



Argyll and Bute Council: Education

CONSULTATION REPORT

Report on the outcome of the consultation relating to the proposal to close Southend Primary School

February 2023

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.

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1. Summary of the Proposal

- 1.1 It is proposed that education provision at Southend Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024.
- 1.2 The delineated catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Southend Primary School.

2. Reasons for the Proposal

- 2.1 The above is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposal which are:
 - Southend Primary School has been mothballed for over two years. The school roll is very low 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 the Proposal Paper was adopted as a basis for statutory consultation, there were 16.29 fte vacancies for both teachers and headteachers 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 £27,270.

3. Introduction

- 3.1 This is a Consultation Report prepared in compliance with the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* as amended (the 2010 Act) on the above proposal.
- 3.2 The purpose of this Report is to:
 - Provide a record of the total number of written responses made during the statutory consultation period;
 - Provide a summary of the written responses;
 - Provide a summary of oral representations made at the public meeting held on 27th September at 6.00 pm;
 - Provide a statement of the Council's response to those written and oral representations;
 - Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of the Council's response to this report;
 - State how the Council reviewed the proposal following the representations received during the statutory consultation period and receipt of the report from Education Scotland;
 - Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Paper and state how the Council acted upon those;
 - State how the Council has complied with Sections 11A to 13 of the

- 2010 Act when reviewing the proposal; and
- Explain the opportunity that may arise to make representations to the Scottish Ministers in connection with Section 15(4) of the 2010 Act.

4. Background

4.1 On 10th June 2021, Argyll and Bute Council's Community Services Committee approved the mothballing of Southend Primary School. The council agreed that officers would prepare a review of the School's mothballing for the Committee's June 2022 meeting at which members could decide on a continued period of mothballing or request Officers begin a preliminary exercise with a view to starting the pre-consultation process to consider the future options for Southend Primary School.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=14218&Ver=4>

4.2 On 25th August 2022, the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an Options Appraisal for Southend Primary School.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=14784&Ver=4>

4.3 A report providing details of the Options Appraisal, which was carried out in accordance with Section 12A of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* as amended, was tabled at the Community Services Committee held on 9th March 2023, where the Committee agreed to note the outcome of the preliminary requirements and requested that officers formulate a draft closure proposal.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=15032&Ver=4>

4.4 At the Community Services Committee held on 24th August 2023, Members considered, and agreed to adopt, the draft proposal as a "relevant proposal" that would proceed to a statutory consultation under the 2010 Act. This statutory consultation opened on 31st August 2023 and concluded on 27th October 2023. A public meeting was also arranged for 27th September 2023 in Southend Primary School.

[Agenda for Community Services Committee on Thursday, 24 August 2023, 10:30 am - Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

4.5 Full details of the proposal, reasons for the proposal, the reasonable alternatives to the proposal that were identified, an assessment of the proposal and each of the reasonable alternatives, and an assessment of the educational benefits to the proposal and each of the alternatives are set out in the Proposal Paper, which is attached as **Appendix 1**.

5. Equality and Socio-Economic Impact

- 5.1 The Council as a public authority has a duty under the *Equality Act 2010*, the *Public Sector Equality Duty 2011*, the *Fairer Scotland Duty* 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). The full EQSEIA in respect to the proposal to close Southend Primary School is attached as **Appendix 2**.
- 5.2 The EQSEIA identifies a potential negative impact on the community. There was some concern expressed in relation to Southend Primary School building being left empty and this being detrimental to the community and the adjoining property. There was also concern that not having a school within Southend village may make the village less attractive to families. Community solutions for the property highlighted a strength of feeling that it should be to benefit young people in some way such as an outdoor activity centre.

6. The Consultation Process

- 6.1 Following the Community Services Committee's decision of 24th August 2023, where it agreed to adopt the proposal as a "relevant proposal" in terms of the 2010 Act and issue it as a basis for consultation, the Proposal Paper was made available on the Argyll and Bute Council website:

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

- 6.2 A summary of that document was also 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 two 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 1 (South Kintyre)
 - Campbeltown Community Council and Southend Community Council
 - Community Planning Partnership
 - 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

6.3 Hard copies of the Proposal Paper were also made available for inspection at the following locations:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Campbeltown Public Library, Kinloch Road, Town Centre, Campbeltown, PA28 6EG
- Lochgilphead Service Point, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD
- Castlehill Primary School, Ralston Road, Campbeltown, PA28 6LE
- Dunaverty Hall, Southend, Campbeltown, Argyll & Bute, PA28 6RF

6.4 It was possible for anyone to request a copy of the Proposal Paper in an alternative format, translated to another language, or requests could be made for the services of an interpreter.

6.5 Copies of the Summary Proposal (including information about where copies of the full Proposal Paper could be accessed) were emailed to notify Education Scotland and all of the relevant consultees (as prescribed by Schedule 2 of the 2010 Act) of the proposal and invited them to make representations as part of the consultation process.

6.6 The consultation exercise ran from 31st August 2023 until 27th October 2023 – a continuous period in accordance with Section 6(4) of the 2010 Act.

6.7 A public meeting was held at Southend Primary School on 27th September 2023 at 6.00pm. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting and participate was welcome to do so. Advance written notice of this meeting was given to all the “relevant consultees” in terms of the 2010 Act. The meeting was convened by the Education Authority who presented reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There was an opportunity for questions to be asked and comments to be made.

6.8 This Consultation Report is the Council’s response to the issues raised regarding the proposal during the consultation period. It will be published on the Council’s website for a period of no less than 3 weeks prior to final consideration of the proposal by the Council’s Community Services Committee on 7th March 2024.

7. Pupil Engagement

7.1 The proposal to close Southend Primary School could have an impact on pupils, parents and the community. Pupils’ views are a significant part of the consultation process. To that regard, pupils that had attended Southend Primary School prior to its mothballing, along with pupils who currently live within the Southend catchment

area, took part in focus groups with officers from the Education Service to share their views on the proposal.

7.2 The three focus group consisted of 28 pupils from Castlehill Primary School, 9 of whom lived within the Southend catchment area. The pupil focus groups took place in Castlehill Primary School on 27th September 2023.

7.3 The focus groups consisted of pupils at Castlehill Primary School, with 10 P1-3 pupils, 8 P4-5 pupils, and 10 P6-7 pupils - all deemed to be of suitable age and maturity to be able to communicate a view on the proposal. Pupils were provided with a PowerPoint that was presented by an Education Officer and were offered an opportunity to give their views and have these recorded as part of the consultation process.

7.4 Pupils in the focus groups who had previously attended Southend Primary School or lived within the Southend Primary catchment area but now attended Castlehill Primary School said:

- *“I think I got a good education and it had more pupils than some other schools.”*
- *“I want to stay in Castlehill because the teachers are kind”*
- *“I think it is a good idea to close Southend Primary “*
- *“It can be far to drive from Southend to Castlehill”*
- *“We can have more friends and space in Castlehill.”*
- *“There are enough pupils in Southend but people are not choosing to go there for a reason.”*

7.5 Pupils within the wider focus groups said:

- *“Castlehill is much larger so you can make more friends”*
- *“There is not many teachers in Southend – this is bad as you don’t have a lot of people to learn from.”*
- *“Castlehill has separated classes for separate years.”*
- *“In Southend you might not get the same/as much education as in Castlehill because there are more staff.”*
- *“I think there would not be many people who would want to work in Southend (e.g.teachers) because of the travel.”*
- *“A small school might be liked by those pupils who want a calmer school.”*
- *“These ideas are all really good but the Council need to use their money wisely.”*

