Argyll and Bute Council

Customer Services: Education

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: MARCH 2019

Review of Education Provision

Ardchattan Primary School

Argyll and Bute Council

Proposal for the closure of Ardchattan Primary School

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that education provision at Ardchattan Primary School be discontinued with effect from 21st October 2019.

Pupils of Ardchattan Primary School will continue to be educated at Lochnell Primary School.

The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ardchattan Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

This is the best option to address the reasons for the proposals which are;

- Ardchattan Primary School has been mothballed for four years. The school roll is very low and not predicted to rise in the near future. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £2,147
- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 14 vacancies for teachers and 2 vacancies for head teachers in Argyll and Bute.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budges for maintenance.

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/education-and-learning

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools

- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- Argyll and Bute Councillors
- The Community Councils
- 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
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal

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

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

1 Introduction

1.1 On 24th April 2014, Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Ardchattan Primary School. The Council agreed that in the event there are no registered pupils by the commencement of session 2016/17 the school be considered for formal closure through the statutory process.

Ardchattan Primary School – Mothballing Decision:-
https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=257&MId=6147&Ver=4

1.2 On 14th December 2017, the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an options appraisal for Ardchattan Primary School. The Community Services Committee received a report on 15th March 2018 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/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=7671&Ver=4

1.3 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 a preliminary consultation process.

1.4 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.

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

1.6 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.

1.7 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.

1.8 Over the next five years, our agreed priorities are to ensure that:

- The education we provide meets the needs of all our young people and their families
- We make the most of our assets to build the local economy
- We support individual and community wellbeing
- We strengthen and empower our communities
- We ensure there are homes for all, we tackle poverty and build opportunity
- We have greener and cleaner communities
- We are an employer of choice
- We manage our finances prudently

1.9 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" which is the Education Vision and Strategy for Argyll and Bute Council.

2 Proposal

2.1 It is proposed that education provision at Ardchattan Primary School be discontinued with effect from 21st October 2019. Pupils of Ardchattan Primary School will continue to be educated at Lochnell Primary School from 21st October 2019. The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ardchattan Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

2.2 This is the best option to address the reasons for the proposals which are:

- Ardchattan Primary School has been mothballed for four years. The school roll is very low and not predicted to rise in the near future. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £2,147

- Along with several other rural councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 14 vacancies for teachers and 2 vacancies for head teachers in Argyll and Bute.

- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budges for maintenance.

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;

- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high;

- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary 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 it's 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 and

- This proposal contains the Educational Benefits Statement.

3 Preliminary requirements

3.1 The Council is required to consider the future of Ardchattan Primary School, as it has been mothballed for four years. Pupils from Ardchattan Primary catchment area currently attend Dunbeg Primary School and Lochnell Primary School. 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 were also considered. Some of these figures have been recalculated since the initial pre-appraisal took place.

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. When the school was mothballed, the community continued to have use of the facilities and this was also taken into consideration as part of the pre-consultation process.

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 continue to travel by bus to Lochnell Primary School.

3.5 Four options were presented to the local community by the Council for consideration during the pre-consultation phase of this proposal, as required

by section 12A of the 2010 Act. The local community also suggested a further option which was discussed and considered as part of this process.

3.6 Of the five options which were considered by the community and the Council; E is the favoured proposal by the Council, as it was considered it most adequately addressed the reasons for the proposal.

a) Re-open Ardchattan Primary School,
b) Continued Mothballing of Ardchattan Primary with the pupils zoned to Lochnell Primary School,
c) Re-open Ardchattan Primary School and realign the catchment area of Lochnell Primary School,
d) Ardchattan Primary School is reopened and designated as a resource centre for children with additional support needs (Suggested by the community),
e) Close Ardchattan Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School (The Proposal).

3.7 Following from an initial options appraisal which was presented to Council on 11th December 2018, it was agreed that the preliminary requirements were satisfied enabling the draft proposal to proceed.

3.8 There were a range of viewpoints on the future of Ardchattan Primary School, from parents, young people and members of the community.

3.9 The community reflected that Ardchattan Primary School had been an integral part of the community, and there were contrasting views on the proposals for the future of Ardchattan Primary School. However there is a will that the school be retained for community use and not be allowed to fall into disrepair. The community stressed that the school buildings should be looked after as the only public space asset in the Bonawe area. The school has beautiful grounds and is a rich habitat for wildlife. Ardchattan/ Bonawe community are actively pursuing options for use of the building as a community hub.

3.10 The current travel arrangements for children and staff have been in place for four years. Closing the school would have no impact on staff or pupil travel from the current arrangement. 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 Ardchattan 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 and are also available here to read:

https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=8098&Ver=4

3.12 In conclusion, after the pre-consultation with the community, the Council feels that the proposal to close Ardchattan Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School is reasonable and further detail is provided in relation to educational benefits, travel, environmental impact, community impact and financial impact below.

4 Educational Benefits Statement

4.1 It is proposed that education provision at Ardchattan Primary School be discontinued with effect from 21st October 2019. Pupils of Ardchattan Primary School will continue to be educated at Lochnell Primary School from 21st October 2019. The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ardchattan Primary School.

4.2 Ardchattan Primary School has been mothballed for four years. The school condition will deteriorate with limited budgets for maintenance. The school roll was very low and not predicted to rise in the near future. This continues to be the situation. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £2,147.

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 14 vacancies for teachers and 2 vacancies for head 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 accomodation 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 it's 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 five options. E is the favoured proposal by the Council, as it was considered it most adequately addressed the reasons for the proposal.

a) Re-open Ardchattan Primary School;
b) Continued Mothballing of Ardchattan Primary with the pupils zoned to Lochnell Primary School;

c) Re-open Ardchattan Primary School and realign the catchment area of Lochnell Primary School;
d) Ardchattan Primary School is reopened and designated as a resource centre for children with additional support needs (Suggested by the community); and
e) Close Ardchattan Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School (The Proposal).

4.10 Having considered these other alternatives the Council has made a decision that these are not viable alternatives to the closure proposal, and will proceed with the option to consult on the proposal to close Ardchattan Primary School and that the catchment area of Lochnell Primary school shall be extended to include the current catchment area for Ardchattan 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 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 The Council has also taken special regard to the following factors if this proposal was to be implemented, as Ardchattan Primary School is classified as a 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.
- Financial Impact.

4.15 In addition, the Council has also considered how to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the implementation of this proposal.

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 Ardchattan Primary School has seen a steady decline since 2007.

School Roll	Ardchattan PS	Lochnell PS
Capacity	57	148
	Roll	Roll
2005-06	13	79
2006-07	10	80
2007-08	12	92
2008-09	10	92
2009-2010	9	87
2010-2011	5	92
2011-2012	3	96
2012-2013	3	101
2013-2014	4	112
2014-2015	0	109
2015-2016	0	114
2016-2017	0	124
2017-2018	0	130
2018 -2019	0	127

Predicted Roll

Predicted School Roll	Pupils who live in the Ardchattan Catchment	Lochnell PS Roll
2019- 2020	6	124
2020 -2021	5	116
2021 -2022	6	107

5.2 In 2018-2019 there are eight children who live in the Ardchattan Primary School catchment area and who attend other schools.

5.3 There are five pupils who live in the Ardchattan catchment area who currently attend Lochnell Primary School. These children are all in receipt of Council transport to go to school. There are also another three pupils who attend Dunbeg Primary School who live in the catchment area for Lochnell Primary School, however they attend Dunbeg Primary School as a placing request.

5.4 The school roll is low and would not be predicted to rise in the future. The area around Ardchattan is a small settlement and is not identified for growth in the local development plan.

