

LUING PRIMARY SCHOOL – MOTHBALLING REVIEW

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Community Services Committee on the current situation of Luing Primary School. The report proposes a number of measures under which the Education Service can monitor the position of the School over the forthcoming year.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee agree that:
- 2.1.1 Luing Primary School continues to be mothballed on a temporary basis, and that the building be retained for one year on a care and maintenance basis.
 - 2.1.2 Officers will conduct a review of the School's mothballing ahead of the Committee's March 2026 meeting.
 - 2.1.3 The community shall have pre-arranged access to the building to promote any community functions during the period of continued mothballing.

LUING PRIMARY SCHOOL – MOTHBALLING REVIEW

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 On 7th March 2024, the Community Services Committee considered a Consultation Report, produced in accordance with the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* (the 2010 Act) and decided to continue the mothballing of Luing Primary School for a further year to allow the community adequate time to demonstrate the sustainability of the School long-term.
- 3.2 As that constituted a decision not to implement a closure proposal, Section 2A of the 2010 Act applies. Under that provision, the Education Authority may not publish a Proposal Paper concerning a further closure proposal in relation to the School during the period of five years (beginning with the day on which the decision is made) unless there is a “*significant change in the School's circumstances*”.
- 3.3 The purpose of this report is to update the Community Services Committee on the present position of Luing Primary School, so that its continued mothballing remains subject to at least annual review.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee agree that:

- 4.1.1 Luing Primary School continues to be mothballed on a temporary basis, and that the building be retained for one year on a care and maintenance basis.
- 4.1.2 Officers will conduct a review of the School’s mothballing ahead of the Committee’s March 2026 meeting.
- 4.1.3 The community shall have pre-arranged access to the building to promote any community functions during the period of continued mothballing.

5.0 DETAIL

- 5.1 Since the Committee’s March 2024 decision to continue the mothballing of Luing Primary School, officers have been keeping the circumstances of the School under review. Below are the officers’ findings in relation to a range of relevant factors.

5.2 Pupil Numbers/School Roll Projections

Year	Predicted roll
2023	3
2024	4
2025	5
2026	6
2027	6
2028	6

5.2.1 The above table outlines the number of school aged children who reside in Luing Primary School's catchment area but who attend Easdale Primary School (2023 and 2024 figures). The figures for 2025-2028 are the projected numbers of children of school age who will reside within the Luing catchment area.

5.3 Condition of the Building and Costs of Continued Mothballing

5.3.1 The school building whilst unoccupied, will continue to deteriorate over time. As the Luing Primary School building is of a significant age, officers also expect ongoing maintenance to be required in order to preserve the fabric of the building. Current maintenance costs for 2024/25 are in the region of £12k.

5.4 Community Requests to Use the School Building

5.4.1 In the period since mothballing commenced, there have been no formal requests from local community groups to use the School building. Officers anticipate that this may mainly be due to the fact that there are already several community spaces situated on the island.

5.5 Activity of Local Community Groups on Luing in the Intervening Period

5.5.1 Luing Community Council provided officers with an update on potential developments on the island. Whilst there have been no new housing developments built or proposed since the closure consultation, the Isle of Luing Community Trust is actively working to deliver additional affordable homes, and agreement has been reached with the Council to commence asset transfer negotiations on some land for housing. This is being progressed to the valuation stage, and the Trust have submitted an Expression of Interest to the Rural and Islands Housing Fund for feasibility funding to technically assess the land for building and tender for a design team. The [Luing Local Place Plan](#) was registered with the Council on 21st November 2024. The Local Place Plan brings together the development of the slate enterprise, housing and net zero to set out long term strategic goals for the island. Place based housing remains a key priority for the community and the Homes

for Luing campaign has run throughout the year, attracting interest from residents and some non-resident house owners.

5.5.2 Planning approval has also been granted for the slate quarry set up and distribution of slate spoil to the shore. This includes not just slate production but the product possibilities and the benefits of craft learning and tourism. This has fed into the design of a slate workshop building for craft and tourism activities, which is anticipated to be submitted for planning consent in March 2025, and aiming for Quarter 2 (2025/26) to complete the detailed design and contract tenders.