7.6 A summary of the pupil focus group responses is attached as **Appendix 6**.

8. Responses to the Consultation Exercise

8.1 There were four written responses received during the consultation period which were emailed to argyllhouwereception@argyll-bute.gov.uk. One of those written responses can be found in full at **Appendix 3**. The other three respondents indicated that they wished their written responses to be considered confidential and did not give permission for them to be published. However, the points raised by those consultees are included in the below summary:

- One response indicated that the school should permanently close and the council should focus on providing a new primary school building for the Campbeltown area. This response also included a request for free school transport to Dalintober Primary School in addition to Castlehill Primary School.
- One response form praised the level of education and the ethos that a rural school can provide and recognised the importance of this within the community. The respondent identified themselves as someone who wanted to work in the school if it to re-open. The suggestion was also made that an alternative use could be as a centre for additional support needs within the area.
- One response was submitted that represented the views of 2 people. This outlined that the respondents felt the building was in a serviceable state and that a continuation of mothballing would allow time for those currently attending the local toddler group to consider attending Southend Primary School when they reach school age. The response outlined that continuation of mothballing would allow for an extended period of reflection by the community in relation to the proposed closure of Southend Primary School. There was concern expressed that the loss of the school from the area would impact on the community, in particular, it would mean that there is a continuing aging demographic within the area. The response also highlighted that the loss of the school from the area impacts negatively on the cultural identity of the area.

8.2 Oral responses to the proposal were gathered at the public meeting held at Southend Primary School on 27th September 2023. Seven representatives from the local community attended along with officers from the Education Authority. Minutes of the public meeting are attached as **Appendix 4**. The seven members of the public present had some differing opinions. Those attending who had school aged children intimated that they were in favour of the proposal. There was a desire expressed to further explore the potential for an ELC facility to be developed within the school premises, but as there has been a change to the statutory requirements as part of the introductory of 1140 hours, it was explained that this was not viable due to the physical characteristics of the building. One member of the community present wanted to see the school continue to be mothballed.

8.3 The written and oral responses to the consultation can be grouped broadly as follows:

- Views were expressed that Southend Primary School should continue to be mothballed in the hope that the village school can be re-opened in the future. Views were expressed in relation to the benefits of rural schools for the children and the community.
- The view was expressed that the school should be permanently closed to allow resources to support the building/resources of the other primary schools within the Campbeltown area. A request was also made for the council to clarify its position in relation to transport to Dalintober Primary School from Southend.

8.4 The Education Authority identified and assessed a number of reasonable alternatives to the proposal in its Proposal Paper and as part of the preliminary requirements. No further reasonable alternatives to the proposal were submitted as part of the public consultation process.

9. Education Authority Response to Written/Oral Representations

9.1 Questions raised through the consultation process fell into four main themes: conditions of school buildings, ELC provision, community interest and the role of young people in the process.

9.2 ELC Provision

Question: Parents are put off putting children to Southend as there is no nursery provision. Short sighted not to have pre-school in the area.

Like the idea of a local school, but know it is not practical. Need to be realistic and not sentimental.

Response: We are unable to operate an ELC from this building. 1140 hours were implemented and care inspectorate rightly changed the requirements which a building must have to operate an ELC and this building does not comply with these.

The Service are required to follow the legislation which the Scottish Government sets out.

Nurseries don't have catchment areas and parents can choose where they go. In Campbeltown parents can chose from Aqualibrium, Campbeltown Nursery, Meadows and Dalintober. There is also provision in Carradale and Drumlemble Primary Schools.

9.3 Condition of the School Building

Question: This proposal is the most logical one.

Would be hesitant to put my kids to this school if there were only 1 or 2 kids in the school. Frustrating that the two schools in Campbeltown are in disrepair.

What is the future for a single primary campus in Campbeltown?

Answer: The panel actually visited both Castlehill and Dalintober today.

Pleased that the Council has invested money in both schools but it is clear that the buildings, by virtue of their age and construction, will require further investment, and no matter how much money is spent on these buildings more will need to be spent.

A local councillor was making the point recently that the rolls of both schools are going downwards and this also impacts on the Grammar School. Our view as a Service is that we would like to look at options for the future of schooling in Campbeltown but there is nothing specific at this time or any plans to bring something forward at present.

Question: Could the building be re-purposed as a centre for Additional Support Needs?

Answer: There has already been a proposal for a learning centre within the Campbeltown area that has been approved by Argyll & Bute Council. There are currently two sites being considered for the development of a leaning centre, Southend Primary School is not one of the proposed sites.

9.4 The role of Young People

Question: What was the outcome of the consultation with the children today?

Answer: Primary 1 – 3 pupils treated the building as a person and were worried about it.

Primary 4 and 5 pupils were protective of the facility, liked the benefits of a bigger school and were making more friends. 2 pupils were of the view that it should stay open.

Primary 6 and 7 pupils unanimously stated that they wished the school to close.

9.5 Transport

Question: Travel time stated in the documents is 20 minutes but this is more like over 40 minutes for the children to get to Campbeltown.

From written submission: Can the Council provide free transport to both Primary Schools within the Campbeltown area?

Answer: The travel time stated in the documents is the journey time taken by bus or car from Southend Primary Schools to Castlehill Primary School. The Southend catchment area is a broad, remote rural area and a variety of pick up points would impact on the overall journey time.

Argyll & Bute Council would provide travel for pupils within the Southend catchment area to Castlehill Primary School as this would become the catchment area school. Any pupils attending other schools within the Campbeltown area would do so via a placing request. Argyll & Bute Council does not provide transport for placing requests. The NEC (National Entitlement Card) does provide children and young people with national free bus travel via any service bus but does not provide access to school transport.

9.6 The role of young people in the process

Question: Were children consulted in this process?

Answer: Yes, both children previously in attendance at Southend Primary School and pupils at the receiving school were consulted on the proposal. The consultation took the form of focus groups. See also, Section 7, above.

10. Education Scotland Report

10.1 In accordance with Section 8(2) of the *Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010*, a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal.

10.2 In preparing their report, Education Scotland considered all relevant documentation in relation to the proposal. They also visited Castlehill Primary School, Dalintober Primary School and Campbeltown Grammar School to seek the views of relevant consultees.

10.3 The Education Scotland report is reproduced in full at **Appendix 5**.

10.4 This report supports the proposal and is summarised below:

- a) Education Scotland agrees that the proposal by Argyll and Bute Council will result in educational benefits for the children in the Southend Primary School catchment area. This includes social benefits and access to wider opportunities at Castlehill Primary School.
- b) Education Scotland found that stakeholders were in agreement with the proposal and could identify the benefits children would gain in attending Castlehill Primary School.
- c) Education Scotland notes that should the Council decide to implement the closure proposal, it should continue to engage with the Southend community to explore options for the future use of the school building. The Council should also provide clarification on existing placing requests and home transport arrangements for the parents of children from the Southend catchment who currently attend Dalintober Primary School.

11. Education Authority Response to Education Scotland Report

11.1 The Council welcomes the report from Education Scotland and agrees with its findings.

11.2 The Council's response to the findings contained within the Education Scotland Report is as follows:

Finding of report:

- a. Education Scotland agrees that the proposal by Argyll and Bute Council will result in educational benefits for the children in the Southend Primary School catchment area. This also includes social benefits and access to wider opportunities at Castlehill Primary School.
 - The Council agrees that the educational benefits for current and future pupils are clear. Children benefit from opportunities to work with a wider number of peers and children at other stages, helping to develop social skills. The access to a range of extracurricular activities is also a benefit that children experience at Castlehill Primary School. There are also educational benefits that result from school staff being a part of a larger staff group which enhances opportunities for professional learning and moderation of children's work. In addition, primary staff also benefit from the support across the Mid-Argyll and Kintyre cluster which supports moderation and tracking of pupil progress across stage appropriate groups. Stakeholders have identified the strength of the educational benefits and opportunities for pupils at Castlehill Primary School.
- b) Education Scotland suggests that should the Council decide to implement the closure proposal, it should continue to engage with the Southend community to explore options for the future use of the school building.
 - Argyll and Bute Council is open to engaging with the local community, on any plans to develop a sustainable community facility via a possible community asset transfer.

