the Helensburgh and Lomond area.	
Business Outcome(s) / Corporate Outcome(s) to which the proposal contributes	
BO18: All our children and young people are supported to realise their potential. Corporate Outcome: Education, skills and training maximise opportunities for all.	
Lead officer details:	
Name of lead officer	Tina Sartain
Job title	Education Manager
Department	Education,
Appropriate officer details:	
Name of appropriate officer	Wendy Brownlie and Jennifer Crocket
Job title	Heads of Education
Department	Education
Sign off of EqSEIA	
Date of sign off	25/07/2023
Who will deliver the proposal?	
Education Service	

Section 2: Evidence used in the course of carrying out EqSEIA

Consultation / engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder responses as part of statutory consultation • Pupil engagement views • Parental engagement views • Views gathered at public meeting
Data

- School rolls
- Geographical location of pupils

Other information**Gaps in evidence**

None.

Section 3: Impact of proposal**Impact on service users:**

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:		x		
Age		x		
Disability		x		
Ethnicity		x		
Sex		x		
Gender reassignment		x		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		x		
Pregnancy and Maternity		x		
Religion			x	
Sexual Orientation		x		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population		x		
Island populations		x		
Low income		x		
Low wealth		x		
Material deprivation		x		
Area deprivation			x	
Socio-economic background		x		
Communities of place		x		
Communities of interest		x		

If you have identified any impacts on service users, explain what these will be.

Implementation of the extended catchment area will ensure equity of access to denominational education to all within the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

If any 'don't know's have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?**Impact on service deliverers (including employees, volunteers etc):**

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:		x		

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Age		X		
Disability		X		
Ethnicity		X		
Sex		X		
Gender reassignment		X		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		X		
Pregnancy and Maternity		X		
Religion			X	
Sexual Orientation		X		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population		X		
Island populations		X		
Low income		X		
Low wealth		X		
Material deprivation		X		
Area deprivation			X	
Socio-economic background		X		
Communities of place		X		
Communities of interest		X		

If you have identified any impacts on service deliverers, explain what these will be.

Implementation of the extended catchment area will ensure equity of access to denominational education to all within the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

If any 'don't know's have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?

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

Section 4: Interdependencies

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

No

Details of knock-on effects identified

Section 5: Monitoring and review

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

Ongoing engagement and feedback with St Joseph's Primary School and the other affected schools.

Monitoring of school rolls in the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

St Joseph's Public Consultation Meeting**St Joseph's Primary School****25 April 2023****Panel**

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director

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

Wendy Brownlie, Head of Education – Performance and Improvement

In attendance

Graeme McMillan - Transformation Programme Manager

Tina Sartain – Education Manager

Brendan Docherty – Education Manager

Mr Robert Hind – Education Scotland

Michelle Collins - Head Teacher of St Joseph's Primary School

Admin:

Fiona Ferguson – Directorate Support Officer

Laura Blackwood – Directorate Support Officer

1 parent

Welcome and introductions were made by Douglas Hendry.

Ms Crocket and Mrs Brownlie then spoke to a prepared presentation on the proposal this included, the background to the proposal, the reasons for the proposal the educational benefits which the Council believe would be achieved upon implementation of the proposal and information on how stakeholders can submit formal responses to the consultation.

Question 1

Who has discretionary power to agree transport to St Joseph's?

Panel Response

Panel advised that the transport service are responsible for arranging travel to school. It was suggested by the panel that this issue could be picked up at the end of the meeting as this meeting has been arranged in regard to extending the catchment area for St Joseph's.

Question 2

It's been over a year and a half since this was raised by Councillor Trail why has this taken so long?

Panel Response

Correct in your understanding. Councillor Trail did raise this at a Council meeting and this was referred to the Community Services Committee who, on 16th December 2021 agreed to take forward a statutory consultation to extend the catchment area for St Joseph's. You are also correct that there was a delay in this kicking off, as the Education Service was already involved in another large piece of work and officers did not have capacity to run these both at the same time.

Question 3

Is there a timescale which the Council must follow when a parental request is made to change the catchment area of a school, if so what is it?

Panel Response

The panel confirmed that a parental request does not in itself trigger a statutory duty to conduct a review of a catchment area under the 2010 Act.

Question 5

The issue of there being an empty seat on the mini bus which travels to school on the same route which this parent travels was raised again.

Panel Response

The panel advised that this was a matter for transport and not the Education Service.

Question 6

By what agreement can pupils go to Our Lady and St Patricks High School?

Panel Response

The panel advised that the right for all pupils in the Hermitage Academy catchment area to choose to attend Our Lady and St Patricks High School as a denominational school was established in 1995 at the time of disaggregation.

There were no further questions on the proposal and Ms Crocket suggested that a conversation with Michelle Collins and Brendan Docherty may be the best way to address the other issues which were raised tonight and this was agreed by the parent.

The parent in attendance wanted to have on record that she was refused transport for her son while she was being treated for cancer and has epilepsy.

Mr Hendry thanked those in attendance and closed the meeting at 7.40pm.

Appendix 5

St Joseph's Primary School Focus Groups

Both focus groups were undertaken by Tina Sartain on 24th April 2023 with Head Teacher, Michelle Collins, observing.

1. Pupil Focus Group – 5 x P6 pupils

Q1. Do you know about a consultation to change the boundary of your school catchment area that is being carried out by the council at the moment?

A. All pupils answered yes, they had learned about it in school.

Q2. What do you think about the fact that the catchment currently means that some pupils who may want to attend the school have to ask for this through a placing request?

A. Pupil 1: think it's not fair because people living in Luss might want to come to this school and they can't get catholic education if they want it.

Pupil 3: I think the catchment should be extended so that everyone can choose to come here

Pupil 4: It's not fair the way it is just now because if you live in Luss, or if you went to St Joseph's and the you moved to Luss, then you wouldn't be able to get the bus to come here and you would end up having to move schools and leave your friends. If your parents couldn't afford to pay for transport you would have to move to Luss Primary School and leave your friends but if you lived in another place you would be able to get the bus to school for free.

