



Argyll and Bute Council

Education

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: June 2023

Review of Education Provision

Minard Primary School

Proposal for the closure of Minard Primary School

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that education provision at Minard Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024.

The catchment areas of Lochgilphead Primary School and Furnace Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Minard Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

This is the best option to address the reasons for the proposals which are;

- Minard Primary School has been mothballed for over 4 years. The school roll is zero and not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 8.59 fte primary vacancies for teachers in Argyll and Bute.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budget for maintenance. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £10,382.

This document has been issued by Argyll and Bute Council in regard to a proposal in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. This document has been prepared by the Council's Education Service with input from other Council Services.

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Argyll and Bute Council website:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/school-consultations-and-proposals>

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document

- The pupils, deemed to be of suitable age and maturity to be able to communicate a view on the proposal, at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- Argyll and Bute Councillors (Ward 3 Mid Argyll)
- Furnace Community Council
- West Loch Fyne Community Council
- Lochgilphead Community Council
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The Constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Chief Superintendent, Police Scotland
- Chief Executive, NHS Highland
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Area Commander, Fire Scotland
- Education Scotland

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Lochgilphead Library, Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8XQ
- Lochgilphead Service Point, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD
- Lochgilphead Joint Campus, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, PA31 8AA
- Furnace Primary Furnace, By Inveraray, Argyll PA32 8XU
- Minard Village Hall, Minard, By Inveraray, Argyll PA32 8YB

This document is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English.

If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please apply to the Executive Director, Argyll and Bute Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT.

Jezeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymaO ten dokument w innym języku lub w innym formacie albo jeeli potrzebna jest pomoc Uumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

1 Introduction

- 1.1 On 10th December 2019, Argyll and Bute Council approved the continued mothballing of Minard Primary School on a temporary basis until December 2020, and that the School premises be retained during this time on a care and maintenance basis.

Minard Primary School – Mothballing Decision:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=8513&Ver=4> (Agenda Item 11)

- 1.2 Further to this, on 8th December 2020, the Community Services Committee agreed that Minard Primary School would continue to be mothballed on a temporary basis until May 2021 and that the school premises be retained during this time on a care and maintenance basis. It was also agreed by the Community Services Committee that in the intervening period, Education Services would undertake a pre consultation meeting as part of the preliminary work and options appraisal process when it was permissible under the Coronavirus Regulations relating to public gatherings. The Education Service intended to undertake the required preliminary consultation, and an options appraisal, for Minard Primary School in May 2021 but due to the restrictions of the pandemic were unable to complete this work until the last term. The Community Services Committee received a report presenting and outlining details of a potential formal consultation under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* (as amended) and a broad timeline of this process.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=13970&Ver=4> (Agenda Item 13b)

Following the preliminary engagement exercise, the Education Service prepared an Options Appraisal in respect of Minard Primary School, which was considered by the Community Services Committee on 25th August 2022. Members noted the outcome of the Options Appraisal (which identified closure of the school as the most reasonable option in the circumstances); and agreed that Officers now formulate a draft closure proposal that would come back to the June 2023 meeting of the Committee for approval by Members which would subsequently trigger the formal consultation process under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

[Agenda for Community Services Committee on Thursday, 25 August 2022, 10:00 am - Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#) (Agenda Item 8)

- 1.3 The statutory process for the closure of a rural school is laid out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Act, as amended, introduced a presumption against closure of a rural school and details specific requirements which the education authority is required to follow if they are formulating a proposal to close a rural school. This includes the introduction of certain preliminary requirements which must be satisfied prior to the formulation of a proposal.
- 1.4 In addition, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out a new right for community organisations to request the transfer of local assets into local community ownership/management. This may be something that the Community wish to consider as part of or as a consequence of this process. Public bodies including Councils must consider such requests and make a decision within six months of receiving a valid request.
- 1.5 Minard Primary School has had zero pupils enrolled since elected members approved the mothballing.
- 1.6 There is a requirement to have special regard to the rural schools factors prior to formulating a proposal to close a rural school. In particular it is necessary to consider any reasonable alternatives before considering closure. It is also necessary to consider the impact on the wider community of a potential closure and the impact of any different travel arrangements. These factors have been considered in the preliminary requirements which were undertaken prior to this proposal being written. A full assessment of the preliminary requirements is set out in the Options Appraisal, which is attached as **Appendix 5**.
- 1.7 The Argyll and Bute Corporate Plan identifies Argyll and Bute as an area of Scotland with outstanding place, people and potential for a prosperous future for everyone. Our Council, along with our Community Planning Partners, is committed to ensuring that Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population. At the time of writing new Council Priorities re Argyll and Bute's Corporate Plan for 2022-2027 are still in the process of being finalised and considered.
- 1.8 At the time of writing, our agreed Council Priorities are to ensure that:
 - The education we provide meets the needs of all our young people and their families

- We make the most of our assets to build the local economy
- We support individual and community wellbeing
- We strengthen and empower our communities
- We ensure there are homes for all, we tackle poverty and build opportunity
- We have greener and cleaner communities
- We are an employer of choice
- We manage our finances prudently

1.9 The Council, as an Education Authority, has a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand. This is reflected in “Our Children, Their Future” which is the Education Vision and Strategy for Argyll and Bute Council.

2 Proposal

2.1 It is proposed that education provision at Minard Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment areas of Lochgilphead Primary School and Furnace Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Minard Primary School as identified in 2.2 and illustrated in **Appendix 3**.

2.2 It is proposed that children in the Minard catchment area would be directed to Lochgilphead Joint Campus or Furnace Primary, depending on where they live in the catchment area. The proposal is that children living in the north section of catchment area from Achagoyle Bay to Blackstone Bay attend Furnace Primary (with that section of Minard’s catchment area being subsumed by Furnace Primary School) and children in the south section of the catchment area from Achagoyle Bay to Kilmichael Beg attend Lochgilphead Joint Campus (with that section of Minard’s catchment area being subsumed by Lochgilphead Primary School). A map illustrating the proposed new catchment areas within Minard is attached in **Appendix 3**.

Reasons for this proposal

2.3 This is the best option to address the reasons for the proposal which are:

- Minard Primary School has been mothballed for over 4 years. The school roll is zero and not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Along with several other rural councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing

there are 8.59 fte primary vacancies for Head Teachers and teachers in Argyll and Bute.

- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budget for maintenance. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £10,382.

Additional Considerations

- The Council needs to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services;
- This proposal will bring educational benefits and assist in ensuring that the Education budget is more sustainable into the future. This proposal document contains an Educational Benefits Statement;
- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high;
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect the educational attainment of pupils; and
- There is no realistic possibility at present of the Council being able to bring its whole school estate up to a satisfactory condition. The present condition is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate.

3 Preliminary requirements

- 3.1 The Council is required to consider the future of Minard Primary School, as it has been mothballed for over 4 years. The Council have considered the reasons for making this proposal, and have also considered other viable alternatives, the likely effect on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements as a consequence of this proposal. Financial implications were also considered. Some of these figures have been recalculated since the Options Appraisal was produced.
- 3.2 The Council considered how the implementation of this proposal would impact on the education of the children affected. The Council also considered the impact on the children who currently live in the

catchment area but attend other schools, as well as children who may potentially live in the catchment area in the future.