5.5.3 The Trust have continued to engage with the Council's Transformation Projects and Regeneration team. In January 2025, the Council applied to the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund to secure funding for the reopening of the slate quarry. The Trust anticipate receiving a decision around March 2025.

5.6 School Transport Arrangements to Easdale Primary School

5.6.1 A return door-to-door transport service from individual addresses on Luing runs to Easdale Primary School. This service was reintroduced around May 2024. The Luing taxi transport is a Council vehicle which can accommodate five children. Currently, three pupils use this service frequently with one child using it more occasionally. In August 2025, there will be an additional school age child requiring transport from Luing. The School Transport team will continue to keep the uptake of the service, and capacity of the transportation, under review.

5.6.2 The driver collects children from their homes, drives to the ferry, travels over on the Cuan ferry and drops the children at Easdale Primary School. At the end of the school day, the taxi collects the children from school at 15.30 to take the 4pm ferry back over to Luing. Whilst parents are satisfied with the service, they did raise with officers the fact that the travel time and timings of the ferries makes the overall day longer for their children and can mean periods of waiting at the ferry terminal.

5.6.3 Feedback from parents of children using service reported that the driver is very accommodating in terms of any changes to drop off points and is also good at communicating directly with families over any changes, if the ferry is disrupted due to weather conditions, etc. There were concerns raised over communication between the Council's transport teams (Roads and Infrastructure Services) more widely with families and Easdale Primary School. Parents commented that the ferry team is accommodating and at times is able to offer an additional service to ensure that children are not required to wait until the next scheduled ferry.

5.6.4 In addition, a West Coast Motors service bus still runs to connect from the Cuan Ferry to Easdale Primary School. This is available on all school days for any family with a Luing postcode.

5.7 Parent/Pupil Feedback on the Current Education Arrangements

5.7.1 Whilst Luing Primary School remains mothballed, pupils residing in the School's catchment area have been rezoned temporarily to Easdale Primary School. The parents and pupils whom officers spoke to are generally satisfied with the educational experience at Easdale Primary School. Several parents stated that they feel that the larger number of pupils at Easdale is beneficial to their children, in terms of socialisation and friendship groups.

5.7.2 One parent expressed their view that ultimately it would be preferable for Luing Primary School to reopen, but appreciates that current numbers do not allow for this. Easdale Primary school plan events during the school day or towards the end of a day for transport purposes. These events include concerts, sports clubs for pupils and parent/carer consultation meetings. Whilst, as in any school, these timings will not suit all parents/carers, the school works hard to ensure that no families from Luing miss out on these opportunities due to transport limitations.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 As the above update does not indicate that a significant change in the School's circumstances has occurred (as per Section 2A of the 2010 Act), it is proposed that Members agree to the continuation of the temporary mothballing of Luing Primary School for a further year, and that a report will be presented to the Committee in March 2026 reviewing the position of the School after that further year has elapsed.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Policy – None

7.2 Financial – If the continued 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 relevant proposal under that Act in order to assess and ultimately determine the future of Luing Primary School.

7.4 HR – None

7.5 Fairer Duty Scotland

7.5.1 Equalities

7.5.2 Socio-Economic Duty – None at present

- 7.5.3 Islands – It is acknowledged that Luing is an island community and the provisions of the *Islands (Scotland) Act 2018* will apply if any policy or service changes are to be proposed in due course.
- 7.6 Risk – None at present
- 7.7 Customer Service – None at present
- 7.8 Climate Change – None
- 7.9 UNCRC – Under this legislation the Council are required to act in the best interests of the child. Given the age and stage of children and in line with Article 5 (parental guidance and a child’s evolving capacities) views of children have been given through their parents (Article 13) – see Section 5.7, above. This has helped ensure that children are not unsettled by uncertainty around the school they may attend in the future. Time was provided to allow parents to reflect and discuss with their child. In the event of any future engagement, pupils’ views will be sought with approach being agreed with parents. Priority has been given to maintaining the right to education (Article 28).

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