Pupil 2 and Pupil 5 were also in agreement that the catchment as it currently stands is unfair for people living in the Luss area who might want to attend St Josephs.

2. Parent/Staff Focus Group – Parent council chair and 2 parent council members, who are also staff.

Parent council chair was aware of current boundary status. He felt that if people were to find out that the choice of denominational education was being denied to some parents within a geographical area this could be politically contentious. The right of parents to access denominational education should be available to all within the catchment and the current situation should be remedied as soon as possible.

The other parents/staff members were unaware of the current boundary situation but were then in agreement with the chair that it requires to be changed and brought in line with the right of parents to choose Hermitage Academy or Our Lady and St Patricks.

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Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Argyll and Bute Council to rezone the catchment area of St Joseph's Primary School.

May 2023

1. Introduction

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

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 25 April 2023 in connection with the council's proposal;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
- visits to the site of St Joseph's Primary School and Luss Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Argyll and Bute Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The council undertook the consultation between 16 March and 12 May 2023. The council published information on the proposal on their website. Information about the proposal was made available to stakeholders including children, parents and carers of the schools affected by the proposal. The council facilitated discussions with the children and Parent Council from St Joseph's Primary School and they all agreed with the proposal. One parent attended the public meeting at St Joseph's Primary School who supported the proposal. They queried the delay in proceeding with the catchment review. The council acknowledge they progressed with the proposal following further representation from St Joseph's Primary School Parent Council. Argyll and Bute Council received no written responses in relation to this statutory consultation.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council sets out a clear rationale for extending the catchment area for St Joseph's Primary School to cover the whole of the Helensburgh and Lomond area from August 2023. They believe that children from a wider geographical area will have the opportunity to attend a denominational school. There are currently three children living in the portion of Helensburgh and Lomond area out with the catchment who chose to attend St Joseph's Primary School through a placing request. If the council proceeds with the proposal, all children who reside in the rezoned catchment area would have the ability to attend St Joseph's Primary School or their local non-denominational school. This would reduce potential barriers such as payment for travel to school and the need for placing requests. HM Inspectors agree that this will also offer additional educational choice and resolve an inherited catchment anomaly. The council has also considered the implications for the local communities of the affected primary schools. They acknowledge that this may lead to a reduction in school rolls for pupils of these schools.

3.2 HM Inspectors met with stakeholders in the two schools most likely to be affected by the proposal. All children, staff and parents were supportive of the proposed changes to the catchment area. Children at St Joseph Primary school understand the benefits from a potential increase in the number of children attending. They particularly welcome opportunities for increased friendships for a larger geographical area. Children from Luss Primary School who met with HM Inspectors expressed some concern about the potential negative impact that this may have on their school roll. They believe their school playground could be adapted to be more inclusive for children with additional support needs. Should the council proceed with the proposal, HM Inspectors recommend that they work with schools and communities to mitigate any likely negative impact.

3.3 HM Inspectors discussed potential education benefits with parents from St Joseph's Primary School. They value the opportunity to send their children to the closest school and agree this adds to the diversity, strength and vibrancy of the school. Parents and carers from Luss Primary School were given the opportunity to speak with HM Inspectors. However, no one attended. The two headteachers had each discussed the proposals with their respective Parent Councils and they reported that there were no concerns raised regarding the council's proposal.

3.4 HM Inspectors discussed the proposal with a representative from the Roman Catholic Church in Helensburgh who is in favour of the proposal. They believe this will reduce financial burden on families who currently pay for school transport. They agree that the new catchment area will present increased opportunities for children to experience a faith-based curriculum and will strengthen St Joseph's Primary School.

4. Summary

Overall, Argyll and Bute Council have set out a clear rationale for rezoning all of the Helensburgh and Lomond area to St Joseph's Primary School. All stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors are in favour of the proposal. The council's proposal, should it proceed, will decrease the need for placing requests and reduce the need for parents to pay for school transport. HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has potential educational benefits and will offer greater parental choice.

In taking forward the proposal, the council would benefit from working with stakeholders to consider solutions which may alleviate accessibility concerns at Luss Primary School. This could enhance the sustainability of schools in the area.

HM Inspectors
May 2023

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
CUSTOMER SUPPORT SERVICES

COMMUNITY SERVICES
24 AUGUST 2023

GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Council has a duty under the Gaelic Language Act to prepare and deliver a Gaelic Language Plan. As part of this duty, the Council must complete and submit a monitoring report on progress against the plan on an annual basis in a format determined by Bòrd na Gaidhlig.

This report provides Community Services Committee with this detail of this year's progress update on the plan as submitted to Bòrd na Gaidhlig.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to

- 2.1 Note the progress being made on the plan.
- 2.2 Note that this progress report relates to the plan prior to the agreed changes mandated by the Minister in December 2022.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The Council is required to prepare and monitor a Gaelic Language Plan and to provide regular updates on progress to Bòrd na Gaidhlig.
- 3.2 This report provides Community Services Committee with this detail of this year's progress update on the plan as submitted to Bòrd na Gaidhlig. It relates to the plan prior to the amendments mandated by the Minister in December 2022.
- 3.3 Members should note the good progress being made against the plan.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 This report provides assurance to the Community Service Committee of the progress being made in delivering the Gaelic Language Plan and the Council's adherence to its duty under the Gaelic Language Act.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy - None

6.2 Financial - None

6.3 Legal – The paper demonstrates the Council's compliance with the requirements of the Gaelic Language Act.

6.4 HR - None

6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:

6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – Positive impact on those speaking a minority language

6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – Positive impact on remote and island communities and businesses where Gaelic is spoken

