

SOUTHEND 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 Southend Primary School, and invite Members to agree to the recommendations outlined.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee agree that:

- a) Southend Primary School is mothballed on a temporary basis and that the building be retained on a care and maintenance basis.
- b) Officers will prepare a review of the school's mothballing for the Committee's June 2022 meeting at which members can decide on a continued period of mothballing or request officers to begin a preliminary exercise with a view to starting the pre-consultation process to consider the future options for Southend Primary School.

SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 As of April 2021 there will be no pupils attending Southend Primary School. Pupils residing within the Southend catchment area currently attend schools within Campbeltown. The pre-school aged children within the catchment area attend nursery settings in Campbeltown. There are no Primary 1 pupils registered to attend Southend Primary School in session 2021-22.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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- a) Southend Primary School is mothballed on a temporary basis and that the building be retained on a care and maintenance basis.
- b) Officers will prepare a review of the school's mothballing for the Committee's June 2022 meeting at which members can decide on a continued period of mothballing or request officers to begin a preliminary exercise with a view to starting the pre-consultation process to consider the future options for Southend Primary School.

5.0 DETAIL

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Southend Primary School building be retained for two years on a care and maintenance basis.
- 5.2 If there are no registered pupils by the commencement of session 2022/23, it is proposed that a preliminary assessment of options regarding the future of the school be undertaken by way of an Options Appraisal, in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. Should the school subsequently be considered for formal closure, a statutory consultation process in accordance with the 2010 Act will be necessary.
- 5.3 The school roll at Southend Primary School has been small but stable over a number of years but as of April 2021 there were no pupils attending the school.

- 5.4 The school roll declined rapidly over a short period of time, due to families moving outwith the catchment area and parental choice for placing requests to other schools, leaving no enrolled pupils at Southend Primary School.
- 5.5 As of April 2021 there will be no pupils in Southend Primary School. Pupils residing within the Southend catchment area currently attend schools within Campbeltown. The pre-school aged children within the catchment area attend nursery settings in Campbeltown. There are no Primary 1 pupils registered to attend Southend in session 2021-22.
- 5.6 All members of staff from Southend Primary School have either been redeployed into other posts within the authority or accepted redundancy.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 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.
- 5.9 As no pupils have been attending Southend Primary School since April 2021, it is recommended that the School is mothballed on a temporary basis until March 2022, at which point members will decide on whether to continue the mothballing of the school or begin the pre-consultation process in line with the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.
- 5.10 During the period of mothballing, officers will monitor the situation and gather information in relation to the preliminary requirements with regard to possible 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 Southend Primary School.
- 5.11 In the event of a school age pupil moving to live within the catchment area for Southend 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.

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

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 It is proposed that Members agree to the temporary mothballing of Southend Primary School until June 2022, after which the Committee will decide on a continued period of mothballing for the school or for the Education Service to begin gathering the necessary information to carry out the exercise of assessing the options for the future of Southend Primary School, in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

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.

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 Southend 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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