5.5 There are no housing allocations or potential developments identified.

6 Teacher numbers

6.1 Teacher numbers are improving nationally, with a 6.86% increase in the number of teachers nationally from 2013 - 2017. However in Argyll and Bute there has been a 1.28% reduction in the number of teachers from 2013 -- 2017.

6.2 As the school has been mothballed for the last 4 years, the issue of recruitment of staff has not improved. At the time of writing this report there are 14 vacancies for class teachers in Argyll and Bute and 2 vacancies for head teachers. 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 Ardchattan Primary School.

6.3 At the current time, if the proposal was to be accepted, 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 2013 that the condition of Ardchattan Primary School was satisfactory. There was also an acknowledgement that there was work required to be undertaken on both the roof and windows.

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 (Sc) 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.

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 the Ardchattan pupils have been attending since August 2014.

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 the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which 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 which is matched to their needs.

8.4 Both Ardchattan Primary School and Lochnell Primary School are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from Ardchattan Primary School area attending 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, Lorn 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 on sports day and in the dining room 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. Almost all children are achieving national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy. Lochnell 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 group 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.

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.

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.

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 the village of Benderloch. The entire building is well maintained and along with the surrounding scenery provides attractive accommodation for the 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 The children maintain links with friends who live in their own village as well as creating links with children from two other rural communities.

12.3 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 children 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. 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.

Gaelic learners

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

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, 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 would increase the roll of Lochnell Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities.

14.4 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Ardchattan 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 Disability Discrimination Act, 1996.

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.

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 Ardchattan Primary School catchment area. However, children who live in this catchment area have been making this journey for the last four years, 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.

17 Factors for rural school closures

17.1 The Council has taken special regard to the following factors in relation to this proposal as Ardchattan Primary School is classified as a rural school.

The likely effect on the local community if this proposal is implemented

17.2 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.

17.3 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

17.4 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.

17.5 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 Ardchattan Primary School may be an important step in building community confidence, promoting growth and enabling communities to realise their aspirations.

17.6 Research 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.

17.7 It is important to recognise that a school's primary function is to provide pupils with the best possible educational experience. During initial consultation, there was some support from the community for closure of the school with the building and adjoining grounds being retained for community use.

17.8 Within the Ardchattan/Bonawe there is no hall or other community building. All people who attended the consultation strongly stated the school building should be retained for community use and not allowed to fall in to further disrepair.

17.9 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.

17.10 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 focus for activities and events.

On the availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community

17.11 During the pre-consultation phase, some 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. Within Ardchattan/Bonawe there is no hall or other community building. Most 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 community's access to the premises.

17.12 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. Formal closure of the school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community.

17.13 There have been some community lets in Ardchattan Primary School in the last five years, particularly for community events and the community does use the school grounds for sporting events such as community football

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements

17.14 The travel distance from Ardchattan Primary to Lochnell Primary is 9.8 miles on the B845/A828, or 8.3 miles via North Connel. Travel time is approximately twenty minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost four years, and travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Bonawe community.

17.15 This option would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Ardchattan Primary School, in terms of current travel arrangements would have a neutral effect on the environment. The current annual transport cost for pupils to travel to Lochnell Primary School is £19,545.

17.16 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.

17.17 At present, some travel to Dunbeg Primary School. The environmental impact of travel will be minimal, as these arrangements are currently in place due to the mothballing of Ardchattan Primary School. The closure of Ardchattan Primary School, in terms of travel, would have a neutral effect on the environment.

Environmental impact

17.18 Currently three pupils travel to Dunbeg Primary School and five pupils travel to Lochnell Primary School from the Ardchattan Primary School Catchment area. 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.

17.19 If this proposal was to be implemented there would be little or no impact on the natural environment.

Financial Impact

17.20 The full breakdown of the financial analysis is detailed in Appendix 4. Some of this information has been recalculated since the initial pre-appraisal took place. This information gives details on the estimated cost if Ardchattan Primary School was still to be an occupied and operational establishment. However, as Ardchattan Primary School is currently mothballed, the cost for the mothballing is estimated at £2,147 per year. Should the school be reopened, occupied and operational, the running costs per year are estimated at £134,049.

17.21 Column 2 of Table 1 shows the projected annual running costs of Ardchattan 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.

17.22 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.

17.23 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. On top of this there is estimated to be an increase to Lochnell Primary School's teacher entitlement of 0.1 FTE at a cost of £5,073. The additional pupils transferring to Lochnell would result in an increase to their formula-based discretionary budget of £177. 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 school transport,

and the costs of maintaining the teachers employed in Ardchattan Primary School.

17.24 Transport costs for pupils to attend Lochnell Primary School are £19,545. Costs per year to attend Ardchattan Primary School if it were to be reopened are estimated at £16,756 per pupil per year. Costs per pupil per year to attend Lochnell Primary School are £4,596 per pupil per year.

17.25 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 Ardchattan Primary School is £372,498, and for Lochnell Primary School this is £943,593.

17.26 Table 3 contains the annual running costs during mothballing of Ardchattan Primary School and these are estimated at £2,147 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.

17.27 The transfer of pupils from Ardchattan to Lochnell would impact on the council's Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) allocation for Primary School Teaching Staff as there would be a reduction in the Percentage of Primary Pupils in Small Schools. This reduction is estimated at £25k. However Argyll and Bute Council is supported through the floor mechanism so would not see a reduction in their overall funding.

Summary of educational benefit assessment and statement

17.28 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 authorities assessment of other likely effects of the proposal and the reasons for that assessment are attached as appendix 5.

17.29 Whilst the positive educational benefits are numerous, there are also some negative aspects which arise from the children attending Lochnell Primary School. These negative aspects are 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 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 Island (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.

19 Consultation arrangements

19.1 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 11th December 2018 that, having specific regard to the reasons for formulating a prospective closure proposal, the option to close Ardchattan Primary School and redraw its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School is the most appropriate response to the specific reasons for the potential proposal.

19.2 This document was considered by the Education Authority on 14 March 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.

19.3 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/education-and-learning

19.4 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 18th March 2019 until the close of business on 17th May 2019 which lasts for a minimum of 6 weeks and includes at least 30 school days.

19.5 A public meeting will be held at Ardchattan Primary School on 2nd May 2019 at 2.30pm. 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 Head of Education, Learning and Teaching, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 17th May 2019.

19.6 Written representations may be made on the proposal and the alternatives to the proposal. Written representations may also suggest other alternatives to the proposal.

19.7 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.

19.8 After receiving Education Scotland's report, the Education Authority will then prepare and publish a Consultation Report in accordance with Sections 9 and 10 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.

19.9 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.

19.10 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.

19.11 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.

20 Conclusion

20.1 It is proposed that education provision at Ardchattan Primary School be discontinued with effect from 21st October 2019.Pupils of Ardchattan Primary School will continue to be educated at Lochnell Primary School. The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ardchattan Primary School. The implementation date for this would be October 21st 2019.

20.2 This is the best option to address the reasons for the proposals which are:

- Ardchattan Primary School has been mothballed for four years. The school condition will deteriorate with limited budgets for maintenance. The school roll was very low and not predicted to rise in the near future. This continues to be the situation. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £2,147;

- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 14 vacancies for teachers and 2 vacancies for head teachers in Argyll and Bute; and

- The Council needs to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services.

Other Considerations

- This proposal will bring educational benefits 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 unessecary 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 it's whole school estate up to a satisfactory condition. The present condition is unsistainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate;

- This proposal sets out the Educational Benefits Statement.