6.5.3 Islands – Positive impact on those islands where Gaelic is spoken.

6.6 Climate Change - None

6.7 Risk - None

6.8 Customer Service – All customer contacts received in Gaelic are replied to in Gaelic

Kirsty Flanagan

Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services

Policy Lead Robin Currie

06.07.2023

For further information contact: Jane Fowler, Head of Customer Support Services

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Gaelic Language Progress Report

Appendix 1

BÒRD NA GàIDHLIG

FOIRM DÀTA BLIADHNAIL 2021-22
ANNUAL RETURN FORM 2021-22

Ainm na buidhne Organisation's name	Argyll & Bute Council
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Prìomh Dhàta Measaidh
Primary Indicator Data

Fios bhon Phoball Communications from the Public	Cia mheud brath sgrìobhte a fhuair am buidheann bhon phoball ann an Gàidhlig am-bliadhna? How many written communications have the organisation received from the public in Gaelic this year?	2
A' sgaoileadh fiosrachaidh Dissemination of information	Cia mheud pìos a sgaoil am buidheann air na meadhanan sòisealta ann an Gàidhlig am-bliadhna? How many posts did the organisation distribute on social media in Gaelic this year?	Approximately 10 per month on Facebook – posted both in the Argyll Gaelic Forum Group and on the Argyll Gaelic Forum page.
	Cia mheud fios-naidheachd a chaidh a sgaoileadh leis a' bhuidheann anns a' Ghàidhlig am-bliadhna? How many press releases did the organisation publish in Gaelic this year?	0 Engagement with press releases was extremely low compared with the positive interaction on social media Gaelic posts, so we have increased effort in that area.
Luchd-obrach Staff	Cia meud neach-obrach a fhuair cothrom trèanaidh ann an sgìlean Gàidhlig am-bliadhna? How many staff received Gaelic skills training this year?	14
	Cia mheud dreuchd a th' agaibh an-dràsta far a bheil Gàidhlig ann mar sgil riatanach? How many posts do you currently have where Gaelic is an essential skill?	41 24 were advertised bilingually with bilingual job descriptions, information for applicants, Head Teacher reports (if applicable) and PVG information attachments. 19 were advertised with Gaelic as Essential. 17 Gaelic Teacher

	<p>posts advertised used the general teacher post with the job description in Gaelic. Gaelic is essential for all posts that have Gaelic in the job title.</p>
<p>Cia mheud neach-obrach a th' agaibh an-dràsta aig a bheil sgilean Gàidhlig? How many staff currently within the organisation have Gaelic skills?</p>	<p>All GME teachers have Gaelic skills, as do our Gaelic Development Worker, Furan co-ordinator and Education Officer for Gaelic. A short survey was undertaken in in 2022 to ascertain skill levels and demand for classes</p>

Foillseachaidh ean Publications	Cia mheud foillseachadh a dh'fhoillsich am buidheann gu dà-chananach am-bliadhna? How many organisational publications have been published bilingually (Gaelic and English) this year?	0
Inbhe Status	Cia mheud soidhne dà-chànanach a chuir am buidheann an àirde am-bliadhna? How many bilingual signs has the organisation erected this year?	All Council signs are bilingual. Mid Argyll, 66 bilingual signs installed. Kintyre, 29 bilingual signs installed. Islay, 43 bilingual signs purchased but yet to be installed due to resource issues. Mull - 18 x bilingual signs installed Helensburgh / Lomond - 9 Bute – 11 Cowal – 89

Prìomhachasan a' Phlana Cànan Nàiseanta Gàidhlig National Gaelic Language Plan Priorities

Cleachdadh na Gàidhlig / Using Gaelic

Ciamar a tha a' bhuidhinn a' toirt fàs air cleachdadh na Gàidhlig?

How is the organisation increasing the use of Gaelic?

Furan Gaelic Centre and the Gaelic Administrator continue to provide crucial support to both Education and the wider Gaelic community.

During Academic Session 22/23 the administrator has provided weekly online Bookbug sessions for Sgoiltean-Àraich across the LA as well as in-person delivery in Strath of Appin PS, Rockfield PS and in Furan on a Saturday. The sessions have been well received with Duncan MacNeil receiving a Highly Commended Reward from the Scottish Books Council.

Moving forward, Duncan will provide in-person support to Bowmore GME and Tìree GME in Term 1 of the next academic session. This will enable him to build relationships with both pupils and staff to facilitate future support for Mòd tuition, delivered virtually.

The Parental Advocacy (Advisory) Scheme in partnership with Comann nam Pàrant no longer exists, as there are no parental officers paid by CnP to encourage parents to consider GME. Individual schools continue to liaise very closely with local CnP members and teaching staff regularly attend meetings. Most GME provisions across the LA provide information opportunities for prospective parents – many as part of the school registration process. Parents of GM pupils at ELC, Primary and Secondary are invited to attend 'sharing of learning' sessions – please see Islay High School's response as an example of good practice (attached as separate document).

Secondary schools still face challenges regarding the offer of GM delivery in other curricular areas. Oban High School and Tìree High School continue to liaise virtually to maximise the GM offer to students. Islay High School has worked very closely with e-Sgoil this session to afford GM students the opportunity to sit National 5 Gàidhlig.

It is now embedded that all schools delivering GME have a Gaelic Education specific target within the school's Improvement Plan which is reported on annually via the Standards and Quality report. Gaelic provisions, at all levels, across the authority are making good use of both local and national networks to enhance and enrich the GM curriculum offer to students.

All island schools and schools with a dual GM and EM stream deliver Gaelic as L2. This work is embedded with schools delivering a specific GLE aspect of transition to high school. There has been a significant focus on supporting schools across the whole LA to deliver Gaelic as L3 from the Languages 1+2 Co-ordinator. This has been supported through partnership working with The Northern Alliance and language specialists nationally. Schools have been offered regular support from e-Sgoil and FèisSgoil. The up-take from schools is encouraging and further work will be undertaken in academic session 2023/24 to maximise the impact of this project and encourage schools within areas that do not deliver GME to engage.