- 3.3 The place of the school in the community was also considered, in terms of the impact this proposal would have on the sustainability of the community itself. The school has not been used by the local community since it has been mothballed.
- 3.4 Impact on the environment was taken into account during the initial pre-consultation process. This included a consideration of the transport implications if this proposal was to be implemented, as children would have to travel by bus to attend Lochgilphead or Furnace Primary Schools.
- 3.5 Three options were presented to the local community by the Council for consideration during the pre-consultation phase, as required by section 12A of the 2010 Act.
- 3.6 Of the three options which were considered by the community and the Council; (c) is the favoured option by the Council, as it was considered it most adequately addressed the reasons for the proposal.
 - a) Re-open Minard Primary School,
 - b) Continued Mothballing of Minard Primary with pupils zoned to Lochgilphead Primary and Furnace Primary schools.
 - c) Close Minard Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochgilphead Primary and Furnace Primary schools (The Proposal).
- 3.7 When considering the above options; the positive educational benefits of Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools alongside the factors of projected low pupil numbers, the challenges in recruiting teaching staff and the considerable expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard at Minard Primary School, in addition the lack of local support for reopening Minard Primary School, option (c) was considered the most appropriate response to the underlying reasons behind consideration of this proposal.
- 3.8 Following from an initial Options Appraisal which was presented to the Council's Community Services Committee on 25th August 2022, it was agreed that the preliminary requirements were satisfied enabling the draft closure proposal to be formulated, with the option to close Minard Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools (in the manner described at Paragraph 2.2, and Appendix 3, of this Paper) being identified as the most adequate means of addressing the reasons for possible proposal.

- 3.9 During the preliminary engagement regarding the future options for Minard Primary School there were a range of viewpoints gathered from parents, young people and members of the community.
- 3.10 The community reflected that Minard Primary School had been an integral part of the community, and there were contrasting views on the proposals for the future of Minard Primary School.
- 3.11 Closing the school would have no impact on staff or pupil travel from the current arrangement. There would be no alteration to the current environmental impact.

Alternatives to the Proposal

- 3.12 The community engagement process prior to the drafting of this proposal considered the views of members of the community and also considered any other alternatives to the closure of Minard Primary School. Full details from the community engagement and the findings from the preliminary requirements, including assessment of the reasonable alternatives, are attached as **Appendix 5**.
- 3.13 In conclusion, after the pre-consultation with the community, the Council feels that the proposal to close Minard Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools (as described at Paragraph 2.2 & Appendix 3) is the most reasonable means to address the underlying reasons for considering the future of Minard Primary School. Further detail is provided in relation to educational benefits, travel, environmental impact, community impact and financial impact below.

4 Assessment of the Proposal

- 4.1 It is proposed that education provision at Minard Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Minard Primary School as detailed at Paragraph 2.2 and **Appendix 3**.
- 4.2 Minard Primary School has been mothballed for over 4 years. The school condition will deteriorate with limited budgets for maintenance. The school roll is currently zero and although there is a small increase in pupils within the catchment area projected, this is not significant enough to make the school viable again. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £10,382.

- 4.3 Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 8.59 fte primary vacancies for Head Teachers and teachers in Argyll and Bute.
- 4.4 The Council needs to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services.
- 4.5 This proposal will bring educational benefits and assist in ensuring that the Education budget is more sustainable into the future.
- 4.6 The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high.
- 4.7 Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect the educational attainment of pupils.
- 4.8 There is no realistic possibility at present of the Council being able to bring its whole school estate up to a satisfactory condition. The present condition is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate.
- 4.9 As part of the preliminary requirements in the drafting of this proposal, the Council considered three options. The favoured option by the Council is (c), as it was considered it most adequately addressed the reasons for the proposal.
- a) Re-open Minard Primary School;
 - b) Continued Mothballing of Minard Primary with the pupils zoned to Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools;
 - c) Close Minard Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools (The Proposal).
- 4.10 Having considered these other alternatives the Council has made a decision that these are not viable alternatives to the closure proposal, and will proceed with the option to consult on the proposal to close Minard Primary School and extend the catchment areas of Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools respectively (as detailed at Paragraph 2.2, and Appendix 3) to include the current catchment area for Minard Primary School.
- 4.11 The Council has undertaken an appraisal on impact if this proposal was to be implemented.
- 4.12 This includes an assessment of:

- The school roll and predicted school roll;
- Teacher numbers; and
- The condition of the building.

4.13 The Council has carefully considered and reviewed the steps it has taken to address the underlying reasons for the proposal (as outlined at Section 2.3, above), prior to formulating this Proposal Paper.

4.13.1 In relation to the decline in the school roll, and no material increase being predicted in the forthcoming years, the School was mothballed over four years ago as a result of a change to the School's circumstances – i.e. the school roll falling to zero. The Education Authority therefore decided to mothball the school as a temporary measure – in order to monitor the situation and assess whether there was any likelihood of the school roll increasing to the extent that the School became viable again in the near future. The mothballing was subject to review at least annually and the Education Service undertook to review the position should any further school age pupils move into the catchment area and/or if they demonstrated a sufficient level of demand for the School to justify its re-opening. As mentioned above, the School has been mothballed for over four years, and its roll is not predicted to rise in the forthcoming years to a level which would make the School suitable for re-opening. As there has been no material change in circumstance evidenced, and having kept the position under review via mothballing for several years, the Education Service are of the view that matters should now move forward in the form of a statutory closure consultation in order to determine the future of Minard Primary School. This approach aligns with that suggested by the Statutory Guidance for the 2010 Act, and Paragraphs 63-65 in particular. Further details in relation to the School roll are set out at Section 5 of this Proposal Paper

4.13.2 In relation to the underlying reason for this proposal in regards to recruitment of teachers, the issues that have been faced by the Education Service regarding the recruitment of teachers to Minard Primary School are detailed at Section 6 of this Proposal Paper. Since the School's mothballing, in order to address this particular issue, and prior to formulating this proposal, the Education Service have offered a number of posts across the Authority area on a permanent basis to a locality, rather than to a temporary school, as an attempt to

increase the likelihood of attracting a permanent post. The Council has also entered into a strategic housing agreement with social housing partners to support staff with sourcing accommodation (which is a particular pressure in remote areas of Argyll and Bute), as well as offering relocation packages. Furthermore, the Education Service continues to work with UHI Argyll to recruit more local candidates for teacher training. Notwithstanding these efforts, the recruitment of teaching staff within Argyll and Bute remains a considerable challenge, hence why it is still a main underlying reason for this closure proposal.

4.13.3 In relation to the underlying reason for this proposal concerning the condition of the school premises, the school property will continue to deteriorate whilst it remains mothballed. As mentioned at Paragraph 4.13.1, above, there is currently no evidence to suggest that the School will become viable for re-opening in the near future. Whilst the School remains mothballed, it costs the Council £10,382 annually. Accordingly, the Education Service are now seeking approval to proceed with a statutory closure consultation which, if subsequently implemented, will allow the Education Service to use any savings generated to the benefit of the other occupied schools and pupils within the Education Authority's area. It may also allow for any plans for other uses of the School property to be progressed, as it will need to be permanently discontinued as an educational establishment in the first instance. Further information about the condition of the School building and premises can be found at Section 7 of this Proposal Paper.