20.3 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 Island (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 these matters in the decision making process.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director of Customer Services

Louise Connor
Head of Education: Learning & Teaching

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly
Policy Lead for Education and Lifelong Learning

For further information contact:
Alison MacDonald
Education Manager
alison.macdonald@argyll-bute.gov.uk

February 2019

APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Consultation Letter
Appendix 2- Response form
Appendix 3 - Map
Appendix 4 - Financial template
Appendix 5- Options Appraisal

APPENDIX 1

Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

Customer Services
Executive Director: Douglas Hendry

Customer Services
Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA318RT
Telephone: **Fax:**
Our Ref: **Ref:**
If phoning or calling please ask for:
e-mail: @argyll-bute.gov.uk
Council Website: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Ardchattan Primary School

Dear Consultee,

Review of Education Provision
Notice and Summary of Proposal for closing Ardchattan 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 Ardchattan 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 18th March 2019 and will conclude on 17th May 2019. 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 Ardchattan Primary School be discontinued with effect from 21st October 2019. Pupils of Ardchattan Primary School will continue to be educated at Lochnell Primary School from 21st October 2019. The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ardchattan Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

This is the best option to address the reasons for the proposals which are;

- Ardchattan Primary School has been mothballed for four years. The school condition will deteriorate with limited budgets for maintenance. The school roll was very low and not predicted to rise in the near future. This continues to be the situation.

- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 14 vacancies for teachers and 2 vacancies for head teachers in Argyll and Bute.

- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budges 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 pre-consultation stage of this process;

a) Re-open Ardchattan Primary School,
b) Continued Mothballing of Ardchattan Primary with the pupils zoned to Lochnell School,

c) Re-open Ardchattan Primary School and realign the catchment area of Lochnell School,
d) Ardchattan School is reopened and designated as a resource centre for children with additional support needs,
e) Close Ardchattan 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/education-and-learning
- Holding public meetings 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 2nd May 2019 at 2.30pm in Ardchattan 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:
Via the website: https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/education-and-learning

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 view 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 the children would continue to be educated in the schools they currently attend.

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

Yours sincerely

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director of Customer Services

APPENDIX 2

Argyll and Bute Council
Customer Services: Education

RESPONSE FORM

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

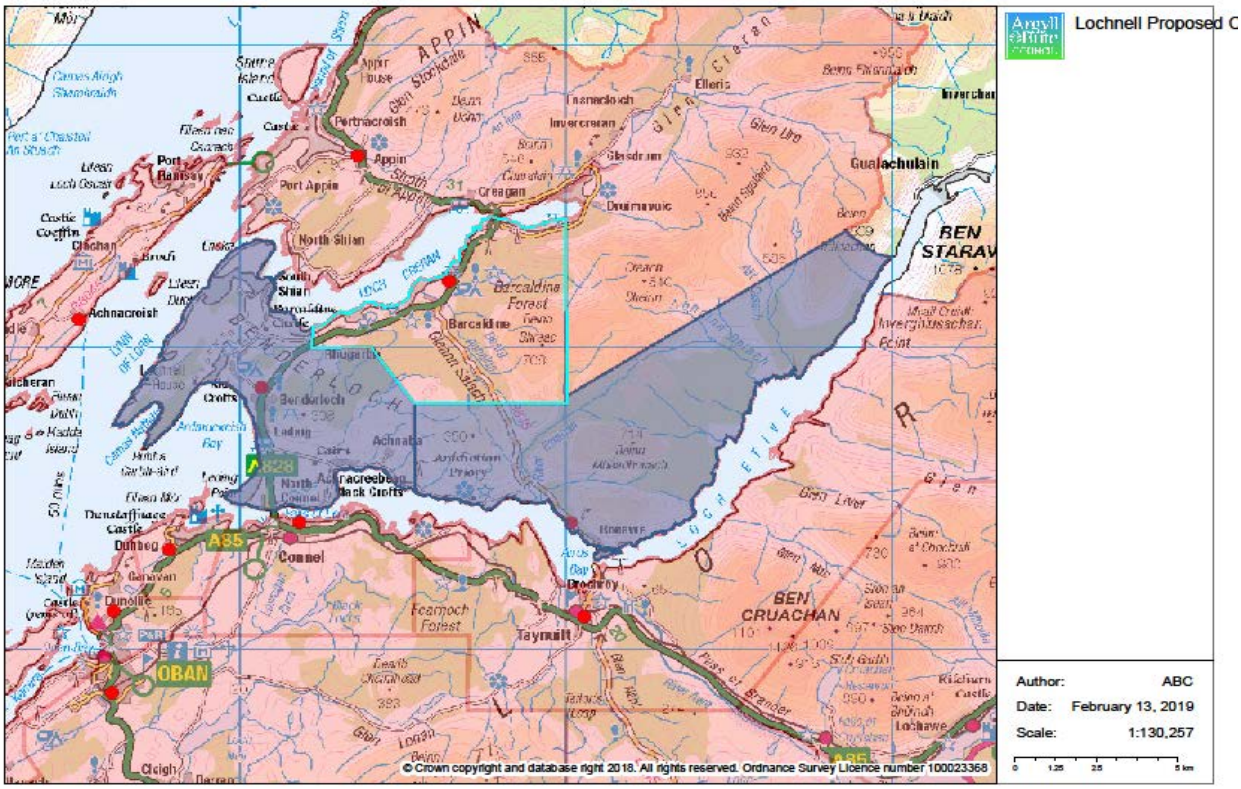
Proposal	
It is proposed that: Education provision at Ardchattan Primary School be discontinued with effect from 21 October 2019. Pupils of Ardchattan Primary School will continue to be educated at Lochnell Primary School from 21 October 2019. The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ardchattan 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)

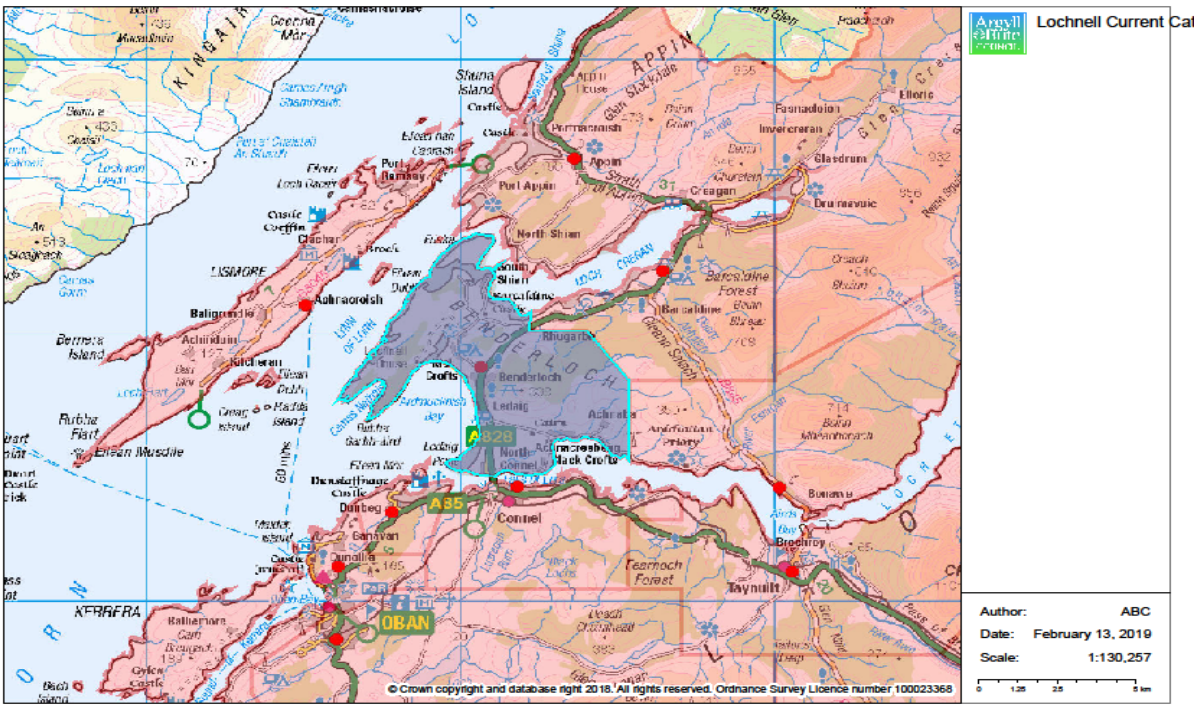
Parent ☐	Child / Young Person ☐	Staff ☐	Other * ☐
Elected Member / MSP / MP ☐		Member of Community Council ☐	
***Other: (please specify)			
Please state your views on the proposal (continue overleaf if necessary)			

