

**MINARD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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**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**

The Report recommends that Community Services Committee agree that:

- a) Minard Primary School is continued to be mothballed on a temporary basis for the next year and that the School premises be retained during this time on a care and maintenance basis.
- b) During the intervening period, Education Officers will start the pre-consultation process when it is permissible under the Regulations relating to public gatherings and produce an Options Appraisal paper for the Committee's June 2022 meeting for a decision in relation to the future of Minard Primary School.

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**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 two years. Three pupils in the Minard catchment area currently attend Furnace Primary School, two children attend Inveraray Primary and nine children attend Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary. Of the children who are of pre-school age, two children attend Pre 5 Provision at Furnace and three children attend Inveraray Nursery.
- 3.2 The Community Services Committee previously agreed on 8 December 2020 to extend the mothballing until May 2021 and that the preliminary work and Options Appraisal would be undertaken during this time.
- 3.3 The Education Service have been unable to undertake the community pre-consultation and Options Appraisal due to further 'lockdown' measures that have been enforced since January 2021.

**4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Report recommends that Community Services Committee agree that:

- a) Minard Primary School is continued to be mothballed on a temporary basis for the next year and that the School premises be retained during this time on a care and maintenance basis.
- b) During the intervening period, Education Officers will start the pre-consultation process when it is permissible under the Regulations relating to public gatherings and produce an Options Appraisal paper for the Committee's June 2022 meeting for a decision in relation to the future of Minard Primary School.

**5.0 DETAIL**

- 5.1 It is proposed that Minard Primary School building be retained for the next year on a care and maintenance basis.

- 5.2 The School Roll at Minard Primary 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 for over two years. Three pupils in the Minard catchment area currently attend Furnace Primary School, two children attend Inveraray Primary and nine children attend Lochgilphead Joint Campus Primary. Of the children who are of pre-school age, two children attend Pre 5 Provision at Furnace and three children attend Inveraray Nursery.
- 5.3 All members of staff from Minard Primary School have either been redeployed into other posts within the authority or accepted redundancy.
- 5.4 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 does 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.
- 5.5 The Scottish Government's Statutory Guidance on the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*<sup>1</sup> 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.
- 5.6 Minard Primary School has been *de facto* mothballed since October 2018, we are seeking further continuation of this mothballing and in the intervening period, Education Officers will start the pre-consultation process when it is permissible under the Regulations relating to public gatherings and produce an Options Appraisal paper for the Committee's June 2022 meeting for a decision in relation to the future of Minard Primary School.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 It is proposed that Members agree to continuing the temporary mothballing of Minard Primary School until June 2022, after which the Committee will decide the future of the School, based on the community pre-consultation and Options Appraisal paper 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 agreed, there will be costs associated with the upkeep and maintenance of the School premises.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/schools-consultation-scotland-act-2010-statutory-guidance/>

- 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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