Schools delivering GME are cognisant of the need to enrich their learner's curriculum through meaningful connections with the wider Gaelic speaking community. The majority of primary schools engage with their Gaelic speaking communities through partnership working, information sharing opportunities and outreach work.

Ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig / Learning Gaelic

Ciamar a tha a' bhuidhinn a' toirt fàs air ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig?

How is the organisation increasing the learning of Gaelic?

As previously stated, all GM provision in primary and some in secondary, provide opportunities for parents and carers, both existing and potential, to engage with the school to learn more about the children's learning and the opportunities for GM students to use Gaelic as part of a career choice. Partnership working with colleagues representing the Islands and Repopulation Scheme, using a grant from the Scottish Government, will link Fèisean nan Gàidheal with schools in Coll, Tiree and Bute to highlight the career opportunities for Gaelic speakers. This work will commence in Session 2023/24: Using a grant from The Scottish Government's Islands and Repopulation Scheme, the council has engaged Fèisean nan Gàidheal's formal education service, Fèisgoil, to offer island schools (on Coll, Tiree and Bute only) the opportunity to engage in a special one-off workshop in the new academic session, showcasing different opportunities available for learners and speakers of the language through a variety of contemporary industries.

Secondary GM and GL students have engaged in online Career Information sessions with SDS, e-Sgoil and A&B since the last monitoring report to BnG.

Delivering regular Gaelic Bookbug sessions in all areas with Gaelic Medium Education (GME). Bookbug sessions being delivered by the Furan Gaelic Administrator in Session 2022/23 in Oban, Appin and Dunoon across the course of the academic year. Weekly online Bookbug sessions for all ELC children across the LA delivered every Tuesday afternoon. Uptake is consistently good and Early Years are looking to provide Gaelic Bookbug training to practitioners so that each area can deliver in-person sessions.

All children transitioning from a GM ELC to P1 GME have experienced a Gaelic specific transition project – based on the book; 'The Everywhere Bear'. The Gaelic Administrator was instrumental in translating the book to Gaelic and was filmed delivering the story for use across all settings.

In rural settings P7 / S1 transition for GM pupils in on-going with opportunities for secondary staff to

teach in primary settings and for pupils to visit their receiving secondary school on a regular basis.

There is a continued focus on supporting schools across the authority to employ Gaelic as L3. The L1+2 Co-ordinator has worked in partnership with colleagues nationally to produce a wide range of interactive teaching resources, including the use of 'live' digital delivery. The bank of resources for non-Gaelic specialist teachers continues to grow and the LA is beginning to see the positive outcome for Gaelic language learning in all areas including those who, historically, have not delivered Gaelic Education previously.

Education continues to liaise with An Comunn Gàidhealach (CnaG). There is an Iomairt officer in Islay who supports the students to enter FilmG annually. Unfortunately CnaG have not been able to recruit an officer to the Oban area, although the funding from the LA/ BnG remains with CnP an Òbain. This situation is reviewed by CnaG on an annual basis.

Providing access to partnership specialist school support staff; the staged intervention process is followed regardless of educational medium. Children as much as possible are supported by Gaelic speaking staff. Children are supported in English only if necessary. All GME primary provisions have a Gaelic language auxiliary in post to support the fluency and learning of pupils.

Providing CLPL opportunities for all Gaelic Education staff - GME teaching staff were offered online training in the use of standardised assessments (MCNG). Uptake from primary practitioners was encouraging. Further training opportunities in MCNG will be offered in session 23/24.

The LA and Education Scotland delivered training in the use of the Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action resource (POLAAR) at the Scottish Learning Festival in 2021/22 and as a 'twilight' training for managers and class teachers this session.

There is a Gaelic Moderation Platform for primary GM practitioners to enable a collegiate approach to planning, teaching and assessment. Next session will see further opportunities for staff across the LA to 'partner' and work together to support best practice.

All secondary practitioners have worked in 'working groups' to moderate students' work at an SQA level with Islay HS including moderation activities for BGE. There has been a Progression Pathway for 3rd Level Gaelic Literacy produced for use across the LA.

The Local Authority continues to respond to requests for GMPE as per 2016 legislation. There is information for parents on the council's website. There have been no requests made since Bunesan in 2016.

Continuing to support those teachers in English Medium who wish to transfer to the Gaelic Medium sector by undertaking the Gaelic Immersion for Teachers course (GIFT) or equivalent. The provision replacing GIFT has been widely shared and publicised across all schools in the authority, and prospective applicants have been advised appropriately re strict BnG criteria for entry. No uptake at present. Further discussion with BnG ongoing re potential pathways into Gaelic teaching – there are a number of staff interested in this opportunity but none can commit to leaving home to study in Glasgow. There would be significant up-take if this offer were to become a distance learning course again.

A'cur air adhart na Gàidhlig / Promoting Gaelic

Ciamar a tha a' buidhinn a' cur deagh iomhaigh air adhart airson na Gàidhlig?

How is the organisation promoting a positive image of Gaelic?

Offering free Live Argyll venues for local provincial mods. This is in place and ongoing.

Promoting opportunities for Gaelic staff to work collaboratively across the Council to ensure a shared standard of achievement; the Gaelic Moderation Platform contains relevant documentation to support the effective delivery of GME and enables staff from across the LA to collaborate to ensure a shared understanding of standards.

The Gaelic Administrator in Furan continues to support primary schools in Oban with Mòd tuition – next session will see this opportunity delivered online to include pupils from across the LA.

Most GM primary pupils have attended their local Mòd with some travelling a significant distance to attend the Oban Mòd – Sandbank PS in Dunoon.

Hosting a successful Royal National Mod (RNM). Council has an annual grant in place with An Comunn for the RNM to take place in Oban in 2024.