APPENDIX 3 –

MAP OF PROPOSED CATCHMENT AREA



MAP OF CURRENT LOCHNELL PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA



APPENDIX 4 – FINANCIAL TEMPLATE

Table 1

Name of School Ardchattan Primary	**Projected annual costs for full financial year 2019/20**	**Additional financial impact on receiving school** Lochnell Primary	**Annual recurring savings** (column 2 minus column 3)
School costs			
Employee costs -			
teaching staff	81,698	86,771	-5,073
support staff	12,277	0	12,277
teaching staff training (CPD etc)	0	0	0
support staff training	0	0	0
Supply costs -	2,345	95	2,250
Building costs:			
property insurance	476	476	0
non domestic rates	702	0	702
water & sewerage charges	211	0	211
energy costs	10,456	0	10,456
cleaning (contract or in-house)	4,557	0	4,557
building repair & maintenance	6,446	0	6,446
grounds maintenance	133	0	133
facilities management costs -	0	0	0
revenue costs arising from capital	0	0	0
other - refuse collection; telephones	562	0	562
School operational costs:			
learning materials	2,934	177	2,757
catering (contract or inhouse)	12,435	3,694	8,741
SQA costs	0	0	0
other school operational costs (e.g. licences)	0	0	0
Transport costs:			
home to school	0	19,545	-19,545
other pupil transport costs	0	0	0
staff travel	0	0	0
SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL	**135,232**	**110,758**	**24,474**

Income:			
Sale of meals	-1,183	-1,183	0
Lets	0	0	0
External care provider	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL	**-1,183**	**-1,183**	**0**
TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL	**134,049**	**109,575**	**24,474**

UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR	**16,756**	**13,697**	**3,059**

Table 2

Capital costs	**School proposed for closure** Ardchattan Primary	**Receiving school** Lochnell Primary
Capital Life Cycle cost	372,498	943,593
Third party contributions to capital costs	0	0

Table 3

Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal	
property insurance	476
non domestic rates	632
water & sewerage charges	160
energy costs	817
cleaning (contract or in-house)	0
security costs	0
building repair & maintenance	0
grounds maintenance	62
facilities management costs	0
other	0
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL	**2,147**

Table 4

Non-recurring revenue costs	
	0
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	

Table 5

Impact on GAE	
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 pupils from Ardchattan are designated to attend Lochnell which has a roll of > 70 pupils. The additional pupils from Ardchattan will maintain the roll of Lochnell above the small school threshold. There will be a loss of small school GAE for those pupils attending Ardchattan equating to approximately £25k. **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.**	25,000
GAE IMPACT	25,000

Appendix 5 Options Appraisal

CUSTOMER SERVICES: EDUCATION

OPTIONS APPRAISAL

ARDCHATTAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. INTRODUCTION

On 24 April 2014 Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Ardchattan Primary School. The Council agreed that if there were no registered pupils by the close of the registration period for session 2016/17 the Council would consult formally on the future of school provision at Ardchattan.

https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=257&MId=6147&Ver=4

On 14th December 2017, the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an options appraisal, for Ardchattan Primary School. The Community Services Committee received a report on 15th March 2018 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/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=7671&Ver=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 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 within a reasonable timescale to them.

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

On 14th December 2017, Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the preliminary requirements in

relation to considering a rural school closure required and look at an options appraisal for Ardchattan Primary School. This review will enable Community Services: Education to identify and consider the options put forward.

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 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. REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

An authority that is 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.

1. The Authority's reasons for formulating a proposal are: Ardchattan Primary School has been mothballed for four years. The school roll was very low and 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 October 2018 there were significant 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 required to consider the future of Ardchattan Primary School. The 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 Ardchattan and the Local Area - the Ardchattan Primary School Setting

Ardchattan is a scenically beautiful area, north of Oban, bordering on Loch Etive. Its name derives from the 6th-century Irish monk Saint Cathan, combined with the Gaelic element *Ard-* or heights. Ardchattan

Priory which was founded around the year 1230, is an historic attraction within the parish. The priory's ruins and surrounding gardens are open to the public. In the early 1900s there were about a thousand people living in Bonawe/ Ardchattan. The hub of this community was the Bonawe Quarry which still operates today.

3.4 The School within the Community

Ardchattan Primary School has been very active within the community. It has been a focus for social and educational events. The pupils invited the community to attend events on many occasions every year. Whilst being mothballed, the school continues to be used for Community Council Meetings, Friends of Ardchattan School Meetings and other occasional events. There is no other available community space or hall in the 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. The table below refers directly to the Ardchattan area showing the changing population from census 2001 to census 2011:

Table 1: Population Information

Ardchattan Area Census Ref : 60QD000575			
2001		2011	
Total Resident Population	140	Total Resident Population	136
% under 16	25.71	% under 16	15.4
% 16 – 64 (pensionable age)	55.71	% 16 – 64 (pensionable age)	66.2
% pensionable age and over	18.57	% pensionable age and over	16.8

It is recognised that the census area and the catchment area of Ardchattan Primary School differ slightly.

3.6 Development and House Building

The current Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in March 2015. A new Local Development Plan (LDP2), which will set out planning and development proposals for the next 10 years from 2020 and a vision for 20 years, is currently being prepared. 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 Bonawe. Within the Ardchattan/ Bonawe LDP there is a designated area suitable for quarrying development whilst there is no area designated specifically for housing development. Within the Lochnell area there are 2 designated areas for housing.

The 'Key Rural Settlement' of Benderloch, where Lochnell Primary School is situated, has a moderate potential for growth with the Council's adopted settlement planning strategy allowing for 'medium scale' development (between 6 and 30 dwelling units) on appropriate sites within the defined settlement boundary. In addition, the settlement of Benderloch currently has two 'Housing Allocations' within its boundaries with an expectation that these could be developed with a combined total of 61 dwellings. There is a further 'Potential Development Area' identified within the settlement boundary which affords the potential for further residential development of the site to a medium to high density. Benderloch is a relatively large settlement consisting of two discrete built-up areas, both of which have the potential to accommodate further 'windfall' development on appropriate sites.

In addition, the catchment area for Lochnell Primary School also incorporates the settlement of North Connel. North Connel is another relatively large settlement which includes a further two Housing Allocations for a combined total of 38 dwelling units and two additional Potential Development Areas for residential development (at low density).

Appendix 2 shows the LDP for Lochnell.

Appendix 3 provides the key for LDPs.