12. Rural Schools – Compliance with Section 9(1) of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*

- 12.1 After the Education Authority received Education Scotland's report, officers carried out a further review of the proposal following the close of the consultation, having regard (in particular) to:
 - Written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the Consultation period;
 - Views of Castlehill Primary pupils as gathered during the consultation exercise,
 - Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting, and
 - Education Scotland's report.
- 12.2 In addition, officers carried out a further assessment of the proposal and each of the reasonable alternatives to it as set out in the Proposal Paper, having particular regard to the preliminary requirements for rural school closures as set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act. As mentioned previously, no further

reasonable alternatives to the proposal were identified or advanced by officers or stakeholders during or following the consultation exercise.

- 12.3 The feedback from the Consultation was considered by officers. Data and factual information was checked where required and advice sought from other Council services where necessary. This ensured that the Council met the requirements to review the proposal under Sections 9(1) and 13(5) of the 2010 Act. Given the fluidity of vacancy figures, these have been recalculated since the consultation was launched. At the end of January 2024, the updated vacancy figure to 10.84fte.
- 12.4 Officers of the Education Authority have listened carefully to the points made at the public meeting and have considered equally carefully the Education Scotland report and the online and written representations. The proposal was reviewed to consider whether any of the representations led the Council to reconsider any other options as being reasonable alternatives to the proposal to close Southend Primary School. None of the representations led officers to conclude that any of these options should be reconsidered as reasonable alternatives. The Educational Benefits were reviewed in respect of the Education Scotland report and representations made. There were no factors included in the Education Scotland report or representations made requiring any aspect of the Educational Benefits to be reconsidered. Further consideration was also given to the likely effect on the local community, and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements. Having reviewed the Education Scotland report and feedback from consultees in respect of the proposal and each of the reasonable alternatives, officers concluded that the proposal continues to be the most appropriate response to the underlying reasons for its formulation.
- 12.5 Officers concluded that the educational benefits of the proposal far outweigh any potential disadvantages. Formal closure of the school will allow plans to acquire the building to be progressed by the local community, which in turn will increase the availability of the premises to the community and even benefit the sustainability of the community. The proposal will have a neutral impact on travelling arrangements, as these have been in place since the mothballing of Southend Primary School in 2021. The overwhelming majority of consultation responses, community groups and pupils whose views were gathered are not in support of the school being re-opened for education provision. Education Scotland's report is also supportive of the Council's proposal being implemented.
- 12.6 Therefore, the Council has had regard to the points made at the public meeting, the written consultation responses and Education Scotland's report. It thereafter carried out a review of the proposal and all the reasonable alternatives and has concluded that the proposal remains the best solution to address the reasons for the proposal as set out at Section 2 of this Report. Implementation of the proposal will allow children to have access to increased learning opportunities, wider experiences and better socialisation through being part of a larger school. The current number of children within the Southend Primary School catchment

area choosing to place their children at the school is insufficient to make the school viable. If the school were to remain mothballed this would be a continuing drain on the Council's resources. The proposal will assist the Council to deliver 'Best Value' through making more efficient and effective use of its resources. Furthermore, the Council will follow up on working with the Southend community to explore options for future use of the mothballed school should they wish to progress this.

13. Alleged Omissions or Inaccuracies

- 13.1 Section 10(3) of the 2010 Act places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission in the Proposal Paper which has either been identified by the Council or raised by consultees. This provision also requires the Council to provide a statement on the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, or if no action was taken, to state that fact and why.
- 13.2 In the course of the statutory consultation, there was one area identified by the respondents as being inaccurate. At the public Consultation, it was highlighted that the journey time is inaccurate. The Council would like to clarify that the journey time provided is in relation from Southend Primary School to Castlehill Primary School, travel may be longer for those living in areas further away from Southend Primary School. The travel time of 14 minutes is correct as the driving time between the two schools. However, in the view of the Council, it does not materially impact any aspects of the proposal as these particular travelling arrangements that have been in place for a number of years now.
- 13.3 The Council would also like to highlight that pupil numbers and teacher vacancy numbers were accurate at the time of writing, these are fluid figures.

14. Opportunity to Make Representations to the Scottish Ministers

- 14.1 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.
- 14.2 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.

- 14.3 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.
- 14.4 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.

15. Conclusion

- 15.1 It is proposed that education provision at Southend Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall also be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.
- 15.2 This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposal which are:
- Southend Primary School has been mothballed for over two years. The school roll fell to zero as parents were choosing to place their children in schools outwith the Southend catchment area. The school roll is 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. As of the end of January 2024 there are 10.84 fte vacancies for both 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 £27,270.

16. Recommendation

- 16.1 On the basis of the consultation responses received, Education Scotland's report, and having particular regard to the specific factors for rural school closures, it is recommended that education provision at Southend Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024; and that the delineated catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be permanently

extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Southend Primary School.



Argyll and Bute Council
Education



Review of Education Provision

Southend Primary School

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: August 2023

Proposal for the closure of Southend Primary School

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

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

The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

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

- Southend Primary School has been mothballed for 2 years. The school roll is very low 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 16.29 fte vacancies for both teachers and headteachers 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 £27,270.

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 1 (South Kintyre)

- Campbeltown Community Council and Southend Community Council
- Community Planning Partnership
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- The Constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- Chief Superintendent, Police Scotland
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- 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
- Campbeltown Public Library, Kinloch Road, Town Centre, Campbeltown, PA28 6EG
- Lochgilphead Service Point, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD
- Castlehill Primary School, Ralston Road, Campbeltown. PA28 6LE
- Dunaverty Hall, Southend, Campbeltown, Argyll & Bute, PA28 6RF

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

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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

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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 June 2021, Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Southend Primary School. The council agreed that officers would prepare a review of the school's mothballing for the Committee's June 2022 meeting at which members could decide on a continued period of mothballing or request Officers begin a preliminary exercise with a view to starting the pre-consultation process to consider the future options for Southend Primary School.

Southend Primary School Mothballing Decision: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=14218&Ver=4>

- 1.2 On 22nd August 2022, the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an Options Appraisal for Southend Primary School.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=14784&Ver=4>

- 1.3 The Community Services Committee received a report on 9th March 2023 providing details of the Options Appraisal for Southend Primary School; carried out in accordance with the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended. The Committee agreed to note the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements and requested that officers formulate a draft proposal for consideration at the meeting of the Community Services Committee on 24th August 2023 which, if approved, would subsequently trigger the formal consultation process under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=548&MId=15032&Ver=4>

- 1.4 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.

- 1.5 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.

- 1.6 Southend Primary School has had zero pupils enrolled since elected members approved its mothballing.
- 1.7 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**.
- 1.8 A new Corporate Plan (2023-2027) was agreed by the Council on 29th June 2023. The Plan contains the new set of Council Priorities. The Argyll and Bute Corporate Plan 2023-2027 states its vision of a successful and vibrant Argyll and Bute with a growing population and thriving economy. The area has a rich mix of remote, rural and island communities. The Council will use its strong track record in partnership working, at all levels, to secure the best possible outcomes.