Including Gaelic in the CHArts (Culture Heritage and the Arts) initiative. This is complete and is reviewed annually. Gaelic culture is included in the vision, branding, manifesto, mission, and social and physical inclusion documents. CHARTS has a Gaelic representative on the CHArts Steering group and now has a p/t Gaelic Culture Officer in post. This allows a strong Gaelic link into the development and delivery of projects. The Gaelic Culture Officer is developing a Gaelic Culture Strategy which will be complete in 2022/23.

Work with others to actively promote participation in the Royal National Mod. We have begun work with Royal National Mod committee/local Mod committee and partners in the run up to the Mod in 2024.

In particular we have established a working group to promote Gaelic to businesses with the aim of businesses providing a Gaelic welcome to those participating and attending the RNM.

Securing a higher profile and visibility for Gaelic and bilingualism in commercial, retail, food and drink and in tourism sectors. As appropriate Business Gateway Advisers will signpost businesses to bodies such as HIE and Bòrd na Gàidhlig that provide funding to businesses for promotion activity in Gaelic. The RNM Oban 2024 in Oban working group promoting Gaelic to businesses will also deliver this target.

Include the Gaelic language in the promotion of Argyll and Bute as a tourism destination. Bòrd na Gàidhlig has provided funding to VisitScotland to create and co-ordinate a Gaelic Tourism Strategy which includes the Argyll and Bute area.

Maximise the economic impact of Gaelic at events/festivals held in Argyll and Bute. The Council's Strategic Events and Festivals Grant funded 18 festivals that took place in the financial year 21/22. These included many Gaelic culture festivals such as Cowal Gathering, MOK Fest Argyll Gathering and many more.

Assisting in the development of the economic impact of the Royal National Mod. The Economic evaluation report commissioned by An Comunn Gàidhealach has been delivered.

Promoting Argyll and Bute as a place to undertake Film and TV work that involves Gaelic language and culture.

5 Gaelic Newsletters created and sent between December 2022 and June 2023 to 109 subscribers.

Work in partnership with Highlands and Islands Enterprise as in the development of Ar Stòras Gàidhlig. The council works with HIE and a range of partners to deliver on the foundational 'Ar Storas Gaidlig'. The council and partners established the Argyll and Bute Gaelic Partnership, to deliver key actions which were agreed as a result of the 2022 Gaelic Gathering. The council is also working in partnership regarding Gaelic through regular meetings with HIE Creative Industries and CHARTS, and is developing (2023) a project with partners to promote Gaelic to businesses in Oban ahead of the Royal National Mod in 2024.

Involving Bòrd na Gàidhlig in Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership. Ongoing.

Increasing Gaelic content on 'The Hub' and website. Ongoing.

Promoting good news stories in and relating to Gaelic. Ongoing.

Ensuring mail and email received in Gaelic will be responded to in Gaelic. Ongoing.

Ensuring complaints received in Gaelic are responded to in Gaelic within timescale. Ongoing.

Ensuring the bilingual welcome for Council Reception staff is standard. Ongoing.

Opening Committee meetings with a Gaelic greeting. Ongoing.

Including Gaelic media organisations in the distribution of all council press releases. Ongoing.

Increase the general community's knowledge and understanding of the benefits and aims of Gaelic/the Gaelic Plan in Argyll and Bute through the Gaelic Forum Facebook Page, other social media and Gaelic Medium units and the Gaelic Gathering/Gaelic Forum/Partnership. Ongoing.

Fiosrachadh dearcnachaidh eile
Other monitoring information

A' brosnachadh Foghlam Gàidhlig
Promotion of Gaelic Education

Chan fheum ach Ùghdarrasan Ionadail seo a lìonadh a-steach
 For Local Authorities only to complete

Fo Earrainn 15 de dh'Achd an Fhoghlaim (Alba) 2016, feumaidh ùghdarrasan ionadail aig a bheil foghlam Gàidhlig anns an sgìre aca seo a shanasachd ann an dòigh iomchaidh. Feumaidh gach ùghdarras ionadail sanasachd a dhèanamh air na còraichean a th' aig pàrantan gus tagradh a dhèanamh airson foghlam Gàidhlig aig ìre na bun-sgoile agus foghlam luchd-ionnsachaidh na Gàidhlig a stèidheachadh. Ciamar a tha sibh a' coileanadh an dleistanais seo?

Under Section 15 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, local authorities which already provide Gaelic education in their area must take reasonable steps to promote this. All local authorities must take reasonable steps to promote the rights which parents have under the Act to make a request for Gaelic Medium Primary Education and the potential provision of Gaelic Learner Education. Could you tell us how you are undertaking this?

There is clear and easily found guidance on this on the Council's website [Requests for Gaelic Medium Education \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](http://argyll-bute.gov.uk)

Pàrantan Corporra
Corporate Parenting

Chan fheum ach Pàrantan Corporra seo a lìonadh a-steach
 For Corporate Parents only to complete

Am b' urrainn dhuibh dàta a thoirt dhuinn air an àireimh de dhaoine òga le Gàidhlig a tha, no a tha air a bhith, fo chùram a tha clàraichte leis an Ùghdarras.

Please provide data on the number of Gaelic-speaking care experienced young people registered with the Authority.

We currently have no Gaelic speaking care experienced young people in the authority.

Am b' urrainn dhuibh fiosrachadh a thoirt dhuinn air tachartasan no cothroman a tha sibh a' cur air dòigh airson daoine òga le Gàidhlig a tha, no a tha air a bhith, fo chùram a tha clàraichte leis an Ùghdarras. Please provide information on activities or opportunities you provide for Gaelic-speaking care experienced young people.

Gaelic speaking young people have access to all the Gaelic speaking activities of mainstream pupils in A&B. Additionally we have connections through the Young Islanders Network which is predominantly based in Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar and through these they can access Gaelic activity if desired/required.

If a young person required anything beyond that we would negotiate with CNES for further access through Esgoil.