3.7 Ardchattan Primary School

Ardchattan Primary School was built in 1886 and is an attractive building of local granite in an exceptionally scenic setting. The school is co-educational and non-denominational and has a catchment area extending along the northern shore of Loch Etive including the village of Bonawe. The schools has two classrooms, an art area and general purpose room as well as an office, a separate canteen building and a large playground.

Appendix 4 – Ardchattan Primary School Floor Plan.
Ardchattan Primary School is 8.3 miles from Lochnell Primary School. The area is sparsely populated with houses along the loch side, farms and the community of Bonawe. The school is situated on the side of a single track road that leads from North Connel to Ardchattan, there is then a further 0.8 of a mile of road leading to Bonawe Quarry where the road ends.

The Scottish Government's Rural School List 2016 classifies Ardchattan 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. Ardchattan Primary is one of a group of over 20 primaries associated with Oban High School.

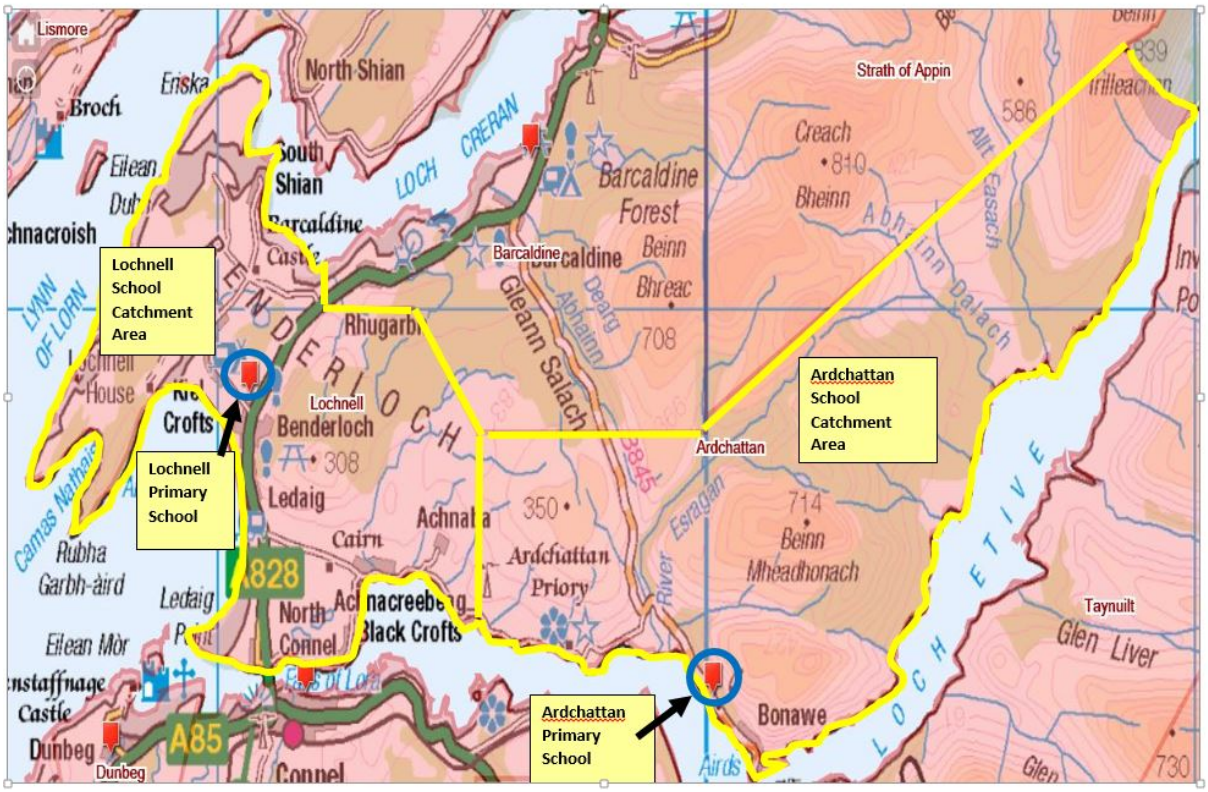
3.8 Lochnell Primary School

Following the mothballing of Ardchattan Primary School children attend either Lochnell Primary School or Dunbeg Primary School. 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 entire building is well maintained and along with the surrounding scenery provides attractive accommodation for the primary school.

Appendix 5 - Lochnell Primary School Floor Plan.
The outdoor area provides many opportunities for learning. A joint school and community project was completed to provide and maintain the all-weather pitch adjacent to the school. There is a hard play area complemented by grass play areas. The school has safe and easy access both the beach and Beinn Lora. There are willow dens to play in and access to the nearby cycle track.

The Lochnell Primary School building has facilities for pupils, visitors and special access needs. The Scottish Government's Rural School List 2016 classifies Lochnell Primary School as 'remote rural'. Oban High School is the associated Secondary School for Ardchattan, Lochnell and over 20 other Primary Schools.

The Map below shows the adjoining catchment areas of Ardchattan and Lochnell Primary Schools Catchment Areas:



3.9 Pupil Numbers

Pupil projections, and data for 2017 - 2018 are based on the 2017 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 from NHS data taken from children registered with GP practices in the area. This data is anonymised.

Table 2 shows the historic and current pupil numbers for both Ardchattan and Lochnell primary schools:

Table 2:	Ardchattan PS	Lochnell PS
	Roll	Roll
Capacity	57	148
2005-06	13	79
2006-07	10	80

2007-08	12	92
2008-09	10	92
2009-2010	9	87
2010-2011	5	92
2011-2012	3	96
2012-2013	3	101
2013-2014	4	112
2014-2015	0	109
2015-2016	0	114
2016-2017	0	124
2017-2018	0	130

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

Table 3:	**Ardchattan PS**	**Lochnell PS**
	Roll	Roll
Capacity	57	154
2018 -2019	7	127
2019- 2020	6	128
2020 -2021	5	116*
2021 -2022	6	107*

* A prediction based on information available May 2018.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Meetings

A Community Engagement Meeting was held in Ardchattan Primary School, on Wednesday 28th March 2018, 2-7pm. This was to seek the views of the community on the future of Ardchattan School. This meeting was attended by 15 people. There was also a meeting in Oban High, Dunbeg Primary and Lochnell Primary Schools to gather opinions from the young people from within the catchment area for Ardchattan School. Seven primary age children attended and five secondary aged young people attended.

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 three years, what has been the effect of mothballing Ardchattan 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*

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 Ardchattan School:
The mothballing has had a negative social impact on various examples of village community life, including:

- *Community events have stopped as in the past they were led by the school.*
- *Children have become disconnected from each other and the community - they travel to different schools via different transport arrangements and they don't know each other.*

The Community is disappointed that buildings have been neglected:

- *The school house has been abandoned and is now decaying rapidly.*
  The school building has been neglected, there is significant water ingress, the kitchen has been removed and general disrepair is apparent.

Parents stated:

- *Pupils are now well settled in other schools* – they would not move their children back to Ardchattan.

The young people stated:

- *Community events stopped.*
- *Make the building a community shop, café, museum*
- *Reopening is not an option because there are not enough pupils to make it viable*
- *Moving the catchment area is not an option because people travel out of the Bonawe area towards Oban / Benderloch to go to work – not many travel the other way.*

- *In a very small school you have arguments and fall out then have to fall in again – so that's OK.*
- *If the school reopened we could walk to school.*
- *A family decision was made to attend another school due to friendships made at Nursery.*

General Comments:

- It was acknowledged by several attendees that the pupil numbers were low and this made a school unsustainable
- Some pupils are travelling out of the Ardchattan Catchment Area with their families to a school nearer their employment that is more convenient for them as a family.
- The community stressed that the school buildings should be looked after as the only public space asset in the Bonawe area. The school has beautiful grounds and is a rich habitat for wildlife.
- Ardchattan/ Bonawe community are actively pursuing options for use of the building as a community hub.