In the Corporate Plan for 2023-2027, through the agreed priorities, the Council will ensure:

- Children and young people will attain and achieve at all stages We will improve outcomes for our children and young people
 - Our schools are effective, sustainable learning environments
 - Continued support for all of our children and young people with additional support needs across Argyll and Bute, within our schools and other service areas
 - We will support connections to, from and within Argyll and Bute
 - Recognition of the importance of marine connections to and from our island and mainland communities and our role in maintaining these links
 - We will reduce our carbon emissions
 - We seek to increase availability of all types of housing, including affordable homes
 - We build up and strengthen our communities as attractive, vibrant places to live, work and do business
 - We make assets work now while we plan for and invest in the future
 - We commit to working in partnership wherever we need to as well as calling on others, with responsibility, to take the action that is required to safeguard Argyll and Bute's success
- 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 Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024; and that the catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.

Reasons for the Proposal

- 2.2 This is the best option to address the underlying reasons for the proposal which are:
- Southend Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll fell to zero as parents were choosing to place their children in schools outwith the Southend catchment area. The school roll is 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 16.29 fte vacancies for both 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 **£27,270**.

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 Southend Primary School, as it has been mothballed for two 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 have also been 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. Since the mothballing of the School, the community has not used the school or the school grounds. Dunaverty Village Hall is used as the community hub and is situated more centrally within Southend village.
- 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 Castlehill Primary School.
- 3.5 Four 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 four options which were considered by the community and the Council; (d) is the option favoured by the Council, as it was considered it most adequately addressed the reasons for the proposal.
 - a) Re-open Southend Primary School,
 - b) Continued Mothballing of Southend Primary with pupils zoned to Castlehill Primary School,
 - c) Re-open Southend Primary School and realign its catchment area,
 - d) Close Southend Primary School and realign its catchment area to Castlehill Primary School (The Proposal).

When considering the above options; the positive educational benefits of Castlehill Primary School; 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 Southend Primary School; in addition the lack of local support for reopening Southend Primary School - option (d) was considered the most appropriate response to the underlying reasons behind consideration of this proposal.

- 3.7 Following from an initial Options Appraisal which was presented to the Council's Community Services Committee on 9th March 2023, it was agreed that the preliminary requirements were satisfied enabling the draft proposal to be formulated, with the option to close Southend Primary School and realign

its catchment area to Castlehill Primary School being identified as the most adequate means of addressing the reasons for possible proposal.

- 3.8 During the preliminary consultation regarding the future options for Southend Primary School there were a range of viewpoints gathered from parents, young people and members of the community.
- 3.9 The community reflected that Southend Primary School had been an integral part of the community, and there were contrasting views on the options for the future of Southend Primary School. However, it was felt that the mothballing of the school and the building not being used at all was having a bigger negative impact on the community. Southend community felt that they benefitted greatly from vibrant use of their local hall. A re-purposing of the school building could potentially have a very positive impact on the sustainability of the community if the proposal were to progress.
- 3.10 Closing the school would have no impact on staff or pupil travel from the current arrangements since mothballing. There would be no alteration to the current environmental impact.

Alternatives to the Proposal

- 3.11 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 Southend Primary School. Full details from the community engagement and the findings from the preliminary requirements, are set out in **Appendix 5**.
- 3.12 In conclusion, after the pre-consultation with the community, the Council feels that the proposal to close Southend Primary School and realign its catchment area to Castlehill Primary School is the most reasonable means to address the underlying reasons for considering the future of Southend 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 Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.
- 4.2 Southend Primary School has been mothballed for 2 years. The school condition is deteriorating with limited budgets for maintenance. The school roll is currently zero and is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is **£27,270**.

- 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 16.29 fte 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 four options. The favoured option by the Council is (d), as it was considered it most adequately addressed the reasons for the proposal.
- a) Re-open Southend Primary School;
 - b) Continued Mothballing of Southend Primary with the pupils zoned to Castlehill Primary School;
 - c) Re-open Southend Primary School and realign its catchment area;
 - d) Close Southend Primary School and realign its catchment area to Castlehill Primary School (The Proposal).
- 4.10 Having considered these other alternatives the Council does not consider them to be viable alternatives to the closure proposal, and will proceed to consult on the proposal to close Southend Primary School and extend the catchment area of Castlehill Primary School to include the current catchment area for Southend 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 2.2, 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 Council mothballed the school two years ago as a result of a change to the School's circumstances – i.e. the school roll falling to zero as of April 2021. 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 two 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 two 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 Southend 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 Southend Primary School are detailed at Section 6 of this Proposal Paper. Since 2020, 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 £27,270 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 would 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 details about the condition of the school building are set out within 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 Southend 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. Past pupil numbers are historic data from past pupil censuses. Pupil projections are

based on 3/5 years intake and updated post P1 registration. 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 and parents/carers exercising their right to consider placing requests.

The school roll of Southend Primary School has seen a considerable decline since 2017.

Table 2:	Southend PS	Castlehill PS
	Roll	Roll
Capacity	50	459
2005-06	46	289
2006-07	41	276
2007-08	38	257
2008-09	33	243
2009-2010	32	218
2010-2011	27	195
2011-2012	22	189
2012-2013	22	178
2013-2014	18	180
2014-2015	17	184
2015-2016	16	188
2016-2017	18	182
2017-2018	5	197
2018-19	6	210
2019-20	7	205
2020 -2021	0	203
2021 -2022	0	194
2022-2023	0	189

Predicted Roll

Table 3:	Southend PS	Castlehill PS
	Roll	Roll
Capacity	50	459
2023-2024	0	189
2024 -2025	8	180
2025-2026	8	173

*A prediction based on information available in March 2023. Southend information based on prediction available at December 2019

- 5.2 In 2019-2020 the school roll dropped to 3 as a result of parents choosing to place their children in schools more central to Campbeltown.
- 5.3 There are currently 9 pupils who live within the Southend catchment area who are attending Castlehill Primary School. In addition, 1 pupil within the Southend catchment area attends Dalintober Primary School and 1 pupil attends Drumlemble Primary School. There continues to be no school aged children enrolled for Southend Primary School. Parents of school aged children are continuing to place their children in schools within the Campbeltown area, primarily Castlehill Primary School.
- 5.4 The school roll is not predicted to rise significantly in the future. The area around Southend is a small settlement and is not identified for growth in the Local Development Plan: [Local Development Plan | Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk)
- 5.5 There are no housing allocations and only two live planning permissions for residential development within the Southend catchment area. The adopted 2015 Local Development Plan (LDP) contains one allocation for housing in the Southend Primary School Catchment Area. This allocation is for 14 units and is in Southend itself (reference H-AL 14/8). No planning applications have been approved on this allocation (as at 30/4/2023).
- 5.6 The adopted LDP is due to be replaced by Local Development Plan 2 during 2023. Housing allocation H-AL 14/8 was not included in Proposed Local Development Plan 2 (PLDP2) which was subject to public consultation. The lack of inclusion of this allocation was not objected to during the public consultation and as such it is not subject to the current examination of the plan being carried out by Reporters. It is therefore highly unlikely that it will be included in Local Development Plan 2 once adopted.
- 5.7 The adopted LDP and PLDP2 also contain Potential Development Areas (PDAs) which are areas where specific development opportunities may be supported through the life of the LDP where known constraints can be overcome. There are no PDAs for Housing in the Southend Primary School Catchment Area in the adopted LDP or PLDP2.
- 5.8 Planning consents not on allocated or PDA sites are known as 'windfall' consents. In terms of windfall planning consents for dwellings in the Southend Primary School Catchment Area, there are:
- 0 x Planning consents for dwellings still within the normal 3 year consent lifespan.
 - 2 x Planning consents for 1 dwelling each that are older than the normal 3 year consent lifespan but currently appear to be 'under construction'. These would therefore likely be considered as 'extant' and in which case could be completed (construction timeframes are unknown).

5.9 There are no adopted LDP or PLDP2 Business and Industry allocations or PDAs in the Southend Primary School Catchment Area.