4.14 The Council has also undertaken an assessment of likely educational benefits or effects which this proposal may have if implemented on:

- The pupils of any affected school;
- Any other users of the school's facilities;
- Any children who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school; and
- The pupils of any other schools in the Council area.

4.15 In addition, the Council has also considered how to minimise or avoid any adverse educational effects that may arise from the implementation of this proposal.

4.16 The Council has also taken special regard to the following factors if this proposal was to be implemented, as Minard Primary School is classified as a very remote rural school:

- Likely effect on the local community to be assessed by reference to:
 - The sustainability of the community; and
 - Availability of the school's premises and other facilities for use by the school community.
- Likely effect caused by different travelling arrangements by reference to the effect caused by such arrangements on:
 - Environmental impact; and
 - The schools pupils and staff and other users of the schools facilities.

4.17 Finally, the Council has also considered the financial implications of implementation of the proposal and information on this is set out later in this document.

5 School Roll

5.1 The information in relation to the school roll as shown below is drawn from the yearly pupil census, which takes place in September each year. School rolls by their very nature may fluctuate slightly on an ongoing basis due to changes in pupil numbers as a result of pupils moving to and from the catchment area.

The school roll of Minard Primary School has seen a steady decline since 2012.

Table 2:	Minard PS	Furnace PS	Lochgilphead PS
	Roll	Roll	Roll
Capacity	33	50	249
2011-2012	10	21	213
2012-2013	9	18	221
2013-2014	6	12	231
2014-2015	8	10	230
2015-2016	6	7	233
2016-2017	5	7	221
2017-2018	1	6	221

2018-2019	3	13	227
2019-2020	0	10	226
2020-2021	0	12	207
2021-2022	0	9	212
2022-2023	0	3	210

Predicted Roll*

Table 3:	Minard PS	Furnace PS	Lochgilphead PS
	Roll	Roll	Roll
Capacity	33	50	249
2023-2024	0(1)	3	203
2024-2025	2	5	198
2025-2026	1	4	188

*based on calculations available at February 2023
(NB 2023-24 Primary 1 Minard catchment registration to attend Inveraray Primary by Placing Request.)

5.2 In 2022-2023 there are 9 primary school aged children who live in the Minard Primary School catchment area and who attend other schools. One pupil attends Furnace Primary; three pupils attend Lochgilphead Primary. The remaining five pupils attend Inveraray Primary (by way of placing requests).

5.3 The school roll is not predicted to rise significantly in the future. The area around Minard is a small settlement and is not identified for growth in the Local Development Plan: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/ldp>.

5.4 Within the Minard Primary School catchment there is one housing allocation identified in both the Adopted Local Development Plan 2015 and in the emerging Proposed Local Development Plan 2. This is site H-AL 12/19 (re-referenced to H3023 in LDP2). The allocation has a remaining capacity of 13 units with an extant planning permission (16/02279/PP). The Proposed Local Development Plan 2 is currently at Examination with the Examination Report anticipated within the month (at April 2023). Allocation H3023 received objections relating to the capacity of the Allocation and this is currently being considered by the Reporter. There is a consent for a single dwelling outwith the Allocation but within the Minard Primary School Catchment Area.

6 Teacher numbers

- 6.1 Teacher numbers been improving nationally 2016 - 2021. In 2022 there was a small reduction of 0.2% in the total number of teachers in Scotland. In Argyll and Bute there has been a 5% reduction in the fte number of teachers from 2021 and 2022.
- 6.2 As the school has been mothballed for over 4 years, the issue of recruitment of staff has not improved. At the time of writing this report there are 8.59 fte primary vacancies for Head Teachers and teachers in Argyll and Bute. Despite a sustained effort to secure permanent staff, there is no reason to think that staffing would not continue to be a considerable challenge for Minard Primary School
- 6.3 At the current time, if the proposal was to be accepted and implemented following consultation, there would be no impact on staffing levels at Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools.

7 Condition of the building

- 7.1 Outlined in the Options Appraisal (**Appendix 5** – section 6.3) are the full financial details in reference to costs for the re-opening the building or continuing to retain the building as mothballed.
- 7.2 As part of the consultation process the Council would be open to exploring with the community options in regard to the future of the school building. This might involve consideration of matters around the possibility to transfer the building to a recognised community group through the provisions of the *Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015* or some other agreed mechanism. Such a route may provide the community with an opportunity to utilise the building as a driver for community benefit and potential regeneration that could also enhance the sustainability of the community.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT – LOCHGILPHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

8 Assessment of likely educational benefits on pupils

- 8.1 If this proposal is implemented, the Council believes that there will be considerable educational benefits arising from this. These centre around:
- Learning and teaching;

- Meeting learners needs;
 - Broadening the range of opportunities; and
 - The environment for learning.
- 8.2 This initial statement focusses on **Lochgilphead Primary School**, which is one of the schools that pupils from the Minard Primary School catchment area could potentially attend.
- 8.3 The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. There are no specific educational benefits from reopening Minard Primary School as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children, however the closure of the school and continued attendance of pupils at other schools allows children to experience a curriculum which is matched to their needs.
- 8.4 Minard and Lochgilphead Primary Schools are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a very remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Although there are currently 9 school aged children in the Minard Primary School catchment area, children from Minard Primary School area who previously attended Lochgilphead Primary School continued to benefit from education in a locality familiar to them, and still relatively close to home.
- 8.5 The co-location of the Early Learning Centre (ELC) and the primary classes at Lochgilphead Primary School enables a strong transition process between the ELC and school.
- 8.6 Lochgilphead Joint Campus offers a 3-18 education experience which is seamless at transition points between ELC to Primary and Primary to Secondary. Children, young people and their parents/ carers benefit from familiar and established relationships with their peers and teaching staff across the sectors.

9 Learning and Teaching

- 9.1 The curriculum includes a broad range of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, to help every child and young person to develop knowledge, skills and attributes for success in learning, life and work. In Lochgilphead Primary School, children are encouraged to be eager and active participants who are engaged, resilient and highly motivated during

their learning. Children know that their views are sought, valued and acted upon.

- 9.2 The learning environment encourages high level of achievement, providing a wide range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential within the four contexts of learning. In Lochgilphead Primary School children may be taught in classes composed of children from one year group or in some cases a composite class covering two year groups. Lochgilphead Joint Campus also encompasses a Learning Centre to support specific needs. Children benefit from being part of a social context in which they can build relationships with different groups and individuals, develop social skills, meet challenges and exercise responsibilities as members of a social group. They are able to interact and socialise with groups of children, take part in team activities and move with their peers seamlessly to secondary school within the Lochgilphead Joint Campus.
- 9.3 There is a continual challenge for all schools to deliver a school improvement agenda and deliver effectively the principles and outcomes of curriculum for excellence. The National Improvement Framework priorities include raising attainment for all, and closing the gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.
- 9.4 The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community.
- 9.5 At Lochgilphead Primary School, staff are challenged and supported through a range of continuous professional development and review opportunities gained by working and learning with a range of colleagues. Lochgilphead Primary School is part of the Mid Argyll and Kintyre Cluster, which means that staff can be supported across the area, moderation and tracking of pupil progress is enabled and staff work across stage appropriate groups. Colleagues within Lochgilphead Primary School are able to support and challenge each other on a daily basis. The whole staff are able to bring a range of talents and skills to benefit outcomes for learners.
- 9.6 Lochgilphead Primary School encourages nurturing and positivity. The co-location of the nursery and the primary classes at Lochgilphead Joint Campus enhance the transition process for children moving from Nursery to Primary one, through joint educational processes and liaison between the two settings.