Co-ionannachd Equalities

Bu chòir don a h-uile buidheann seo a lìonadh a-steach

For all organisations to complete

An do chomharraich an t-ùghdarras poblach agaibh cùisean sònraichte sam bith co-cheangailte ri co-ionannachd chothroman a thaobh leasachadh na Gàidhlig? Has your public authority identified any particular issues relating to equality of opportunity with regard to the development of Gaelic language?

Geographical remoteness from centres of learning due to the remote and island nature of our council area. ICT and remote delivery of classes, conversation and networking opportunities, which were increased during Covid, are contributing to tackling this barrier.

A bheil poileasaidhean, modhan-obrach no dòighean-obrach sam bith co-cheangailte ri co-ionannachd a chaidh a chur an gnìomh leis an ùghdarras phoblach agaibh, no a tha gan cur an gnìomh an-dràsta, a bhuineas ri bhith a' cur co-ionannachd chothroman air adhart an lùib leasachadh na Gàidhlig? An inns sibh dhuinn mun deidhinn?

Are there any equalities policies, procedures or measures that have been implemented by your public authority, or are in the process of being implemented, that are relevant to advancing the equality of opportunity in the development of Gaelic language? Can you tell us about them?

Geographical distance and teacher recruitment are the main challenges to learning Gaelic, as well as other subjects, in Argyll and Bute. We have 23 inhabited islands and many small communities and the availability of specifically qualified teachers varies from location to location. In order to overcome these barriers, we have been developing use of ICT connectivity across all areas of services that we deliver. We are actively developing a leading approach to the use of remote classroom learning, where young people can join their peers and teacher in different physical learning centres to learn language, or any other subject, together. This has an important positive impact on inclusion and removing geographical barriers and is essential to maximizing the impact of pressurized resources and improve accessibility right across our very large and complex geography.

In terms of community learning of Gaelic, through our survey, people have told us that their preferred way of learning is engaging in online and mostly for social or hobby purposes. More detail on this will be reported in the next monitoring report.

A bheil eisimpleirean ann de cheumannan sònraichte a ghabh sibh gus piseach a thoirt air in-ghabhail agus com-pàirteachas a tha air obrachadh gu sònraichte math a thaobh leasachadh na Gàidhlig taobh a-staigh an ùghdarrais phoblaich agaibh? An inns sibh dhuinn nam biodh sibh toilichte nan sgaoileadh Bòrd na Gàidhlig na h-eisimpleirean agaibh agus nan dèanamaid sanasachd orra.

Are there examples of implementing specific measures to improve inclusivity or engagement that have worked particularly well regarding Gaelic language development for your public authority? Please indicate if you would be happy for Bòrd na Gàidhlig to share and promote the examples provided.

The Argyll Gaelic gathering has been very well received. We have held three - the most recent of which was in 2022. This has brought together people interested in Gaelic language and culture from across Argyll and Scotland. The sharing of interest in and use of the language has highlighted the rich diversity of the Argyll dialects, from Tiree and Islay to Mid Argyll and Cowal.

The appointment of a Gaelic Development Worker, supported by GLAIF, has had a positive impact on increased numbers of social media promotions and engagements, the carrying out of a Gaelic survey to gauge areas of interest and the introduction of online music events to showcase musical talent from Argyll. The post holder also gathered and analysed the results of the engagement work at the Gathering and associated survey work, which has resulted in a comprehensive Gaelic Community Action Plan that has been taken forward by our Gaelic Development Worker (part time), supported by the Gaelic CHArts officer (part time) with other partners contributing. This has brought momentum to community connections around Gaelic in Argyll and Bute, both virtually and in person. The plan is monitored at our Gaelic Policy Lead meeting.

Amasan airson Seirbhisean Corporra	Corporate Service Aims			
Àrd Phrionnsabalan	Overarching Principles			
<p>Spèis Cho-ionann A h-uile gealladh anns a' phlana Ghàidhlig air a lìbhrigeadh dhan aon ìre anns a' Ghàidhlig agus anns a' Bheurla.</p>	<p>Equal Respect Gaelic language plan commitments delivered to an equal standard in both Gaelic and English.</p>	All correspondence or other approach in Gaelic is responded to in Gaelic		
<p>Cothroman Follaiseach Gnìomhan practaigeach gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil fios aig luchd-obrach na buidhne agus am poball daonna air na cothroman a th' ann agus Gàidhlig a chleachdadh leis an ùghdarras phoblach.</p>	<p>Active Offer Practical measures to ensure that staff and public are kept regularly informed of all opportunities that exist to use Gaelic in relation to the work of the public authority.</p>	Our Gaelic facebook page and group continue to grow with excellent interactions by communities and employees		
<p>Treas Phàrtaidhean A' dearbhadh gum bi ALEOs agus cunnraidhean eile ag obair gus plana Gàidhlig an ùghdarras phoblach a chur an gnìomh.</p>	<p>Third Parties Ensure that Arm's Length Executive Organisations and other contractors help with the delivery of the public authority Gaelic language plan.</p>	LiveArgyll support local Mod venues		
<p>Gàidhlig na nì àbhaisteach Geallaidhean bhon phlana Ghàidhlig air an gabhail a-steach ann an structaran an ùghdarras phoblach tro thìde, le sgrùdadh cunbhalach airson cothroman a chomharrachadh taobh a-staigh bhuidseatan stèidhichte gus Gàidhlig a thoirt air adhart.</p>	<p>Normalisation Gaelic plan commitments are normalised within the structures of the public authority over time, with opportunities to grow Gaelic within existing budgets constantly assessed.</p>	We take a continuous improvement approach to appropriate normalisation of Gaelic		
<p>Pàrantan Corporra Gu bheillear mothachail air na dleastanasan a th' ann mar Pàrant Corporra gum bi a h-uile pàiste is neach òg fo chùram no a b' àbhaist a bhith fo chùram le Gàidhlig a' faighinn na h-aon cothroman 's a tha clann le cànan eile.</p>	<p>Corporate Parenting That the authority is aware of the duties of a Corporate Parent to ensure that looked after children and young people and care leavers with Gaelic receive the same opportunities as those with other languages.</p>	Although we currently have no Gaelic speaking care experienced young people, tThe Council is aware through the CEO and CSWO		