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

Ardchattan Primary School has been mothballed for four years. The school roll was very low and not predicted to rise in the near future. This continues to be the situation. There is very little support for the reopening of the school.

Whilst the building is mothballed it continues to deteriorate. The Community is very proactive and is planning a future for the building. Along with several other rural councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. In October 2018 there were significant vacancies for both Head Teachers and Teachers.

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

a) Re-open Ardchattan Primary School.
b) Continued Mothballing of Ardchattan Primary with the pupils zoned to Lochnell School.
c) Re-open Ardchattan Primary School and realign the catchment area of Lochnell School.
d) Ardchattan School is reopened and designated as a resource centre for children with additional support needs.

e) Close Ardchattan Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School (The Proposal).

6. OPTION A: RE-OPEN ARDCHATTAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

6.1 Community Feedback

The majority of people who attended the consultation were not in favour of reopening Ardchattan Primary as a school. They commented on how well pupils had settled in to other schools with developed friendships and on the sustainability of the school with respect to low numbers:

'Pupils are now well settled in other schools – they would not move back or away from their friends'

'Lochnell is super school the children are happy where they are.'

'Without a nursery/ preschool – the school will never pick up again'.

'The pupil numbers were low and this made a school unsustainable'.

There was one family who expressed a preference to reopen:

'Reopen the school as a specialist resourced school or a centre for additional support needs including a sensory room.'

6.2 Pupil Numbers

If the school were to reopen in August 2019, the maximum pupil numbers from the catchment would be six. Pupils currently within the catchment area attend Lochnell, Dunbeg and Strath of Appin (Gaelic Medium Education) Primary Schools. It has been stated by several families that their children would not return to attend Ardchattan Primary School if it were to re-open. Their children have settled into their new schools with developed friendships. There may be a negative impact on children if they were to be moved from their current school.

If the school were to reopen 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

Ardchattan Primary	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022

Approved Capacity	57	57	57	57
Roll Projection	6	6	5	6

6.3 Financial Information

The total amount including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration to re-open the school is **£114,760**[1]

The cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£190,000**[2]

6.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons for the proposal are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Ardchattan Primary School to increase. Ardchattan Primary School is currently mothballed and the pupils are rezoned to other schools. 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 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 have demonstrated no wish for the school to reopen. Almost all who attended the community engagement indicated the need for the school to become a facility for the community to use rather than an educational establishment.

There have been several community events held at the school including Community Council Meetings and social events run by Friends of Ardchattan School. All of which have been reported to be well attended. There was minimal environmental impact in relation to transport as many participants came on foot, as the building is situated centrally within the community. Respondents

[1] Annual costs for running a comparative school for Ardchattan.
[2] No inflation adjustment applies to estimates.

noted the negative impact of the school mothballing on the community as:

'The community events have stopped as in the past they were led by the school.'

'There was involvement regularly from older members of the community – they now miss the social interaction for example Burns Nights – concerts etc. This lack of interaction has a detrimental effect on the wellbeing of the community in terms of isolation and loneliness.'

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 from Ardchattan Primary to Lochnell Primary is 8.3 miles via the B845, or 10.2 miles via the A828. Travel time is approximately twenty minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost four years, travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Bonawe community. If Ardchattan 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 positive and negative impact may 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

The majority of people who attended the consultation were not in favour of reopening Ardchattan Primary as a school. If the school reopened, pupil numbers would be six, as of the September 2017 census, and this is not predicted to increase over the next three years. *Several families have indicated they would not move their children back to Ardchattan Primary if the school reopened.*

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 **£114,760**[3], with the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£190,000**[4]**.**

If the school was to be reopened, the premises would be able to be used by the community as a hub, 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 from Ardchattan Primary to Lochnell Primary is 8.3 miles via the B84, or 10.2 miles via the A828. Travel time is approximately twenty 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 four 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.

[3] Annual costs for running a comparative school for Ardchattan.
[4] No inflation adjustment applies to estimates.

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 considerable expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard, the lack of local support for reopening Ardchattan Primary School this is not a reasonable option.

7. OPTION B: CONTINUED MOTHBALLING OF ARDCHATTAN PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS ZONED TO LOCHNELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Statutory Guidance for the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, 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." Ardchattan Primary School has been mothballed for 4 years.

7.1 Community Feedback

There are many ideas for the future of the building being taken forward by Friends of Ardchattan School as a real hub for community life. 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:

'*The school house has been abandoned and is now decaying rapidly.'*

'The school building has been neglected, there is significant water ingress, the kitchen has been removed and general disrepair is apparent.'

'This is an asset – the authority needs to consider if we close the school what the council will do to support the community.'

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 (2018/19) to the Council of the mothballed Ardchattan Primary School is **£1,035.** 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 **£190,000**[5]. The current annual transport cost of taking pupils to alternative schools is **£44,187.**

7.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons for the proposal are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Ardchattan Primary School to increase. Ardchattan Primary School is currently mothballed and the pupils are rezoned to other schools. To reopen the school would not increase the pupil numbers.

7.4.1 *Community Impact*

If pupils are to continue their education in Lochnell Primary School there would be no change to the current impact on the community. If the mothballing of Ardchattan was to continue the building would deteriorate further and eventually become unavailable to the community to hold and develop events. This could have a detrimental effect on the sustainability of the community. At present the buildings and grounds are available for community use. For example, Ardchattan School has been used for several community events, these include Community Council meetings, Friends of Ardchattan School meetings and information gathering meeting for the future plans of the building. The community view the buildings and grounds as an opportunity to develop a community hub and there were multiple suggestions for possible usage. This may make the area a more attractive place to live.

There would be no change to the current economic impact of maintaining the mothballed Ardchattan Primary School. The current annual cost (2018/19) to the Council is **£1,035.** This includes electricity, heating oil, and ground maintenance but does not include building maintenance and repair costs. The current annual transport cost of taking pupils to alternative schools is **£44,187.**

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 from Ardchattan Primary to Lochnell Primary is 8.3

[5] No inflation adjustment applies to estimates.

miles via the B845, or 10.2 miles via the A828. Travel time is approximately twenty minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost four years. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Bonawe community. The continued mothballing would have little 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.

Both Lochnell and Ardchattan are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from Ardchattan area, attending Lochnell Primary School are benefitting from the rural broader environment, whilst not moving their learning to a school that is completely different to their home environment. Outdoor learning is currently provided at Lochnell.

The co-location of the nursery and the primary classes at Lochnell enhances the transition process for the children moving from Nursery in to Primary one, through joint educational processes and liaison between the two 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 four year mothballing of Ardchattan 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 (2018/19) to the Council of the mothballed Ardchattan Primary School is **£1,035.** 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 **£190,000**[6]. The current annual transport cost of taking pupils to alternative schools is **£44,187.**

The travel distance from Ardchattan Primary to Lochnell Primary is 8.3 miles via the B84, or 10.2 miles via the A828. Travel time is approximately twenty 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 four years. Should the school continue to be mothballed these travel arrangements would continue.

There are no specific educational benefits from continuing the mothballing of the

On the basis that pupil numbers are not expected to increase and the buildings, mothballing is not of benefit to the community or the Council, therefore continued mothballing is not viewed as a reasonable option.

8. OPTION C: RE-OPEN ARDCHATTAN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA OF LOCHNELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

8.1 Community Feedback

The existing catchment area for Ardchattan School is very rural and very sparsely populated. Ardchattan School is 0.8 mile from Bonawe Quarry. The road then becomes a track and continues up Loch Etive – no children/ families live there with the housing being mainly deer stalker bothies or holiday cottages. The track terminates several miles past Cadderlie.