10 Meeting learners' needs

- 10.1 Through the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), practice model, meeting the needs of every child continues to be a priority and teachers carefully plan and assess to ensure each child has the opportunity to reach their potential. Careful tracking and monitoring procedures are in place to evidence pupil progress. This includes professional dialogue with teachers, learning discussions with children, classroom observations, assessment and looking at pupil work.
- 10.2 The school also has planned meetings and discussions with parents. These discussions between home and school improve parental engagement whilst focussing on next steps for learning. Where appropriate, intervention is put in place, while working effectively with other agencies and parents to ensure the needs of each child are met. In the primary classes, the majority of children are achieving national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy. All of the schools in Mid Argyll continue to develop within the PATHS program supporting positive behaviours and relationship within the school.
- 10.3 The staff, parent body and partner groups also bring opportunities for increased collaborative working. This applies both in terms of the wider curriculum and within aspects of the curriculum that may be enhanced by staff individual expertise e.g. PE, language, science, expressive arts teaching.

11 Broadening the Range of Opportunities

- 11.1 Children are offered a range of active, planned experiences which help them develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing both now and in the future.
- 11.2 There is also a strong transition process between Lochgilphead Primary School and Lochgilphead High School, due to the nature of the through school 3-18 arrangements where young people benefit from continuity in relationships and connections.
- 11.3 Children are provided with a variety of experiences to develop their sense of responsibility, independence, confidence and enterprising attitude.
- 11.4 Across the school children are engaged with learning and contribute well in lessons. A strong sense of community exists with pupils and staff

co-operating, communicating and working collaboratively across the sectors to create a vibrant centre of learning for all.

12 Environment for Learning

- 12.1 Lochgilphead Primary School is a suitably-equipped and well supported school, situated in the town of Lochgilphead. The entire 3-18 campus, opened in 2007, is modern, well maintained and along with the surrounding scenery provides attractive accommodation for Lochgilphead Primary School within Lochgilphead Joint Campus. The school has an all-weather pitch adjacent to the school, which is well utilised. The building has facilities for pupils and visitors with special access needs.
- 12.2 The children maintain links with friends who live in their own village as well as creating links with children from other rural communities.
- 12.3 Any mitigating effects around the adverse weather and transport issues are outweighed by the benefits of this proposal. There is no change to the travel arrangements that are currently in place nor to the environmental impact from these. The travel distance (sourced from Google maps) from Minard Primary to Lochgilphead Primary is 13.13 miles via A83. Travel time is approximately 19 minutes by car. The travel arrangements have been in place for more than three years.
- 12.4 In summary, there are a range of educational benefits for pupils if this proposal was to be implemented, as summarised in the paragraphs above. There are benefits for the development of social and emotional skills, as well as the educational benefits resulting from access to a more diverse curriculum. The learning environment in Lochgilphead Primary School also offers children the opportunity to participate in a wider range of active learning strategies.

13 Assessment of likely educational benefits on other users of the school's facilities

Implications for staff

- 13.1 If this proposal is implemented, there will be no new implications for teaching and ancillary staff in Lochgilphead Primary School.
- 13.2 If this proposal is implemented, the Council does not envisage any adverse effects from the proposal in respect of staffing. Should issues arise however, these will be mitigated through the Council Educational Management Team support structure.

Early Learning Centre Users – Pre Five Children

- 13.3 The co-location for the Early Learning Centre (ELC) and the primary classes at Lochgilphead Primary School enables a strong transition process between the ELC and the school and includes joint educational processes and liaison between the two settings.

14 Assessment of likely educational benefits on any children who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school.

Existing and future pupils

- 14.1 Children who may live in this catchment area in the future will benefit from the broad range of educational opportunities which are presented through this proposal, as detailed above.
- 14.2 There would be positive educational benefits associated with this proposal particularly in opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies.
- 14.3 The proposal could increase the roll of Lochgilphead Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities.
- 14.4 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Minard Primary School, which consists of one classroom with dining area, corridor with cloakroom, toilets and office, would benefit from access to modern purpose built accommodation including dedicated sport facilities and specialist areas. Pupils would have access to access daily interaction in a larger peer group and from improved educational arrangements as described above. Pupils in the combined school will have more shared experiences and opportunity for friendships. This will enhance their confidence and make the transition to secondary school seamless through the Joint Campus arrangements. Larger year groups make the provision of specialist services more viable and provide enhanced opportunities for school trips. Lochgilphead Primary School meets all the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT – FURNACE PRIMARY SCHOOL

This second statement focusses on **Furnace Primary School**, which is one of the other schools that pupils from the Minard Primary School catchment area could potentially attend.

Learning & Teaching

- 15.1 The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. There are no specific educational benefits from reopening Minard Primary School as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children, however the closure of the school and continued attendance of pupils at other schools allows children to experience a curriculum which is matched to their needs.
- 15.2 Furnace Primary Schools is a remote rural school and set within a very remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from Minard Primary School area, who previously attended Furnace Primary School, continued to benefit from education in a locality familiar to them and still relatively close to home.
- 15.3 Furnace primary is presently staffed by a full time Principal Teacher and class teacher (0.2FTE) which supports personalised learning in a supportive environment. The school is also currently in a new and changed shared headship arrangement with Inveraray Primary School.

16 Learning and Teaching

- 16.1 The curriculum includes a broad range of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, to help every child and young person to develop knowledge, skills and attributes for success in learning, life and work. In Furnace Primary School, children experience good quality, personalised learning taught in a single multi-composite class bringing with that the opportunity to share learning experiences between the youngest and oldest pupils, as well as within the immediate peer group. Furnace Primary is part of a shared Headship arrangement with Inveraray Primary School, benefiting from close links with the larger school around educational experience and planning tasks and activities that are matched to children's varying needs. The children at Furnace Primary are able to

enhance their social skills and confidence by interacting with a wider range of peers through opportunities to learn at Inveraray Primary School in many aspects of their learning including Science, Physical Education and weekly outdoor learning.

- 16.2 The learning environment encourages high level of achievement, providing a range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential within the four contexts of learning. In Furnace Primary School children will be taught in a small class composed of children from more than one year group. Children benefit from being part of a small social context in which they can build relationships, develop social skills, meet challenges and exercise responsibilities as members of a social group. They are able to interact and connect with other children through shared Headship arrangement with Inveraray Primary. The Headteacher is committed to making proactive connections between the schools and the respective local communities.
- 16.3 There is a continual challenge for all schools to deliver a school improvement agenda and deliver effectively the principles and outcomes of curriculum for excellence. The National Improvement Framework priorities include raising attainment for all, and closing the gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.
- 16.4 The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community.
- 16.5 At Furnace Primary School, the small staffing complement are challenged and supported through a range of continuous professional development and review opportunities gained by working and learning with colleagues at Inveraray Primary School. Furnace Primary School is part of the Mid Argyll and Kintyre Cluster, which means that staff can be further supported to collaborate, moderate and track pupil progress and work with other colleagues to support children's progress.
- 16.6 Furnace Primary School encourages positivity and an inclusive ethos through the individual support and attention delivered in a small school.