Inbhe	Status			
<p>Suaicheantas Ag amas air suaicheantas corporra anns a’ Ghàidhlig agus anns a’ Bheurla a chruthachadh nuair a thig a’ chiad chothrom agus mar phàirt den phròiseas ùrachaidh.</p>	<p>Logo Aim to render the corporate logo in both Gaelic and English at the first opportunity and as part of any renewal process.</p>	A draft logo has been developed and is making its way through governance processes		
<p>Soidhnichean Prìomh shoidhnichean air an dèanamh dà-chànanach nuair a thathar gan ùrachadh.</p>	<p>Signage Prominent signage will include Gaelic and English as part of any renewal process.</p>	All signage is bilingual – see earlier measure		
Conaltradh leis a’ phoball	Communicating with the public			
<p>Brosnachadh Teachdaireachdan gu bheil fàilte air conaltradh sa Ghàidhlig bhon poball daonnan.</p>	<p>Promotion Positive message that communication from the public in Gaelic is always welcome.</p>	In place		
<p>Conaltradh sgrìobhte Fàilte ga cur air conaltradh sgrìobhte sa Ghàidhlig (post, post-d agus meadhanan sòisealta) daonnan agus bidh freagairt ann sa Ghàidhlig, a rèir clàr-ama conaltraidh àbhaisteach na buidhne.</p>	<p>Written Communication Written communication in Gaelic is always accepted (post, email and social media) and replies will be provided in Gaelic in accordance with the general policy.</p>	In place		
<p>Ionad-fàilte agus am fòn Far a bheil luchd-obrach le Gàidhlig ann airson seo a thoirt seachad, gheibh iad taic airson seo a dhèanamh agus thèid sanasachd a dhèanamh air t-seirbheis dhan phoball.</p>	<p>Reception and phone Where Gaelic speaking staff are capable of providing this service, they are supported to do so and the service is promoted to the public.</p>	In place where employees speak Gaelic		
<p>Coinneamhan Cothroman airson coinneamhan dà-chànanach no sa Ghàidhlig a chumail air an rannsachadh gu cunbhalach agus air am brosnachadh.</p>	<p>Public meetings Opportunities to hold public meetings bilingually or in Gaelic are regularly explored and promoted.</p>	This is picked up particularly around meetings on the Gaelic Gathering and Gaelic Partnership		

Fiosrachadh	Information			
<p>Fiosan-naidheachd Prìomh fhiosan-naidheachd agus fiosan-naidheachd mu dheidhinn na Gàidhlig air an cuairteachadh sa Ghàidhlig agus sa Beurla.</p>	<p>News releases High profile news releases and all news releases related to Gaelic are circulated in both Gaelic and English.</p>	<p>We have found engagement to be much better through social media, so have focused on increasing accessibility and reach there rather than in press releases which had extremely limited reach</p>		
<p>Meadhanan sòisealta Stuth Gàidhlig ga sgaoileadh tro na meadhanan sòisealta gu cunbhalach, le stiùir bho ìre cleachdaidh no cleachdadh a dh'fhaodadh a bhith ann.</p>	<p>Social Media Gaelic content distributed regularly through social media, guided by the level of actual and potential users</p>	<p>Argyll Gaelic Forum fb page and group (20+) Argyll Gaelic Forum Facebook</p>		
<p>Làrach-lìn Stuth Gàidhlig air làrach-lìn an ùghdarrais phoblaich, le prìomhachas air na duilleagan le faicsinneachd mhòr.</p>	<p>Website Gaelic content should be available on the public authority's website, with emphasis given to the pages with the highest potential reach.</p>	<p>Gaelic in Argyll and Bute - Gàidhlig ann an Earra-Ghàidheal is Bòd Argyll and Bute Council (argyll-bute.gov.uk)</p>		
<p>Irisean Corporra Irisean corporra sa Ghàidhlig agus Beurla le prìomhachas air sgrìobhainnean le faicsinneachd mhòr.</p>	<p>Corporate Publications Produced in Gaelic and English, with priority given to those with the highest potential reach.</p>	<p>Where appropriate publications are bilingual</p>		
<p>Taisbeanaidhean Cothroman airson taisbeanaidhean dà-chànanach no sa Ghàidhlig a chumail air an rannsachadh gu cunbhalach agus air am brosnachadh, le prìomhachas air an fheadhainn aig a bheil a' bhuaidh as motha.</p>	<p>Exhibitions Opportunities to deliver public exhibitions bilingually or in Gaelic should be explored on a regular basis, with priority given to those with the highest potential impact.</p>	<p>Being taken forward by CHArts</p>		
Corpas na Gàidhlig	Gaelic Language Corpus			
<p>Gnàthachas Litreachaidh na Gàidhlig Leanaidh an t-ùghdarras Poblach Gnàthachas Litreachaidh na Gàidhlig as ùire mar stiùir airson a h-uile rud sgrìobhte aca.</p>	<p>Gaelic Orthographic Conventions The most recent Gaelic Orthographic Conventions will be followed in relation to all written materials produced by the public authority.</p>	<p>In place</p>		