6 TEACHER NUMBERS

6.1 Teacher numbers are improving nationally, with a 6.3% increase in the number of teachers nationally from 2016 - 2022. In Argyll and Bute there has been a 3.1% reduction in the fte number of teachers from 2016- 2022.

6.2 As the school has been mothballed for over 2 years, the issue of recruitment of staff has not improved. At the time of writing this report there are 16.29 fte vacancies for class teachers in Argyll and Bute. Schools within the area have struggled to recruit staff, particularly in relation to Head Teachers and supply staff. Despite a sustained effort to secure staff, there is no reason to think that staffing would not continue to be a considerable challenge for Southend Primary School.

6.3 At the current time, if the proposal was to be accepted, there would be no impact on staffing levels at Castlehill Primary School.

7 CONDITION OF THE BUILDING

7.1 Argyll and Bute Council's School Estate Management Planning process identified in 2022 that the condition of Southend Primary School was satisfactory and graded a B. 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 discussion with the community in regard to the future of the building. This might involve the transfer of the building to a recognised community group through the provisions of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 or some other agreed mechanism. This 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

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 statement focusses on Castlehill Primary School, which is the school pupils from the Southend Primary School catchment area have previously attended from June 2021.
- 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 Southend Primary School as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching that 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 that is matched to their needs.
- 8.4 Southend Primary School is set within a very remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Castlehill Primary School is situated within the town of Campbeltown, the central location has allowed the school to benefit from a range of community partners and strong links with Campbeltown Grammar School. Learners benefit from the relationships formed within the school community that helps support their transition to secondary school. Families benefit from education that is close to their place of work and support networks.
- 8.5 Castlehill Primary School is situated next to Campbeltown Nursery Centre. The partnership between Campbeltown Nursery Centre and Castlehill Primary School provides a strong transition process for the children moving from Nursery into Primary one, through liaison between the two settings.

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 Castlehill 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. The work that has been undertaken in this has been evidenced through the school's Rights Respecting Schools journey, achieving Bronze accreditation.
- 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 Castlehill Primary School 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 of their own gender, take part in

team activities and move with their peers to secondary school. Castlehill Primary School has achieved Bronze recognition in its Nurture approach as part of Argyll & Bute's OCTNE strategy. Through the Options Appraisal process, one pupil reported that they had increased opportunities as a result of being at a larger school. Another pupil reported that they were less stressed now because of the transport arrangements in place.

- 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 Castlehill 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. Castlehill Primary School is part of the Mid Argyll and Kintyre Cluster and is also part of a shared headship that includes Carradale Primary School and Drumlemble Primary School. This means that staff can be supported together, moderation and tracking of pupil progress is enabled and staff work across stage appropriate groups. Colleagues within Castlehill 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 Castlehill Primary School encourages a nurturing environment and positive relationships. This is particularly evident in the playground and in the dining room when groups of children are together in a social context. The school works actively with partners to develop the support offered to pupils. Examples of this includes Active Schools, Bikeability, Roots of Empathy and the Royal Highland Trust.

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. Most children are achieving national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy. Health and Wellbeing continues to develop within the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) programme, which supports 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 planning process between Castlehill Primary School and Campbeltown Grammar School, which involves increased opportunities for children to participate and to make new 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. Staff promote positive relationships at all levels, the impact of this being that children enjoy good relationships with their peers, young leaders feel confident and entrusted to take these developments forward.

12 Environment for Learning

- 12.1 Castlehill Primary School is a suitably-equipped and well supported school, situated in the town of Campbeltown. The entire building is well maintained. The school has a large playground area that wraps around the school building. 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 the town. These relationships also extend into clubs and activities that take place in Campbeltown out-with the school day.
- 12.3 Southend Primary School is 8.7 miles from Castlehill Primary School. Any mitigating effects around the adverse weather and transport issues are outweighed by the benefits of this proposal.

- 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 resultant from access to a more diverse curriculum. The learning environment in Castlehill 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 Castlehill 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 close location for Campbeltown Nursery Centre and Castlehill Primary School enables a strong transition process between the nursery and the school and includes joint early level learning every week.

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. 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.
- 14.3 The proposal could increase the roll of Castlehill 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 Southend Primary School, which consists of one large open plan classroom, library, active play area and snug, would benefit from 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 easier. Larger year groups make the provision of specialist services more viable and provide enhanced opportunities for school trips. Castlehill Primary School meets all the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

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

- 15.1 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. If Southend Primary School was to close, the current mothballing costs being incurred would be re-directed and therefore indirectly benefit other school pupils in Argyll and Bute.
- 15.2 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

- 15.3 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.

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

- 16.1 The main adverse effect from this proposal would be the length of the journey to school for children who live in the Southend Primary School catchment area. However, children who previously lived in this catchment area and attended Castlehill Primary School made this journey, and families in the area do not feel this is a major consideration. Funded school transport would also continue to be provided for pupils should this proposal be implemented. Pupil and parent feedback from the community engagement event provided positive feedback with regards to transport arrangements.

17 Summary of educational benefits statement

- 17.1 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 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**.

- 17.2 Whilst the positive educational benefits are numerous, there is one negative aspect identified which arises from the children attending Castlehill Primary School. 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. It is worth noting that the broad and very rural area that Southend covers, requires pupils to travel to and from school by bus or car. There is no pavement running from Southend village to Southend Primary School.

18 FACTORS FOR RURAL SCHOOL CLOSURES

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

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

- 18.2 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.
- 18.3 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
- 18.4 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.
- 18.5 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. The

opportunity for the local community to acquire this building could be key to helping to make this community an independent, resilient place to live. Management of assets such as Southend Primary School may be an important step in building community confidence, promoting growth and enabling communities to realise their aspirations.

18.6 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.

18.7 Within Southend there is Dunaverty Village Hall which is used for community events. Almost all people who attended the preliminary consultation strongly stated the school building not be allowed to fall in to further disrepair. There was a strong feeling that the building should be used to support tourism or provide opportunities for outdoor learning for children and young people.

18.8 It is considered that formal closure of this school could have a positive impact on the wider community, and may lead to an increase in other users of the facility which may lead to an improvement in economic growth. It was felt that the building not being in use, reflected negatively on the community.

18.9 Indeed, the school closure may help to empower the local community should the community wish to undertake an asset transfer process for the building. This could have a positive impact on community sustainability. Formal closure would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community who are already considering future uses for the building. This may enhance community life by giving a community enterprise focus.

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

18.10 During the pre-consultation phase, members of the community had varying opinions on the closure of the school. All members of the community were strongly of the opinion that continuing to mothball the school or extending the catchment area were not options. Within Southend there is Dunaverty Hall which is used for community events. All 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.

18.11 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. If the local plans for the building progress, 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

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

school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements

- 18.12 The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two years. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Southend community.
- 18.13 Implementation of the proposal would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Southend Primary School, in terms of current travel arrangements would have a neutral effect on the environment. There is no current annual transport cost for pupils to travel to Castlehill Primary School.
- 18.14 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

- 18.15 Currently nine pupils travel to Castlehill Primary School from the Southend Primary School Catchment area. 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.
- 18.16 If this proposal was to be implemented there would be little or no impact on the natural environment.

19 FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 19.1 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 £5,936 to £27,270. This information gives details on the estimated cost if Southend Primary School was still to be an occupied and operational establishment. However, as Southend Primary School is currently mothballed, the cost for the mothballing is estimated at £27,270 per year. Should the school be reopened, occupied and operational, the running costs per year are estimated at £299,054.
- 19.2 Column 2 of Table 1 at **Appendix 4** shows the projected annual running costs of Southend whilst Column 3 shows the additional impact on Castlehill Primary as the receiving school. The annual recurring savings (or costs) are shown in Column 4.
- 19.3 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.