17 Meeting learners' needs

- 17.1 Through the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), practice model, meeting the needs of every child continues to be a priority and teachers carefully plan and assess to ensure each child has the opportunity to reach their potential. Careful tracking and monitoring procedures are in

place to evidence pupil progress. This includes professional dialogue with teachers, learning discussions with children, classroom and assessment of pupil work.

- 17.2 The school also has planned meetings and discussions with parents. These discussions between home and school improve parental engagement whilst focussing on next steps for learning. Where appropriate, intervention is put in place, while working effectively with other agencies and parents to ensure the needs of each child are met. Children are achieving appropriate national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy.

18 Broadening the Range of Opportunities

- 18.1 Children are offered a range of active, planned experiences which help them develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing both now and in the future.
- 18.2 There is also a strong transition process between Furnace Primary School and Lochgilphead High School, where staff link closely with colleagues from Lochgilphead Joint Campus, to support smooth transitions for children moving on to secondary school.
- 18.3 Children are provided with a variety of experiences to develop their sense of responsibility, independence, confidence and enterprising attitude. Opportunities to learn at Inveraray Primary School in aspects of their learning including Science, Physical Education and weekly outdoor learning expand those experiences beyond Furnace Primary School.
- 18.4 In Furnace Primary children are engaged with learning and contribute well in lessons. A strong sense of community exists with pupils and staff co-operating, communicating and working collaboratively to create a calm, positive centre of learning.

19 Environment for Learning

- 19.1 Furnace Primary School is a suitably-equipped and well supported school, situated in the rural village of Furnace. The building is a small traditional school, well maintained and along with the surrounding forest areas and access to the beach excellent opportunities for outdoor learning are available. The building has facilities for pupils and visitors with special access needs.

- 19.2 In Furnace Primary School the children maintain links with friends who live in their own village as well as creating links with children from other rural communities.
- 19.3 Any mitigating effects around the adverse weather and transport issues are outweighed by the benefits of this proposal. There is no change to the travel arrangements that are currently in place nor to the environmental impact from these. The travel distance (sourced from Google maps) from Minard Primary to Furnace Primary is 3.82 miles via the A83. Travel time is approximately 7 minutes by car. The travel arrangements have been in place for more than three years.
- 19.4 In summary, there are a range of educational benefits for pupils if this proposal was to be implemented, as summarised in the paragraphs above. The learning environment in Furnace Primary School offers children the opportunity to learn within a school with a strong sense of community and personalised learning, whilst benefiting from opportunities to expand those experiences with established links to Inveraray Primary.

20 Assessment of likely educational benefits on other users of the school's facilities

Implications for staff

- 20.1 If this proposal is implemented, there will be no new implications for teaching and ancillary staff in Furnace Primary School.
- 20.2 If this proposal is implemented, the Council does not envisage any adverse effects from the proposal in respect of staffing. Should issues arise however, these will be mitigated through the Council Educational Management Team support structure.

21 Assessment of likely educational benefits on any children who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school.

Existing and future pupils

- 21.1 Children who may live in this catchment area in the future will benefit from the range of educational opportunities which are presented through this proposal, as detailed above.
- 21.2 There would be positive educational benefits associated with this proposal. The management arrangements of the school would be

strengthened and there would be opportunities for increasing the range of the curriculum and increasing the use of active pedagogies.

- 21.3 The proposal could support the roll of Furnace Primary School and would thus extend the peer group for all pupils, present and future. The larger school should be able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities.
- 21.4 Pupils who would otherwise have attended Minard Primary School, which consists of one classroom with dining area, corridor with cloakroom, toilets and office, would benefit from a larger school building of two classrooms plus Hall, kitchen facilities, toilets and associated offices for Reception and Head Teacher. Pupils in the combined school will have more shared experiences and opportunity for friendships across the two rural villages. Developing connections with Inveraray Primary support the Furnace rural school identity while benefiting from the extended opportunity links with Inveraray Primary School. Furnace Primary School meets all the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

22 Assessment of likely educational benefits on the pupils of any other schools in the Council area

- 22.1 The current mothballing of the school has had an indirect effect on other pupils in Argyll and Bute. The reduction in the running costs for the school means that this is a saving to the Council, which is not taken from elsewhere. However, the annual costs of keeping the school mothballed could feasibly be better allocated to the benefit of others.
- 22.2 There are no other significant impacts from this proposal on other pupils in the authority or who attend other schools, in either a positive or a negative way.

Placing requests

- 22.3 This proposal will not affect the right of parents to request that their child attend a school of their choice rather than the designated school in whose catchment area the family lives as provided by the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

23 Consideration of how to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the implementation of this proposal

- 23.1 The main adverse effect from this proposal would be the length of the journey to school for children who live in the Minard Primary School catchment area. However, the current arrangements (children from the

catchment area attending either Furnace Lochgilphead or Inveraray Primary Schools) have been in place since Minard Primary School was mothballed. Funded school transport would also continue to be provided for pupils to the new catchment schools should this proposal be implemented.

24 Summary of educational benefits statement

- 24.1 Educational benefits of this proposal, such as the ability for children to participate in a broad range of experiences, the development of the strategic leadership of the acting head teacher in taking forward improvements in learning and teaching, and the ability to meet the educational, social and emotional needs of the children are significant benefits to this proposal. During the pre-consultation phase, these benefits were explored in detail and details from the community engagement and the findings from the preliminary requirements, to include the alternative proposals and the authority's assessment of other likely effects of the proposal and the reasons for that assessment are attached as **Appendix 5**.
- 24.2 Whilst there are positive educational benefits, there is one negative aspect identified which arises from the children attending Lochgilphead or Furnace Primary Schools. This negative aspect is principally around the fact that children have to travel by either bus or car to school. However it is considered that the positive aspects of this proposal outweigh the negative aspect of some travelling for children.

25 Factors for rural school closures

- 25.1 The Council has taken special regard to the following factors in relation to this proposal as Minard Primary School is classified as a rural school.

The likely effect on the local community if this proposal is implemented

- 25.2 The Council has made an assessment on the sustainability of the community should this proposal be implemented and considers that this may have a positive impact.
- 25.3 The Scottish Government focuses on four key areas of importance to rural communities;
- a strong and diverse rural economy, harnessing traditional strengths and with an appetite for change,

- thriving rural communities where everyone can enjoy a decent quality of life, where the young are not forced to leave their communities to get on and where the vulnerable are no longer excluded,
- strong, community focused public services that are accessible, of the highest possible quality and with the greatest possible choice,
- a rural Scotland whose natural and cultural heritage flourishes in all its diversity

25.4 In rural communities, the challenges and opportunities are largely defined by the local area and can often best be met by a bottom-up, community-led response. Strong community leadership is vital to articulating local priorities and driving forward change and growth.