When considering the option to realign the catchment area of Ardchattan, the boundary for Ardchattan School has been hypothetically moved west to include the area of North Connel east of the A828.

Community views are:
'Moving the catchment area is not a viable option because people travel out of the Bonawe area towards Oban / Benderloch to go to work – very few people travel the other way.'

[6] No inflation adjustment applies to estimates.

'I believe the catchment area for this school and physical location restrict reopening options for this school.'
'Pupils are now well settled in other schools – they would not move back or away from their friends'

8.2 Pupil Numbers

The pupil numbers within this new catchment area would increase the roll significantly. As part of any forthcoming consultation there will be discussions with the parent body of Lochnell School regarding the future of Ardchattan School. There was no representation from the Lochnell Parent Council at the Options Appraisal Meeting. It was felt by attendees at the options appraisal meeting that moving the catchment area 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 **£114,760**[7] per annum**.**

To bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school would cost **£190,000[8].**

The cost to use minibuses to transport the children to Ardchattan Primary School would be **£66,000[9]** (These transport costs are calculated assuming the boundary has moved to include all children who live to the east of the A828).

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 for the proposal are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Ardchattan Primary School to increase. Ardchattan Primary School is currently mothballed and the pupils are rezoned to other schools.

To reopen Ardchattan Primary School **and** realign the catchment area of Lochnell School would increase the pupil numbers, if families were to send their children to Ardchattan Primary School.

[7] Annual costs for running a comparative school for Ardchattan.
[8] No inflation adjustment applies to estimates.
[9] This would be the cost of three mini buses.

8.4.1 *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 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 very little support for this option.

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. 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 from Ardchattan Primary to Lochnell Primary is 8.3 miles via the B845, or 10.2 miles via the A828. Travel for children within this new boundary would be less than twenty minutes and would be a new 'bus route'. Therefore, appropriate risk assessments would be necessary. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Bonawe community.

If Ardchattan 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. Local members of staff could also walk or cycle to school. There would be an increase in the number of pupils at the school and therefore an increase in staff numbers. There could be increased car usage by staff resulting in 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.

Both Lochnell and Ardchattan are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from Ardchattan area, attending Lochnell Primary School are benefitting from the rural broader environment, whilst not moving their learning to a school that is completely different to their home environment. Outdoor learning is currently provided at Lochnell.

The outdoor facilities either in the school grounds or in the immediate neighbourhood 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

The majority of people who attended the consultation were not in favour of reopening Ardchattan Primary as a school, and realigning the catchment area of Lochnell Primary School 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 **£114,760**[10], with the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£190,000**[11]**.**

If the school was to be reopened, the premises would be able to be used by the community as a hub, 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 from Ardchattan Primary to Lochnell Primary is 8.3 miles via the B84, or 10.2 miles via the A828. Travel for children within this new boundary would be less than twenty minutes and would be a new 'bus route'.

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 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

[10] Annual costs for running a comparative school for Ardchattan.
[11] No inflation adjustment applies to estimates.

community that may not be the case as most pupils in the neighbouring catchment area travel in the direction of Benderloch or Oban - that is towards the larger centres of population, and not towards Bonawe. It would require pupils who are presently settled in Lochnell Primary School to move to Ardchattan Primary School. Ardchattan families have stated they would not move their children back to Ardchattan if it reopened. All families would be entitled to submit a placing request to attend Lochnell 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 Ardchattan Primary School, this is not a reasonable option.

9. OPTION D: ARDCHATTAN SCHOOL IS RE-OPENED AS A RESOURCE CENTRE FOR CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

9.1 Community Feedback

'The school has good outdoor facilities including a poly tunnel, climbing area, football pitch, tennis court, pond and extensive garden area with access to the hill woodland and path. Wildlife is abundant and this should be considered when making a decision about the future of the school.'

'*Through spending time at Ardchattan Primary School we have realised how special the area is. It is rich in wildlife, peaceful and a pleasant place to do activities.' 'In our rural area and restricted house and garden, there are limited opportunities for sports and leisure locally.'*

'Ardchattan is a place where a child can cope. Staying in is detrimental to the health of children and their carers'

9.2 Pupil Numbers

It is not possible at this stage to give an indication of projected pupil numbers for this option as the majority of pupils with additional support needs are educated within other existing schools.

9.3 Financial Information

The cost to equip a small sensory room for a child with significant needs is in excess of **£5000**. To equip a whole school would cost significantly more.

The total annual running cost - including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration is **£114,760.**

The cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard is **£190,000.** daily - **£22,000**. Bringing children from a wider catchment would cost significantly more. Escorts would also be required.

9.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons for the proposal are stated at Section 2 of this report. There is currently no expectation for the pupil numbers to increase. Ardchattan Primary School is mothballed and the pupils all attend other schools. As it is considered best practice that the needs of most of our young people are met within the mainstream context, either in class or in a learning centre, this option would not increase the pupil numbers.

9.4.1 *Community Impact*

The community's wish for the building to be used for a positive purpose would be met by this option. However, areas of the school may not be available for let due to the requirement for specialist equipment/areas. This option would also ensure the building and facilities are returned to a reasonable standard. This option may offer some local employment contributing to the sustainability of the community. However the school would not be a mainstream school, thus not meeting best practice for educating pupils with additional support needs, most local children would continue to travel out of the area to school and therefore may not add to the attractiveness for families moving to the village or ultimately to the local community's sustainability.

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. The reopening of the school and the potential relocation of families may have a positive effect on the wider economy of the community. There may be additional travel costs associated with specialist vehicles that may be required.

9.4.2 *Travel Arrangements*

Travel for children within this type of school catchment would be variable. Appropriate risk assessments for children with additional support needs would be necessary. Staff would travel by car, there would be multiple car journeys considering staffing levels for a specialist school. Local children would continue to travel out to school

whilst pupils attending the school would travel inwards. This would have a negative environmental impact.

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 from reopening the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

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

9.6 Summary

It is considered best practice that the needs of most of our young people are met within the mainstream context, either in class or in a learning centre. This is both authority and national practice. When considering the above alongside the likely neutral impact of sustainability, negative environmental impact, challenges in recruiting teaching staff and the considerable expenditure needed to equip and bring the building up to standard, and the lack of local support for reopening Ardchattan Primary School, this is not a reasonable option.

10. OPTION E: CLOSE ARDCHATTAN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN ITS CATCHMENT AREA TO LOCHNELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

10.1 Community Feedback

The majority of people who attended the consultation were not in favour of reopening Ardchattan Primary as a school. They commented on how well pupils had settled in to other schools with developed friendships and on the sustainability of the school with respect to low numbers. Comments in relation to the closure of Ardchattan Primary School and attendance at Lochnell Primary School were very positive:

'Pupils are now well settled in other schools – they would not move their children back to Ardchattan.'

'Lochnell is super school the children are happy where they are.'

'Pupils are now well settled in other schools – they would not move back or away from their friends'

'The pupil numbers were low and this made a school unsustainable'.

One comment observed the interactions of the children in the village as children have opted to attend different schools:

'Children have become disconnected from each other and the community - they travel to different schools via different transport arrangements and they don't know each other.'

Another commented on the school premises and potential for this to become a community asset:

'The school buildings should be looked after as the only public space asset in the Bonawe area. The school has beautiful grounds and is a rich habitat for wildlife.'

The Ardchattan/Bonawe community and Friends of Ardchattan School are actively pursuing options for use of the building as a community hub.

