

LUING PRIMARY SCHOOL – TEMPORARY CLOSURE 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 temporarily closed, and that the building be retained for one year on a care and maintenance basis.
 - 2.1.2 Officers will conduct a further review of the School's temporary closure ahead of the Committee's March 2027 meeting.
 - 2.1.3 The community shall have pre-arranged access to the building to promote any community functions during the period of continued temporary closure.

LUING PRIMARY SCHOOL – TEMPORARY CLOSURE 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 temporary closure (formerly referred to as “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 On 6th March 2025, the Committee considered a report providing an update on the position of Luing Primary School following a review of the temporary closure by officers, and agreed that the temporary closure be extended for a further year, to be reviewed at this meeting.
- 3.4 The purpose of this report is to update the Community Services Committee on the present position of Luing Primary School, so that its continued temporary closure 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 temporarily closed, and that the building be retained for one year on a care and maintenance basis.
- 4.1.2 Officers will conduct a further review of the School’s temporary closure ahead of the Committee’s March 2027 meeting.
- 4.1.3 The community shall have pre-arranged access to the building to promote any community functions during the period of continued temporary closure.

5.0 DETAIL

5.1 Since the Committee's March 2025 decision to continue the temporary closure of Luig 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 Luig Primary School's catchment area but who attend Easdale Primary School (2023 - 2025 figures). The figures for 2026-2028 are the projected numbers of children of school age who will reside within the Luig Primary School 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 Luig 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 2025/26 are in the region of £12.5k. If the School was to be re-opened, then a full building inspection would be conducted. Last year's reported reinstatement costs uplifted to reflect industry standard price increases would be in the region of £45,000, however, recent storms have necessitated remedial works to the external building fabric. Continued exposure to severe weather conditions may lead to further deterioration, resulting in additional costs for repairs and maintenance.

5.4 Community Requests to Use the School Building

5.4.1 In the period since temporary closure 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 Luig in the Intervening Period

5.5.1 Luig 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 statutory school closure

consultation, concluded in 2024, the Isle of Luing Community Trust is pursuing an asset transfer with Argyll and Bute Council to secure a building plot to build two to three affordable homes. Expressions of interest to the Scottish Land Fund and the Rural and Island Housing Fund have been submitted. Tenders from design teams are being assessed with the aim of securing feasibility/design funding in early 2026. Together, the Trust and Luing Community Council have continued the 'Homes for Luing' campaign, targeting two potential sources of housing for new island residents: empty or under-used houses (40% or more of the island's houses) which could be made available as seasonal or longer-term rentals or even for sale; and building plots, for self-build housing.

5.5.2 The Cullipool slate quarry enterprise, being established by the Isle of Luing Community Trust in partnership with Historic Environment Scotland, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Government and Argyll and Bute Council, made significant progress in 2025. £1.75 million of Regeneration Capital Grant Fund was secured, along with engagement of a new Development Manager, enabling preparatory work to start. Working closely with the Council, an Invitation to Tender was issued in December 2025 for the quarry setup and a production building. This work is targeted to start in 2026, as well as staff recruitment and training. Up to seven new full-time jobs are expected to be created by the slate enterprise, bringing more working-age people to live and work on Luing.

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, five pupils use this service. 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.

5.6.3 The duration of the journey from Luing to Easdale Primary School has been highlighted as an area of concern by parents over the course of previous reviews, but this has, perhaps been alleviated by the ease of the school transport arrangements in place which are used by all pupils living on Luing. Feedback from the Council's School Transport team is positive and they are confident that this enhanced service is working well.

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 temporarily closed, pupils residing in the School's catchment area have been rezoned temporarily to Easdale Primary School. Parents of children who reside on Luing who attend Easdale Primary School are generally satisfied with the quality of education that their children receive there. Parents attend 'Learning Together' sessions and assemblies each term during the school day. They provide positive feedback and enjoy seeing how their children are learning.

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 closure of Luing Primary School for a further year, and that a report will be presented to the Committee in March 2027 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 temporary closure 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 Customer Service – None at present

7.6 Risk – None at present

7.8 Fairer Duty Scotland

7.9 Equalities – protected characteristics

7.10 Consumer Duty – None at present

7.11 Island Communities – 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.

7.12 Children's Rights and Wellbeing – Under this legislation the Council are required to act in the best interests of the child. In the event of any future engagement, pupils' views will be sought (via their parents/carers where necessary). Priority has been given to maintaining the right to education for children residing on Luing during the period that the School remains temporarily closed (Article 28).

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