25.5 There is the potential if this proposal is implemented to capitalise on the existing will and drive in this community, with opportunities for local leaders to enable them to organise, motivate and inspire their neighbours. A portion of the school grounds were previously acquired by the Minard Community Trust for purposes in furtherance of the community. In terms of the remainder of the School property, the Council would be willing to engage with any community bodies coming forward with an interest or proposals in relation to the same.

25.6 Research¹ has shown that when communities feel empowered, there is:

- greater participation in local democracy;
- increased confidence and skills among local people;
- more people volunteering in their communities; and
- greater satisfaction with quality of life in the neighbourhood.

25.7 Within Minard there is Minard Village Hall which is used for community events. Almost all people who attended the preliminary consultation strongly preferred that the school building should be retained for community use and not allowed to fall in to further disrepair.

25.8 Indeed, the school closure may help to empower the local community should the community thereafter wish to explore the possibility of an asset transfer process for the building. This could have a positive impact on community sustainability. A portion of the school grounds were previously acquired by the Minard Community Trust for purposes

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/>

in furtherance of the community. In terms of the remainder of the School property, the Council would be willing to engage with any community bodies coming forward with an interest or proposals in relation to the same.

On the availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community

- 25.9 During the pre-consultation phase, there were differing views on the closure of the school with the suggestion that the building and adjoining grounds could potentially be retained for community use. Recently, the Council has entered into a short term licence with an individual who is using the School's office space in connection with their academic studies. Within Minard there is Minard Village Hall which is used for community events. Most people who attended the pre-consultation meeting felt that the school building should be retained for community use and not allowed to fall in to further disrepair, as that would adversely impact on the aesthetic of the community.
- 25.10 It is accepted that a school closure may have an adverse effect on a community, but a community hub could be an asset to the community. This could have a positive impact on the sustainability of the community and in particular the availability of the school's premises and other facilities for use by the community. Formal closure of the school would mean that any developing plans for the future of the building could potentially be progressed.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements

- 25.11 The travel distance from Minard Primary to Lochgilphead Primary is 13.13 miles via A83. Travel time is approximately nineteen minutes by car. Minard Primary to Furnace Primary is 3.82 miles via the A83. Travel time is approximately seven minutes by car. The travel arrangements have been in place for more than three years. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Minard community
- 25.12 Implementation of the proposal would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Minard Primary School, in terms of current travel arrangements would have a neutral effect on the environment. There would be no additional travel costs for children attending Lochgilphead 3-18 Campus as there is capacity in the current system.
- 25.13 It is anticipated that the effect on the travel arrangements of staff and other users of the facility would not differ materially from that of the pupils accessing the school.

Environmental impact

- 25.14 Currently three children travel to Lochgilphead Primary School from the Minard Primary School Catchment area. One pupil travels to Furnace primary. Therefore, this option would have a neutral environmental impact on the current position and would have no impact on the current travel arrangements for staff and pupils.
- 25.15 If this proposal was to be implemented there would be little or no impact on the natural environment.

26 Financial Impact

- 26.1 The full breakdown of the financial analysis is detailed in **Appendix 4**. Some of this information has been recalculated since the Options Appraisal was prepared. In particular the annual cost of mothballing the school has been recalculated from £8,956 to £10,382. This information gives details on the estimated cost if Minard Primary School was still to be an occupied and operational establishment. However, as Minard Primary School is currently mothballed, the cost for the mothballing is estimated at £10,382 per year. Should the school be reopened, occupied and operational, the running costs per year are estimated at £157,105.
- 26.2 Column 2 of Table 1 at **Appendix 4** shows the projected annual running costs of Minard whilst Column 3 shows the additional impact on Furnace Primary as the receiving school at the time of mothballing. The annual recurring savings (or costs) are shown in Column 4.
- 26.3 The main elements included within a school budget are teacher employment costs (i.e. basic salary costs plus related employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions plus any relevant individual allowances); Local Government employee costs and an allocation for discretionary expenditure incurred by the school (i.e. educational equipment, materials, staff travel, etc.). Teacher staffing budgets are calculated on an annual basis and within the primary sector are determined, taking cognisance of the SNCT class size maxima, by the number of classes required to provide for the specific number and age of the pupils in each school. When a school ceases to be operational the teacher staffing budget is adjusted (at the appropriate time), per entitlement information from Education HR, with the staffing budget resulting in a nil value.
- 26.4 In line with the national priority of maintaining teacher numbers, the Education Service operates on the basis that supernumerary teachers are redeployed and therefore their salary costs still exist with an

increase to the receiving school's budget. Some of the costs noted in column 3 of Table 1 will not directly impact on the receiving schools but they will be a cost to the Authority as a whole, for example school transport, and the costs of maintaining the teachers previously employed in Minard Primary School.

- 26.5 There are currently no annual transport costs for pupils to attend Lochgilphead Primary School. Transport costs per year to attend Minard Primary School, if it were to be reopened, are estimated at £1482 per year. Transport costs per year to attend Furnace Primary School would be £1,482 although use of the service bus would incur no additional transport costs.
- 26.6 Table 2 contains the notional 30 year lifecycle costs that would arise based on the GIA of the various schools irrespective of the number of pupils accommodated. Lifecycle costs are representative of the cost needed to keep the building in a good state of repair. The cost over the next thirty years therefore to maintain Minard Primary School £238,140 and for Furnace Primary School this is £530,955.
- 26.7 Table 3 contains the annual running costs during mothballing of Minard Primary School and these are estimated at £10,382 per year. This includes non-domestic rates, utility costs, insurances, etc. If the school was to be formally closed, this would allow further consideration to be given to the future of the School premises and any transfer in ownership of the same.

27 Equality and Socio Economic Impact

- 27.1 The Council as a public authority has a duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, the Fairer Scotland Duty (Part one of the Equality Act) and the Islands (Scotland) Act (2018) to have due regard to their provisions when making strategic financial decisions. This is done through assessing the potential impact of the decision on equality through Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (EQSEIAs).
- 27.2 The Council will undertake the process of assessment during the consultation process in respect of this proposal to ensure that due regard is given to such matters in the decision making process. A finalised EQSEIA will be produced alongside the Consultation Report.

28 Consultation arrangements

- 28.1 Prior to formulating a rural school closure proposal under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* (the 2010 Act), as amended, the Education Authority must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act. The Authority has previously identified its reasons for formulating a possible proposal, considered whether there were any reasonable alternatives to the possible proposal as a response to those reasons, and assessed each of the options in accordance with Section 12A(2)(c) of the 2010 Act. After considering a paper addressing these preliminary requirements, the Education Authority decided on 25th August 2022 that, having specific regard to the reasons for formulating a prospective closure proposal, the option to close Minard Primary School and redraw its catchment areas to Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools is the most appropriate response to the specific reasons for the potential proposal.
- 28.2 This document was considered by the Council as Education Authority on 8th June 2023 when it was agreed that it should be adopted as a relevant proposal and issued as a basis for consultation. No decision will be taken by the Council on the proposal contained in this paper until after the end of the consultation period. The Council will then receive a report on the consultation and will reach a view on the proposal.
- 28.3 A summary of this document will be issued free of charge to all of the consultees listed on page 2 of this document and it will also be published on the Council's website:
- <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/school-consultations-and-proposals>
- 28.4 As part of a consultation process, the Education Authority must publish the proposal paper, advertise it and notify Education Scotland and all of the relevant consultees as prescribed by Schedule 2 of the 2010 Act, inviting them to make representations on the proposal. The consultation period will be from 15th June 2023 until the close of business on 13th September 2023 which lasts for a minimum of 6 weeks and includes at least 30 school days.
- 28.5 A public meeting will be held at Minard Primary School on 29th August 2023 at 7.00pm. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting and participate is welcome to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Education Authority and the Education Authority will present reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions to be asked and comments to be made. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered. However, the Education Authority will also consider written comments which should

be sent to Education Services, School Consultations, Argyll & Bute Council, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 5.00pm on 13th September 2023.