10.2 Pupil Numbers

Table 5: Schools Occupancy:

Lochnell Primary	*2018/2019*	*2019/20*
Approved Capacity	*154*	*154*
Lochnell Projected Roll	*127*	*128*
Ardchattan Projected Roll	*6*	*5*
Total Roll Projection	*129*	*128*
Lochnell Occupancy	*83.7%*	*83%*

Pupils from Ardchattan Primary catchment area currently attend Dunbeg Primary School, Lochnell Primary School and the Gaelic

Medium Department in Strath of Appin Primary School. The current occupancy rate for Lochnell School including six pupils from Ardchattan catchment area is 83.7%.

10.3 Financial Information

The annual cost to transport pupils to alternative schools is **£44,187**.
The annual transport cost for six pupils to travel to Lochnell Primary School is **£18,152**.

10.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons for the proposal are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Ardchattan Primary School to increase. Ardchattan Primary School is currently mothballed and the pupils are rezoned to other schools. To reopen the school would not increase the pupil numbers.

10.4.1 *Community Impact*

The community overwhelmingly supported closure of the school with the building and adjoining grounds being retained for community use. Within the Ardchattan/Bonawe there is no hall or other community building. All people who attended the consultation strongly stated 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 community's access to the premises. It is accepted that school closure may have an adverse effect on a community, a vibrant community hub could be an asset to a community. This could potentially have a very positive impact on sustainability of the community if this option were to progress. 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.

10.4.2 *Travel Arrangements*

The travel distance from Ardchattan Primary to Lochnell Primary is 8.3 miles via the B84, or 10.2 miles via the A828. Travel time is approximately twenty minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost four years. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Bonawe community. This option would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The

closure of Ardchattan Primary School, in terms of travel would have a neutral effect on the environment. The current annual transport cost for six pupils to travel to Lochnell Primary School is **£18,152**. The current annual transport cost of taking pupils to alternative schools is **£44,187.**

10.5 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.

Both Lochnell and Ardchattan are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from Ardchattan area, attending Lochnell Primary School are benefitting from the rural broader environment, whilst not moving their learning to a school that is completely different to their home environment. Outdoor learning is currently provided at Lochnell. The pupils are then 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.

10.6 Summary

The majority of people who attended the consultation commented on how well pupils had settled into other schools they attend and were not in favour of reopening Ardchattan Primary as a school, and realigning the catchment area of Lochnell 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 as a community asset.

Current capacity for Lochnell Primary School including the six pupils from Ardchattan Primary School is 83.7%. The annual cost to transport pupils to alternative schools is **£44,187**. The annual transport cost for six pupils to travel to Lochnell Primary School is **£18,152**.

The travel distance from Ardchattan Primary to Lochnell Primary is 8.3 miles via the B84, or 10.2 miles via the A828, and this option would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Ardchattan Primary School would have a neutral effect on the environment. Lochnell School currently accommodates pupils from Ardchattan School 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 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.

11. OVERVIEW OF OPTIONS

Option	Option Description	Outcome
A	Re-open Ardchattan Primary School with the existing catchment area	Not a reasonable option.
B	Continued Mothballing of Ardchattan Primary School with the pupils zoned to Lochnell Primary School	Not a reasonable option.
C	Re-open Ardchattan Primary School and realign the catchment area of Lochnell School to include pupils in the North Connel area to the east of the A828.	Not a reasonable option
D (Community Suggestion)	The school is re-opened and designated as a resource centre for children with additional support needs.	Not a reasonable option
E	Close Ardchattan Primary School and realign the catchment area of Lochnell Primary School to include the catchment area for Ardchattan	A reasonable option with strong representation that the school becomes a facility the community can develop.

12. DETAILED ANALYSIS OF REASONABLE OPTION: CLOSE ARDCHATTAN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA FOR LOCHNELL PRIMARY SCHOOL TO INCLUDE THE FORMER ARDCHATTAN CATCHMENT AREA

12.1 Pupil Projections

Lochnell Primary	*2018/2019*	*2019/20*
Approved Capacity	*154*	*154*
Lochnell Projected Roll	*127*	*128*
Ardchattan Projected Roll	*6*	*5*
Total Roll Projection	*129*	*128*
Lochnell Occupancy	*83.7%*	*83%*

12.2 Educational Benefits

This statement focusses on Lochnell Primary School, which is the school the majority of the Ardchattan Pupils have been attending since August 2014.

12.2.1 *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 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. 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. 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, Lorn and the Isles Cluster, and a smaller local 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.

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 on Sports Day and in the dining room when groups of children are together in a social context. This system develops and benefits both the ‘buddy’ and the ‘buddied’.

To implement this system there needs to be children across a range of stages in the school.

Both Lochnell and Ardchattan are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from Ardchattan area, attending Lochnell Primary School are benefitting from the rural broader environment, whilst not moving their learning to a school that is completely different to their home environment.

The co-location of the nursery and the primary classes at Lochnell enhances the transition process for the children moving from Nursery in to Primary one, through joint educational processes and liaison between the two settings.

12.2.2 *Outcomes*

Through the GIRFEC practice mode, 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. Almost all children are achieving national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy. Lochnell continues to develop within the PATHS program supporting positive behaviours and relationship within the school. 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.

12.2.3 *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.

12.2.4 *Environment for Learning*

Lochnell Primary School is a suitably-equipped and well supported school, situated in the village of Benderloch. The entire building is well maintained and along with the surrounding scenery provides attractive accommodation for the primary school. The school has an all- weather pitch adjacent to the school. The pitch is used very well by the school. The building has facilities for pupils and visitors with special access needs.

12.3 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons for the proposal are stated on page 2 of this report. There is currently no expectation for the pupil numbers to increase at the school. Ardchattan Primary School is mothballed and the pupils all attend other schools. Having considered all the alternatives above, the option to close Ardchattan Primary School and realign the catchment area for Lochnell Primary School to include the former Ardchattan catchment area is considered the most reasonable means to address the reasons identified at page 2 of this report.

12.3.1 *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 Ardchattan/Bonawe there is no hall or other community building. All people who attended the consultation strongly stated 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 community's access to the premises. It is accepted that a school closure may have an adverse effect on a community, but a vibrant community hub 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 by the community.

12.3.2 *Travel* Arrangements

The travel distance from Ardchattan Primary to Lochnell Primary is 8.3 miles via the B84, or 10.2 miles via the A828. Travel time is approximately twenty minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost four years. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Bonawe community. Pupils will travel in one minibus and eventually all the pupils will travel to Lochnell Primary School. At present, some travel to Dunbeg Primary School. The environmental impact of travel will be minimal, as these arrangements are currently in place due to the mothballing of Ardchattan Primary School. The closure of Ardchattan Primary School, in terms of travel, would have a neutral effect on the environment. The current annual transport cost for six pupils to travel to Lochnell Primary School is **£18,152**. The current annual transport cost of taking pupils to alternative schools is **£44,187.** These costs remain unchanged from the current costs.

12.4 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 Ardchattan Primary School are a total of **£1,035**.

Annual savings generated through closing Ardchattan Primary School would be **£1,035**.

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 local community.

12.5 Environmental Impact

Currently four pupils travel to Dunbeg Primary School and six pupils travel to Lochnell Primary School from the Ardchattan Primary School Catchment area, for which there is an environmental impact. 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

Five alternative options have been reviewed in considering the future of Ardchattan 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 formulating a rural school closure proposal must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 before starting to prepare its proposal paper.

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 Ardchattan Primary School and redrawing its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School is the most reasonable option in order to address the 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 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.