

**SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 – SKIPNESS PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 In response to the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic this report sets out proposals to extend the current six week statutory consultation exercise with regard to the proposal to close Skipness Primary School and to re-schedule the public meeting, currently set for 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020, when the Covid-19 situation subsides.
- 1.2 Members are asked to:-
- 1.2.1 Agree the extension of the current consultation period, due to end on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020, to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020;
  - 1.2.2 Agree that the public meeting scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 is cancelled and a new date established once the current UK/Scottish Government restrictions on public assemblies are reduced/lifted.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Skipness Primary School has been mothballed since October 2016 and since that time has had no pupils enrolled.
- 2.2 On 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019 the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an Options Appraisal for Skipness Primary School. A report providing details of the Options Appraisal, which was carried out in accordance with Section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, was tabled at the Community Services Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2019, where the Committee agreed to note the outcome of the preliminary requirements and requested that officers formulate a draft proposal.
- 2.3 At the Community Services Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020, Members considered and agreed to adopt the draft proposal as a “relevant proposal” that would proceed to a statutory consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are asked to:-

- 3.1 Agree the extension of the current consultation period, due to end on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020, to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020;
- 3.2 Agree that the public meeting scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 is cancelled and a new date established once the current UK/Scottish Government restrictions on public assemblies are reduced/lifted.

**3.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 Following agreement of the draft proposal at the Community Services Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020, Officers have commenced the statutory consultation exercise

under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, with regard to the proposed closure of Skipness Primary School with effect from 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

- 4.2 As part of the consultation exercise the Education Authority has published the proposal paper, advertised it, and notified Education Scotland and all of the relevant consultees as prescribed by Schedule 2 of the Act, inviting them to make representations on the proposal.
- 4.3 The 6 week consultation period commenced on 19<sup>th</sup> March and is due to end at close of business on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020, which meets the statutory requirements and includes at least 30 school days. A public meeting has also been arranged for 6<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm in Skipness Village Hall.
- 4.4 Given the current situation surrounding Covid-19 and the UK/Scottish Government restrictions on public assemblies it is recommended that the public meeting scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 is postponed until such time as the current restrictions are reduced/lifted to allow public gatherings. Section 7 of the Act states that the public meeting must be held during the consultation period and, given that the current consultation period is due to end on 15<sup>th</sup> May, it is recommended that this is extended until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. This will allow more flexibility in terms of rearranging the public meeting and also provides stakeholders with an extended timeframe to participate in the consultation process. If the position regarding restrictions on public gatherings changes, then re-scheduling of the public meeting can be brought forward/looked at again.
- 4.5 If the aforementioned is approved, dialogue will take place with Education Scotland to advise them of the changes and to work with them on altering the timelines at the back end of the process, including revised timescales for completing all the necessary reports and the final implementation date. A communication will also be issued to all stakeholders advising why and how the consultation period has been extended. A notification of the change to the consultation timeframe will be posted on the Council's website (<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/school-consultations-and-proposals>) and notice of the rearranged public meeting will be issued to all the relevant consultees once it is confirmed.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Given the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic this report sets out proposals to extend the current six week statutory consultation exercise with regard to the proposal to close Skipness Primary School and to re-schedule the public meeting, currently set for 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020, when the Covid-19 situation subsides.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy – proposals in line with previous committee decisions
- 6.2 Financial – none arising from this report
- 6.3 Legal – proposals comply with Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) 2010 Act

- 6.4 HR – none
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: none
  - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics - none
  - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - none
  - 6.5.3 Islands - none
- 6.6 Risk - appropriate measures put in place to ensure the learning and teaching environment remains safe
- 6.7 Customer Service – proposals allow all relevant stakeholders to engage for an extended period of time

**Douglas Hendry**  
**Executive Director with responsibility for Education**

**Policy Lead – Councillor Yvonne Mcneilly**

31 March 2020

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