- 28.6 Written representations may be made on the proposal and the alternatives to the proposal. Written representations may also suggest other alternatives to the proposal.
- 28.7 Following the close of the consultation, the Education Authority will provide Education Scotland with copies of the written representations submitted, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting and any other relevant documentation. This will allow Education Scotland to prepare a report on the proposal within a period of 3 weeks.
- 28.8 After receiving Education Scotland's report, the Education Authority will then prepare and publish a Consultation Report in accordance with Sections 9, 10 and 13 of the 2010 Act. The Education Authority will thereafter make its final decision on whether to implement the proposal. The decision will be published a minimum of 3 weeks after publication of the Consultation Report. If the Education Authority makes a closure decision, it shall notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and publish the fact that the Scottish Ministers have been notified, and that representations can be made to them. The Education Authority would also be required to publish a notice on its website of the decision to implement the proposal and why it has been satisfied that closure is the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal.
- 28.9 The Scottish Ministers will have a maximum of 8 weeks to call in any closure decision made by the Education Authority in certain circumstances. This 8 week timeframe would consist of an initial 3 weeks from the date of decision, during which representations can be made to the ministers, and a further 5 weeks for the Scottish Ministers to decide whether to issue a call in notice. During this period the Education Authority will not proceed to implement any closure decision.
- 28.10 If the Scottish Ministers call in a closure proposal, it is referred to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels. The Convener must constitute a School Closure Review Panel within 7 days for determination. The Education Authority may not implement a closure decision in whole or in part until the Panel has made its determination. It will usually issue a decision within 8 weeks of the Panel being constituted.
- 28.11 If the School Closure Review Panel refuses to consent to the closure decision, or following publication of the Consultation Report the

Education Authority decides not to implement the closure proposal, the Education Authority cannot publish a further closure proposal in relation to the school for 5 years, unless there is a significant change in the school's circumstances.

29 Conclusion

29.1 It is proposed that education provision at Minard Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Minard Primary School as identified in Paragraph 2.2 and **Appendix 3**.

29.2 It has been assessed that the proposal is the most appropriate means of addressing the underlying reasons for formulating it, which are:

- Minard Primary School has been mothballed for over four years. The school condition will deteriorate with limited budgets for maintenance. The school roll is currently zero and although there is a small increase in pupils within the catchment area projected, this is not significant enough to make the school viable again. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £10,382;
- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 8.59 fte primary vacancies for Head Teachers and teachers in Argyll and Bute; and
- The Council needs to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services.

Other Considerations

- This proposal will bring educational benefits to all present and future users of the affected schools and assist in ensuring that the Education budget is more sustainable into the future;
- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high;
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate;

- Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect the educational attainment of pupils;
- There is no realistic possibility at present of the Council being able to bring its whole school estate up to a satisfactory condition. The present condition is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate.

DOUGLAS HENDRY

Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Wendy Brownlie

Head of Education: Performance and Improvement

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

Policy Lead for Education

For further information contact:

Annette Trevelyan

Education Officer

annette.trevelyan2@argyll-bute.gov.uk

16th May 2023

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Consultation Letter

Appendix 2 - Response form

Appendix 3 - Maps

Appendix 4 - Financial template

Appendix 5 - Options Appraisal

APPENDIX 1

Argyll and Bute Council

Comhairle Earra Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

Executive Director: Douglas Hendry



***Kilmory,
Lochgilphead,
Argyll,
PA318RT***

Telephone: 01546 605522

Our Ref:

E-mail:

annette.trevelyan2@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Council Website:

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Minard Primary School

Dear Consultee,

Review of Education Provision Notice and Summary of Proposal for closing Minard Primary School Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010

Background

Argyll and Bute Council, through its Education Service, aims to realise ambition, excellence and equity for all.

The Council is consulting on a proposal to close Minard Primary School. This notice provides a summary of a proposal that you may have an interest in or are required to be notified of, giving you key information about the proposal.

The Council is conducting a public consultation process. This will commence on 15th June 2023 and will conclude on 13th September 2023. This is the period within which you will be able to make written representations to the Council in respect of the proposal. If you wish your view to be taken account of in the consultation exercise you must submit your written representation within this period. This notice and summary provides further information on where a full copy of the proposal may be obtained or referenced and also advises on how you can make written representations to the Council.

The Council will hold a meeting where officers will be able to provide information on the proposal. The details of the public meeting are contained in this notice and summary.

It is important that everyone we are consulting tells us what they think of the proposal. Please read this notice and summary and then consider the contents of the proposal document. You can then tell us what you think of the proposal by making written representation and/or by attending the public meeting. This notice and summary tell you how to do that.

The Proposal

It is proposed that education provision at Minard Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment areas of both Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Minard Primary School. The proposal is that children living in the north section of catchment area from Achagoyle Bay to Blackstone Bay attend Furnace Primary (with that section of Minard's catchment area being subsumed by Furnace Primary School) and children in the south section of the catchment area from Achagoyle Bay to Kilmichael Beg attend Lochgilphead Joint Campus (with that section of Minard's catchment area being subsumed by Lochgilphead Primary School).

Reasons for this proposal

This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposals which are;

- Minard Primary School has been mothballed for over four years. The school condition will deteriorate with limited budgets for maintenance. The school roll is zero and is not predicted to rise in the near future.
- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there

are 8.59 fte primary vacancies for Head Teachers and teachers in Argyll and Bute.

- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for maintenance.

The Council's education strategy Our Children Their Future

Together we will realise ambition, excellence and equality for all.

- Raise educational attainment and achievement for all,
- Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people,
- Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed,
- Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life,
- Ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement,
- Strengthen leadership at all levels.

Alternatives to the Proposal

The following alternatives to the proposal were considered at the preliminary pre-consultation stage of this process;

- a) Re-open Minard Primary School,
- b) Continued Mothballing of Minard Primary with the pupils zoned to Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools,
- c) Close Minard Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools (the Proposal).

Written representations may be made on those alternatives as well as on the proposal.

Written representations on the proposal may suggest other alternatives to the proposal.

What will we do?

We will consult with people by:

- Providing a notice of the consultation and a summary of the proposal to the relevant consultees **this is that notice and summary**

- Placing an advert in the local press
- Putting information on our website <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/schoolconsultations-and-proposals>
- Holding a public meeting to explain the proposal
- Ask parents, carers, children, young people, teachers, support staff and others to tell us what they think of the proposals.

