

SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION)(SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 - 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

The report recommends that the Community Services Committee:

- a) Agree that Southend Primary School continues to be mothballed on a temporary basis and that the building be retained on a care and maintenance basis.
- b) Agree that officers should start the pre-consultation process and produce an Options Appraisal paper for the March 2023 Committee meeting for a decision in relation to the future of Southend Primary School.
- c) Note that there have been no requests to use the building since 2021 however if any do come forward they would be considered in the light of the current condition of the building, and any recommissioning works required.

SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION)(SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 - SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL

3.0 INTRODUCTION

3.1 Southend Primary School was mothballed in April 2021. As of August 2022 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 2022/23.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- a) Agree that Southend Primary School continues to be mothballed on a temporary basis and that the building be retained on a care and maintenance basis.
- b) Agree that officers should start the pre-consultation process and produce an Options Appraisal paper for the March 2023 Committee meeting for a decision in relation to the future of Southend Primary School.
- c) Note that there have been no requests to use the building since 2021 however if any do come forward they would be considered in the light of the current condition of the building, and any recommissioning works required.

5.0 DETAIL

5.1 At the Community Services Committee meeting on 10th June 2021, it was proposed that the Southend Primary School building be retained for two years on a care and maintenance basis.

- 5.2 As there are no registered pupils for 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 was 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 were 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 Primary School in session 2022-23.
- 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 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.
- 5.8 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, and the School has been mothballed on a temporary basis beyond March 2022, it is recommended that members decide on whether to continue to mothball the school and begin the pre-consultation process in line with the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.
- 5.10 In the intervening period of mothballing, officers intend to 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.

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

5.11 In the event of a sufficient number of school age pupils seeking to attend the School, the school may require to re-open at the next appropriate session. In this eventuality a further report would be brought before members.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 It is proposed that Members of the Committee agree on a continued period of mothballing for the school and for the Education Service to begin gathering the necessary information, 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 Climate Change - None

7.7 Risk – None at present

7.8 Customer Service – None at present

Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly - Policy Lead for Education

For further information contact:

Wendy Brownlie, Head of Education: Learning and Teaching
Wendy.Brownlie@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Annette Trevelyan, Education Officer
Annette.Trevelyan2@argyll-bute.gov.uk

27 June 2022