

MINARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Community Services Committee on the current situation of Minard Primary School, and invite Members to agree to the recommendations outlined.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Community Services Committee agree that:

- a) The mothballing of Minard Primary School be continued on a temporary basis until December 2020 at the latest, and that the School premises be retained during this time on a care and maintenance basis.
- b) In the intervening period, Education Services will gather the necessary information, identify all reasonable options and assess those options in order to consider the future of Minard Primary School in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.
- c) The community will have pre-arranged access to the building to promote community functions.

MINARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 There have been no pupils attending Minard Primary School since October 2018. As such, the School has been *de facto* mothballed for over a year. Three pupils in the Minard Primary catchment area currently attend Furnace Primary School, three attend Inveraray Primary and eight attend Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary. Of the children who are of pre-school age, there are three under-3s who do not attend any pre-school provision and one child who attends Inveraray Nursery.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee agree that:

- a) The mothballing of Minard Primary School be continued on a temporary basis until December 2020 at the latest, and that the School premises be retained during this time on a care and maintenance basis.
- d) In the intervening period, Education Services will gather the necessary information, identify all reasonable options and assess those options in order to consider the future of Minard Primary School in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.
- b) The community will have pre-arranged access to the building to promote community functions.

5.0 DETAIL

- 5.1 The School Roll at Minard Primary School has declined over the last few years and as of October 2018, there have been no pupils attending the School. As such, the School has been *de facto* mothballed since that date. Three pupils living in the Minard Primary catchment area currently attend Furnace Primary School, three attend Inveraray Primary and eight attend Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary. Of the children who are of pre-school age, there are three under-3s who do not attend any pre-school provision and one child who attends Inveraray Nursery.

- 5.2 All members of staff from Minard Primary School have either been redeployed in other posts within the Authority or accepted redundancy.
- 5.3 The mothballing of a school is a temporary closure. It does not require a statutory consultation to be carried out as it is an informal non-statutory measure. It is appropriate where the Authority considers that a school is not presently viable, but do not wish to close it immediately in order to assess the prospects of the number of pupils in the area increasing to the extent that the school should be re-opened in the future.
- 5.4 The Scottish Government's Statutory Guidance on the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*¹ stresses that this flexibility to close a school for a temporary period is not used to undermine the requirements of the 2010 Act to consult on all closure proposals. Mothballing is only appropriate for a temporary period, should be subject to at least an annual review and, in most cases, should last no more than three years in total.
- 5.5 As Minard Primary School has been *de facto* mothballed since October 2018, it is recommended that this process be continued until no later than December 2020. In the intervening period, officers intend to monitor the situation and gather information in relation to the preliminary requirements with regard to rural school closures under the 2010 Act. In particular, this process will look to identify and assess the various options that are available regarding the future of Minard Primary School.
- 5.6 In the event of a school age pupil moving to live within the catchment area for Minard Primary School and seeking to attend the School, the present situation is that the school may require to re-open at the next appropriate session if a sufficient level of demand for the School can be demonstrated.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Minard Primary School has been *de facto* mothballed since October 2018. It is proposed that this arrangement be continued until no later than December 2020, and in the intervening period Education Services gather the necessary information and carry out the exercise of assessing the options for the future of Minard Primary School, in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Policy – None
- 7.2 Financial – If the mothballing of the School is continued, there will be costs associated with the upkeep and maintenance of the School premises.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/schools-consultation-scotland-act-2010-statutory-guidance/> (See Paragraphs 63-65.)

- 7.3 Legal – The provisions of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* will subsequently apply if the Authority later decide to formulate a proposal under that Act in order to determine the future of Minard Primary School.
- 7.4 HR – None
- 7.5 Fairer Duty Scotland
 - 7.5.1 Equalities – None at present
 - 7.5.2 Socio-Economic Duty – None at present
 - 7.5.3 Islands – None at present
- 7.6 Risk – None at present
- 7.7 Customer Service – None at present

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