What to do now?

- Please read the full proposal document
- Please attend the Public Meeting which will be held on 29th August 2023 at 7.00pm in Minard Primary School.
- Let us know what you think by:

Letter to: Education Services
School Consultations
Argyll & Bute Council
Argyll House
Alexandra Parade
Dunoon
PA23 8AJ

Returning the attached response sheet by post or by;

Email to: argyllhoureception@argyll-bute.gov.uk

What next?

Whilst the Council is engaging in a consultation process in relation to this proposal that does not mean that the proposal will go ahead. It does mean that the Council is engaging in a consultation process to seek your views on the proposal.

All the points raised during the consultation will be carefully considered and Elected Members will then decide if the plan should go ahead.

If the suggestion goes ahead, any children from Minard Primary School catchment area would be educated at Lochgilphead Primary School or Furnace Primary School.

Please note that this summary document is for convenience only. Full details of the consultation can be obtained from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ

- Lochgilphead Library, Lochgilphead Community Centre, Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8XQ
 - Lochgilphead Service Point, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD
 - Lochgilphead Primary School, Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8SY
 - Furnace Primary School, Furnace, By Inveraray, Argyll PA32 8XU
 - Minard Village Hall, Minard, By Inveraray, Argyll PA32 8YB
- It is also available electronically via our website:
<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/school-consultations-and-proposals>

Yours faithfully,

DOUGLAS HENDRY

Executive Director with responsibility for Education



Argyll and Bute Council Education

RESPONSE FORM

I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Elected Members and Council Officers of Argyll and Bute Council.

<u>Proposal</u>	
It is proposed that: Education provision at Minard Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31 st May 2024. The catchment areas of Lochgilphead and Furnace Primary Schools shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Minard Primary School – to the extent that the north section of Minard’s catchment area (from Achagoyle Bay to Blackstone Bay) will be subsumed by Furnace Primary School; and the south section of Minard’s catchment area (from Achagoyle Bay to Kilmichael Beg) is subsumed by Lochgilphead Primary School.	
This part of the form must be completed for a valid response:	
Name: (please print)	Address:
	Post Code:
I agree/do not agree (delete which does not apply) that my response can be made publicly available	
Signature:	Date:

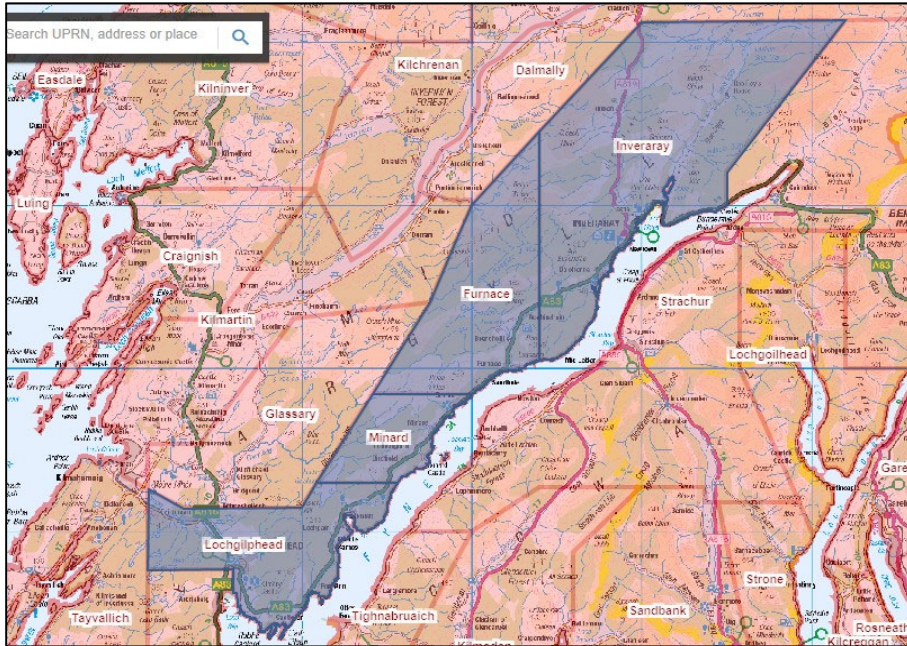
YOUR INTEREST: (please tick)

Parent <input type="checkbox"/>	Child / Young Person <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Other * <input type="checkbox"/>
Elected Member / MSP / MP <input type="checkbox"/>		Member of Community Council <input type="checkbox"/>	
*Other: (please specify)			

Please state your views on the proposal (continue overleaf if necessary)

APPENDIX 3 - MAPS

MAP OF CURRENT PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREAS



MAP OF PROPOSED MINARD CATCHMENT SUBSUMED TO FURNACE AND LOCHGILPHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOLS



— Existing Catchment Area - Minard

•••• New Catchment boundary:

North of Achagoyle Bay to Furnace Primary.

South of Achagoyle Bay to Lochgilphead Joint Campus.

APPENDIX 4 – FINANCIAL TEMPLATE

Table 1

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Current revenue costs for school proposed for closure			
Name of School Minard Primary	Costs for full financial year (projected annual costs)	Additional financial impact on receiving school Furnace Primary	Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)
School costs			
<i>Employee costs - note 1</i>			
teaching staff	106,384	111,704	-5,320
support staff	20,131	0	20,131
teaching staff training (CPD etc)			0
support staff training			0
Supply costs - note 2	3,129	0	3,129
<i>Building costs:</i>			
property insurance	651	0	651
non domestic rates	1,648	0	1,648
water & sewerage charges	291	0	291
energy costs	8,474	0	8,474
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	278	0	278
building repair & maintenance	3,245	0	3,245
grounds maintenance	842	0	842
facilities management costs - note 6	122	0	122
revenue costs arising from capital			0
other - refuse collection; telephones	1,459	0	1,459
<i>School operational costs:</i>			
learning materials	2,757	44	2,713
catering (contract or inhouse)	6,211	170	6,041
SQA costs	0	0	0
other school operational costs (e.g. licences)	0	0	0
			0
<i>Transport costs: note 3</i>			
home to school	0	0	0

other pupil transport costs	1,482	2,964	-1,482
staff travel	0		0
SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL	157,105	114,882	42,223
Income:			
Sale of meals	-105	-70	-35
Lets	0	0	0
External care provider	0	0	0
Other			0
SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL	-105	-70	-35
TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL	157,000	114,812	42,188
UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR	52,333	38,271	14,063

² This figure is based on current financial costs if transport was necessary to be provided.

Table 2

Capital costs	School proposed for closure	Receiving school
	Minard Primary	Furnace Primary
Capital Life Cycle cost - note 7	238,140	530,955
Third party contributions to capital costs	0	0

Table 3

Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal	
property insurance	651
non domestic rates	1,648
water & sewerage charges	291
energy costs	2,542
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	0
security costs	0
building repair & maintenance	0
grounds maintenance	842
facilities management costs	3,302

Other - Routinely check drainage (gutters, downpipes); cleaning equipment; phone lines	1,106
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL	10,382

Table 4

Non-recurring revenue costs	
Securing building	7,150
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	7,150

Table 5

Impact on GAE	0
GAE IMPACT	0