Luchd-obrach	Staff			
<p>Sgrùdadh Luchd-obrach Sgrùdadh cunbhalach air sgilean Gàidhlig agus iarrtasan airson trèanadh Gàidhlig tro bheatha gach plana.</p>	<p>Internal audit Conduct an internal audit of Gaelic skills and training needs through the life of each plan.</p>	<p>Following a drop off of interest and attendance, engagement carried out in 2023 on appetite for Gaelic Skills Development. Audit will be carried out during life of new plan. The findings were submitted to BnG in support of a Gaelic Language Plans Grant bid in 2023.</p>		
<p>Inntrigeadh Eòlas air a' phlana Ghàidhlig mar phàirt den phròiseas inntrigidh.</p>	<p>Induction Knowledge of the public authority's Gaelic language plan included in new staff inductions</p>	<p>The induction programme is currently being reviewed</p>		
<p>Trèanadh cànan Trèanadh ann an sgilean Gàidhlig ga thabhan agus ga bhrosnachadh, gu sònraichte a thaobh a bhith a' cur plana Gàidhlig na buidhne an gnìomh.</p>	<p>Language training Gaelic language skills training and development offered to staff, particularly in relation to implementing the public authority's Gaelic language plan.</p>	<p>Currently reviewing our approach to Gaelic language learning in the workplace with a view to taking a new approach in 2023</p>		
<p>Trèanadh le Fiosrachadh mun Ghàidhlig Trèanadh le fiosrachadh mun Ghàidhlig, le prìomhachas air stiùirichean, buill bùird, comhairlichean agus luchd-obrach air a bheil dleastanas a bhith a' conaltradh leis a' mhòr-shluagh.</p>	<p>Awareness training Gaelic awareness training offered to staff, with priority given to directors, board members, councillors and staff dealing directly with the public.</p>	<p>After a tail off in interest, a new approach will be implemented from 2023 with new opportunities for senior staff and decision makers</p>		
<p>Fastadh A' toirt aithne is spèis do sgilean Gàidhlig mar phàirt den phròiseas fhastaidh.</p>	<p>Recruitment Recognising and respecting Gaelic skills within the recruitment process.</p>	<p>In place</p>		
<p>Gàidhlig ainmichte mar sgil a tha na buannachd agus/no a tha riatanach gus seirbheisean Gàidhlig a libhrigeadh agus a rèir na comhairle laghail aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig.</p>	<p>Gaelic named as an essential and / or desirable skill in job descriptions in order to deliver the Gaelic language plan and in accordance with the Bòrd na Gàidhlig recruitment advice.</p>	<p>In place for appropriate roles</p>		
<p>Sanasan-obrach dà-chànanach no sa Ghàidhlig airson dreuchdan far a bheil Gàidhlig ainmichte mar sgil riatanach.</p>	<p>Bilingual or Gaelic only job adverts for all posts where Gaelic is an essential skill.</p>	<p>In place</p>		

Community Services Committee Work Plan 2023 - 2024

This is an outline plan to facilitate forward planning of reports to the Community Service Committee.

Date	Paper Designation	Lead Service/ Officer	Regularity of occurrence/ consideration	Comment
24 August 2023				
	Police Scotland - Argyll & Bute Performance Summary Report – Reporting Period: April – June 2023	Police Scotland	Quarterly	
	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Argyll & Bute Performance Report Q1 – 1 April – 30 June 2023	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Quarterly	
	Election of a Teacher Representative to the Community Services Committee	Education		
	Argyll and Bute – Education Strategic Plan 2022-24 (2023-24 Update) and Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2022-23	Education		
	Education Refresh Strategy	Education		
	ASN Service Provision 2023	Education		
	SQA School Examination Results 2023	Education		
	Scottish Attainment Challenge	Education		
	Armed Forces Covenant Statutory Duty 2022	Education		
	Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 Kilchrenan Primary School	Education		
	Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 Achaleven Primary School	Education		
	Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 Southend Primary School	Education		
	Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 St Joseph's Primary School	Education		

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	Gaelic Language Plan Progress Report	Customer Support Services	Annually	
14 December 2023				
	Police Scotland Argyll & Bute Performance Summary Report – Reporting Period: July – September 2023	Police Scotland	Quarterly	
	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Argyll & Bute Performance Report Q2 – 1 July – 30 September 2023	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Quarterly	
	Argyll & Bute HSCP – Performance Report	Argyll & Bute HSCP	Quarterly	
	Live Argyll Annual Report 2022/23	Live Argyll	Annually	
	External Education Establishment Inspection Report	Education	Quarterly	For noting
7 March 2024				
	Police Scotland - Argyll & Bute Performance Summary Report – Reporting Period: October – December 2023	Police Scotland	Quarterly	
	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Argyll & Bute Performance Report Q3 – 1 October – 31 December 2023	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Quarterly	
	Argyll & Bute HSCP – Performance Report	Argyll & Bute HSCP	Quarterly	
	Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 – Luing Primary School	Education		Update
	Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 – Minard Primary School	Education		Update
	External Education Establishment Inspection Report	Education	Quarterly	For noting

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6 June 2024				
	Police Scotland Argyll & Bute Performance Summary Report – Reporting Period: January – March 2024	Police Scotland	Quarterly	
	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Argyll & Bute Performance Report Q4 – 1 January – 31 March 2024	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Quarterly	
	Argyll & Bute HSCP – Performance Report	Argyll & Bute HSCP	Quarterly	
	Children and Young People’s Service Plan 2023-2023 Year 1 Review	Argyll & Bute HSCP	Annually	
	External Education Establishment Inspection Report	Education	Quarterly	For noting
Future Reports – dates to be determined				
	Dalintober and Castlehill Primary Schools, Campbeltown	Education/ Commercial Services		
	The Expansion of Funded Early Years Learning and Childcare in Scotland – Argyll and Bute Early Learning and Childcare Updated Delivery Plan	Education		
	Care Experienced Children and Young People	Education		
	Report on Argyll and Bute Council Response to the Scottish Government Legislation on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	Education		
	Argyll & Bute Health and Social Care Partnership – Annual Report	Argyll & Bute HSCP	Annually	

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	Argyll and Bute Annual Education Plan	Education	Annually	
	Live Argyll Annual Report	Live Argyll	Annually	
	Education Service Annual Performance Review	Education	Annually	
	Gaelic Language Plan Progress Report	Customer Support Services	Annually	
	ASN Review Update	Education		