- 19.4 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 Castlehill Primary School but they will be a cost to the Authority as a whole, for example school transport, and the costs of maintaining the teachers employed in Southend Primary School.
- 19.5 There are currently no annual transport costs for pupils to attend Southend Primary School. Transport costs per year to attend Southend Primary School, if it were to be reopened, are estimated at £131,238.48 per year. There is no change to the transport costs for pupils to attend Castlehill Primary School due to the service route in place.
- 19.6 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 Southend Primary School is £465,114 and for Castlehill Primary School this is £3,400,423.
- 19.7 Table 3 contains the annual running costs during mothballing of Southend Primary School and these are estimated at **£27,270** per year. This includes non-domestic rates, utility costs, insurances, etc. If the school was to be formally closed, this would allow the Council to take steps towards selling the school to a third party or local community.
- 19.8 The transfer of pupils from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary School would impact on the council's Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) allocation for Castlehill Primary School Teaching Staff as there would be a reduction in the Percentage of Primary Pupils in Small Schools. This reduction is estimated at £22,569. However Argyll and Bute Council is supported through the floor mechanism so would not see a reduction in their overall funding.

20 EQUALITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

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).

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.

21 CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 21.1 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 9th March 2023 that, having specific regard to the reasons for formulating a prospective closure proposal, the option to close Southend Primary School and redraw its catchment area to Castlehill Primary School is the most appropriate response to the specific reasons for the potential proposal.
- 21.2 This document was considered by the Council as Education Authority on 24th August 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.
- 21.3 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>
- 21.4 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 31st August 2023 until the close of business on 27th October 2023 which lasts for a minimum of 6 weeks and includes at least 30 school days.
- 21.5 A public meeting will be held at Southend Primary School on 27th September 2023 at 6.00pm. 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 27th October 2023.

- 21.6 Written representations may be made on the proposal and the alternatives to the proposal. Written representations may also suggest other alternatives to the proposal.
- 21.7 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.
- 21.8 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.
- 21.9 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.
- 21.10 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.
- 21.11 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.

22 CONCLUSION

- 22.1 It is proposed that education provision at Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.
- 22.2 It has been assessed that the proposal is the most appropriate means of addressing the underlying reasons for formulating it, which are:
- Southend Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is currently zero and is 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 16.29 fte vacancies for teachers and head teachers in Argyll and Bute.
 - Whilst vacant, the condition of the school premises will continue to deteriorate, with limited budgets for maintenance. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £27,270.

Other 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 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 unnessecary accomodation 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

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

Policy Lead for Education

For further information contact:

Jennifer Crocket

Chief Education Officer/ Head of Education: Wellbeing, Inclusion and Achievement

Jennifer.Crocket@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Rosie Mackay

Education Manager

Rosie.mackay@argyll-bute.gov.uk

9th August 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: 01436 657674 Fax:

Our Ref: Ref:

If phoning or calling please ask for:

e-mail: Rosie.Mackay@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Council Website: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Southend Primary School

Dear Consultee,

Review of Education Provision

Notice and Summary of Proposal for closing Southend 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 Southend 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 31st August 2023 and will conclude on 27th October 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 Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

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

- Southend Primary School has been mothballed for 2 years. The school roll is very low 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 16.29 fte vacancies for both teachers and headteachers 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 £27,270.

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 Southend Primary School,
- b) Continued Mothballing of Southend Primary with the pupils zoned to Castlehill Primary School,
- c) Re-open Southend Primary School and realign its catchment area,
- d) Close Southend Primary School and realign its catchment area to Castlehill Primary School (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/school-consultations-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 27th September 2023 at 6.00pm in Southend 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 Southend Primary School catchment area would be educated at Castlehill 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
- Campbeltown Public Library, Kinloch Road, Town Centre, Campbeltown, PA28 6EG
- Lochgilphead Service Point, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD
- Castlehill Primary School, Ralston Road, Campbeltown. PA28 6LE
- Dunaverty Hall, Southend, Campbeltown, Argyll & Bute, PA28 6RF

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 Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31 st May 2024. The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend 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:

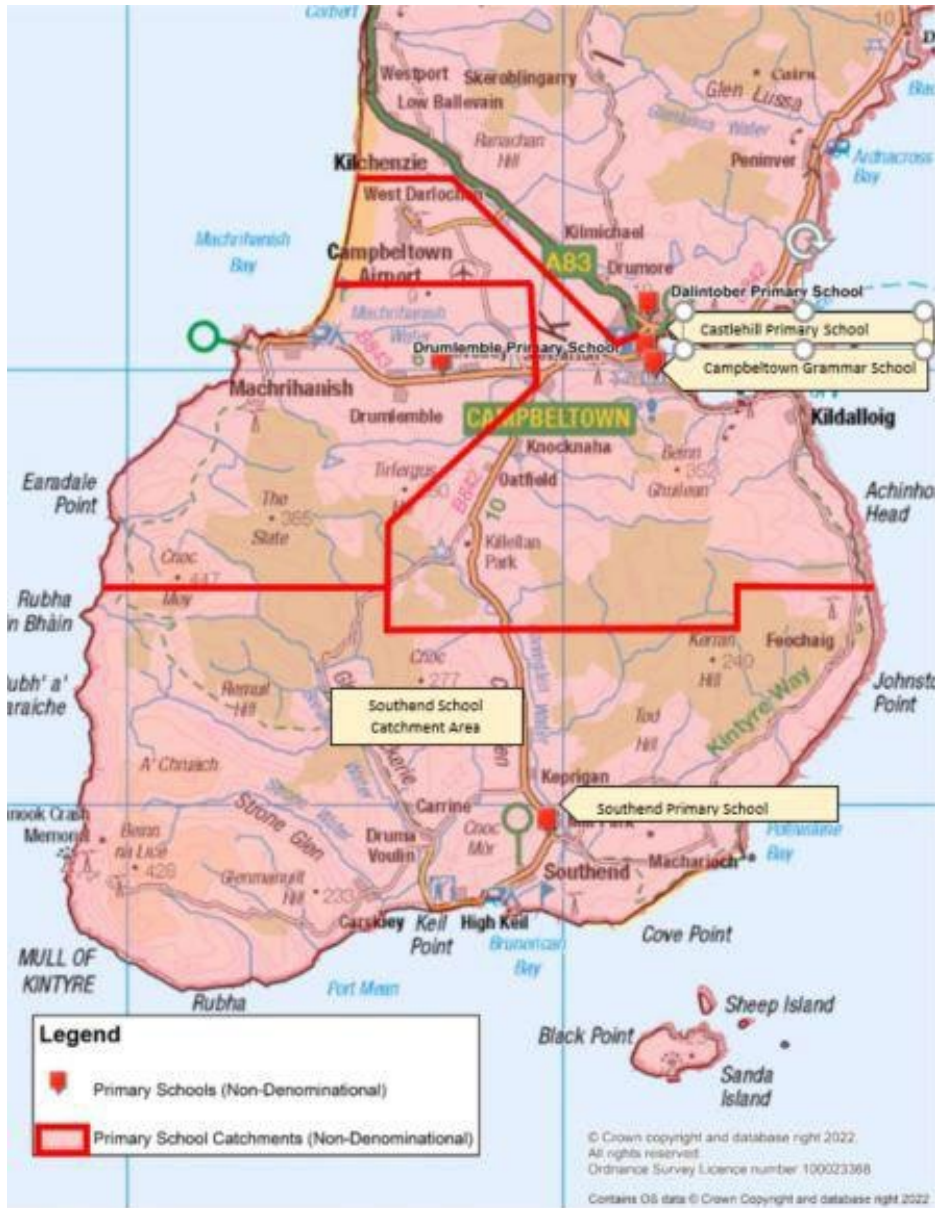
YOUR INTEREST: (please tick)

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 AREA



MAP OF PROPOSED CATCHMENT AREA



APPENDIX 4 – FINANCIAL TEMPLATE

Table 1²

	Projected annual costs for full financial year 2023/24	Additional financial impact on receiving school Castlehill Primary	Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)
Name of School Southend Primary			
School costs			
<i>Employee costs -</i>			
teaching staff	104,390	0	104,390
support staff	20,272	0	20,272
teaching staff training (CPD etc)	0	0	0
support staff training	0	0	0
Supply costs	3,030	0	3,030
<i>Building costs:</i>			
property insurance	1,062	0	1,062
non domestic rates	1,422	0	1,422
water & sewerage charges	165	0	165
energy costs	18,307	0	18,307
cleaning (contract or in-house)	395	0	395
building repair & maintenance	4,600	0	4,600
grounds maintenance	53	0	53
facilities management costs	0	0	0
revenue costs arising from capital	0	0	0
other - refuse collection; telephones	1,585	0	1,585
<i>School operational costs:</i>			
learning materials	2,911	199	2,712
catering (contract or in-house)	11,062	1,625	9,437
SQA costs	0	0	0
other school operational costs (e.g. licences)			0
<i>Transport costs:</i>			
home to school	131,238.48	0	0
other pupil transport costs	0		
staff travel	0		

² These figures have been calculated based on Skipness Primary school roll the last full year prior to mothballing.

SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL	300,492	1,842	298,407
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Income:			
Sale of meals	-1,438	-1,177	-261
Lets	0		0
External care provider	0		0
Other	0		0
SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL	-1,438	-1,177	-261
TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL	299,054	647	298,407

UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR	27,187	72	27,128
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Table 2

Capital costs	School proposed for closure	Receiving school
	Southend Primary	Castlehill Primary
Capital Life Cycle cost	465,114	3,400,423
Third party contributions to capital costs	0	0

Table 3

Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal	
property insurance	1,062
non domestic rates	1,422
water & sewerage charges	165
energy costs	1,101
cleaning (contract or in-house)	0
security costs	0
building repair & maintenance	1,950
grounds maintenance	53
facilities management costs	0
Other, employee costs; equipment lease and alarm rental	21,517
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL	27,270

Table 4

Non-recurring revenue costs	
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	12,725

Table 5

Impact on GAE	
The Primary Indicator determining the GAE allocation for Primary School Teaching Staff is based on the number of primary school pupils with the Secondary Indicator being the percentage of pupils in small schools (roll < 70 pupils averaged over 2 years). The additional pupils from Southend will maintain the roll of Castlehill above the small school threshold. There will be a loss of small school GAE for those pupils attending Southend equating to approximately £22,569. Argyll and Bute Council, however, is supported by the floor mechanism therefore any calculated reduction in GAE would not have an actual impact on the overall GAE allocation.	22,569
GAE IMPACT	22,569



EDUCATION

OPTIONS APPRAISAL

SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As of April 2021 there were no pupils attending Southend Primary School. Pupils residing within the Southend catchment area were attending schools within the Campbeltown area. The pre-school age children within the catchment area were also attending nursery settings in Campbeltown. There were no Primary 1 pupils registered to attend Southend Primary School in session 2021-22. At the Community Services Committee on 10th June 2021, Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Southend Primary School on a temporary basis. It was agreed that the premises be retained for 2 years on a care and maintenance basis.

[SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL 27052021 Pre-Agenda Briefing of the Community Services Committee.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

On 25th August 2022, Argyll and Bute Council approved the continued mothballing of Southend Primary School and for the Education Service to begin gathering necessary information and carry out the exercise of assessing the options for the future of Southend Primary School, in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.

[SCHOOLS CONSULTATIONSCOTLAND ACT 2010 - SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

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, contains 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 a preliminary consultation process.

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. Public bodies, including councils, must consider such requests and respond to them within a reasonable timescale.

Southend Primary School has had zero pupils enrolled since elected members approved the mothballing.

On 25th August 2022, Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the preliminary requirements in relation to considering a rural school closure and look at an options appraisal for Southend Primary School. This review will enable the Education Service to identify and consider the options put forward.

The 2010 Act makes special arrangements in regard to rural schools that is in effect a presumption against their closure. 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 this Options Appraisal.

2.0 REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

2.1 An authority that is contemplating formulating a rural school closure proposal must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act before starting to prepare its Proposal Paper. In particular, it must identify the underlying reasons why the future of the School is being considered, which, in this case, are as follows:

1. Southend Primary School has been mothballed for almost two years. The school roll fell to zero as parents were choosing to place their children in schools outwith the Southend catchment area to Castlehill Primary School. The school roll was very low and is not predicted to rise in the near future.
2. Along with several other rural councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. In January 2023 there were 15.9 fte vacancies for both Head Teachers and Teachers.
3. Whilst the School is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for maintenance.

The Council is therefore considering the future of Southend Primary School. The various options are explored within this paper.

3.0 BACKGROUND

Argyll and Bute is an area of outstanding natural beauty sitting within an ancient landscape with a strong cultural identity. Today, the culture of Argyll and Bute is reflected in its traditional industries of fishing, farming and crofting, sports such as shinty and in its world class musicians and artists as well as its modern commercial industries such as wind turbine production and fish farming.

Argyll and Bute is geographically the second largest authority in Scotland. Education is delivered in a range of settings including schools, partnerships and youth services.

3.1 Argyll and Bute Corporate Plan

The Argyll and Bute Corporate Plan identifies Argyll and Bute as an area of Scotland with outstanding places, 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.

This strategic approach embraces the vision for our area, our communities and our people as outlined in the Corporate Plan. Our key service priorities support the delivery of our commitments in the plans, helping to focus on local outcomes that will achieve meaningful improvements for the area, our local communities and our citizens.

Councils have a statutory responsibility in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 to achieve best value. Our Community Services Asset Management Plan provides a review of the property assets used to deliver services. It incorporates the School Estate Management Plan which reflects the local implementation of Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future, the national school estate strategy developed by the Scottish Government in conjunction with local authorities.

The aspirations, guiding principles and objectives contained within Building Better Schools are reflected throughout Education and Children's Services Asset Management Plan (SAMP) for schools and public buildings, both in the management of the existing assets and in the design and construction of developments.

[corporate plan 2018 181119 v2.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

3.2 Our Children Their Future

Councils, as an Education Authority, have 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: Education Vision and Strategy.

[argyll bute vision strategy final web.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

3.3 Southend and the Local Area - the Southend Primary School Setting

Southend is a scenically beautiful area situated at the end of the Kintyre peninsula, only 13 miles across the North Channel from Northern Ireland. Southend is a small and picturesque village which is situated approximately 9 miles from Campbeltown. The final stage of the Kintyre Way spans from Southend to Machrihanish. The area is home to the historic attractions of the 13th Century Dunaverty Rock and Castle, St. Ciaran's Cave, St. Columba's Chapel as well as Iron Hill Fort on the hill of Cnoc Araich where access is gained from behind Southend Primary School. There is also an 18 hole golf course. The area is popular with cyclists, hill walkers and nature enthusiasts.

3.4 The School within the Community

Southend Primary School was previously very active within the community. It was a focus for social and educational events. The pupils invited the community to attend events on many occasions every year as well as community members volunteering with drama productions and activities such as golfing lessons. Whilst being mothballed, there were no requests for the building to be used for such events. With Dunaverty Hall, a community managed charity that hosts various community events, being the hub of the village.

3.5 Population

Argyll and Bute has an average population density of just 0.13 persons per hectare. This coupled with the changing demographic profile of the area presents one of our greatest challenges. The table below refers directly to the Southend area showing the changing population from census 2001 to census 2011:

Table 1: Population Information

Southend Area Census			
2001		2011	
Total Resident Population	165	Total Resident Population	165
% under 16	28.48	% under 16	15.7
% 16 – 64 (pensionable age)	50	% 16 – 64 (pensionable age)	63
% pensionable age and over	21	% pensionable age and over	20

It is recognised that the census area and the catchment area of Southend Primary School differ slightly. The census cannot display results for that postcode area alone because it could impact people's privacy. Instead, it groups the postcode with nearby postcodes.

3.6 Development and House Building

A new Local Development Plan (LDP2) is now available, which sets out planning and development proposals for the next 10 years from 2020, and a vision for 20 years. The Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan provides the local planning framework for the Council area, excluding the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park area. The Plan is divided into the written statement and proposals maps. The written statement provides the general policy context

against which planning applications for new development proposals should be assessed. This is supported by the proposals maps which show the range of development opportunities and constraints within the area, for example:

- the key development areas i.e. the allocations for housing, industry and business, community facilities and infrastructure;
 - the potential areas for future development (Potential Development Areas);
 - areas requiring actions such as environmental improvement or regeneration (Areas for Action); and
 - environmental designations such as national Scenic Areas, Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas and Local Nature Conservation Sites.
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- *Appendix 1* shows the LDP2 for Southend
 - *Appendix 2* shows the LDP2 for Castlehill
 - *Appendix 3* provides the key for Local Development Plans.

3.7 **Southend Primary School**

Southend Primary School is situated outside of the village of Southend and was built in 1886 with an extension added in 2005/06. The school is co-educational and non-denominational with Early Learning and Childcare available. It has a catchment area extending from Carskiefy to Macharioch and Fiochaig to A'Chruach. The school has one large open plan classroom, Library, Active Play Area and Snug. The Hall was used by pre 5 Monday to Wednesday and was also used for activities such as physical education and drama performances. The hall can also be used as a dining area as it is next to the kitchen. The school has two playgrounds, one of which is enclosed. Within the playground there is a pavilion, Wendy House, mud kitchen area, picnic tables and raised beds for plants. The larger playground includes a wooden climbing frame and a habitat area with pond. There are also coloured number and PE tarmac markings.

Appendix 4 shows the Southend Primary School Floor Plan.

Southend Primary School is 8.7 miles from Castlehill Primary School. The area is sparsely populated. Southend Primary School is situated on the side of the B842 that leads from Campbeltown to Southend.

The Scottish Government's Rural School List 2021 classifies Southend Primary School as 'very remote rural'. This is defined as an area with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more. Southend Primary is one of 8 primary schools associated with Campbeltown Grammar School.

[Rural schools in Scotland - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

3.8 **Castlehill Primary School**

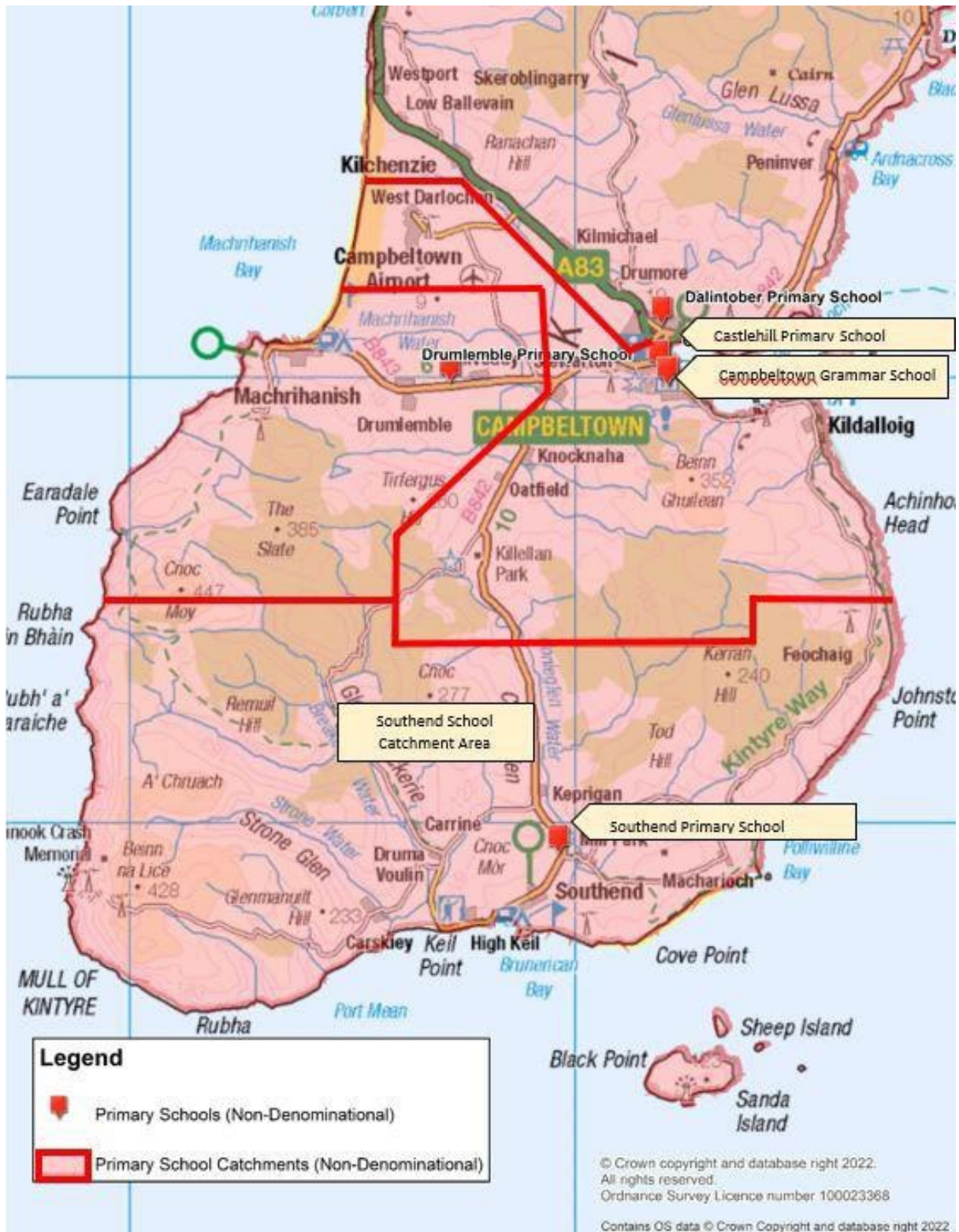
Following the mothballing of Southend Primary School, children from the Southend catchment area attended Castlehill Primary School. Castlehill Primary School is a non-denominational and co-educational school situated in the town of Campbeltown at Ralston Road. Castlehill Primary serves part of the town of Campbeltown and much of the area to the south and east of the town. The original school building was constructed in 1876 and is still used today. The school accommodation is split over two levels with a reception office, school kitchen and dining hall. The school has a playground that wraps around the school building. The school has close links with Campbeltown Nursery.

Appendix 5 shows the Castlehill Primary School Floor Plan.

The school has strong and active traditions in instrumental music, in sport and physical activity. The school enjoys the support of an active Parent Council and strong community partners.

The Primary School building has facilities for pupils, visitors and special access needs. With its central location within Campbeltown, Castlehill Primary School is not on the Scottish Government's Rural School List 2021. Campbeltown Grammar School is the associated Secondary School for Southend, Dalintober, Drumlemble, Castlehill, Carradale & Glenbarr pupils. Pupils at Rhunahaorine and Gigha are given the choice between Tarbert Academy and Campbeltown Grammar.

The Map below shows the adjoining catchment areas of Southend and Castlehill Primary Schools Catchment Areas:



3.9 Pupil Numbers

Pupil projections, and data for 2023-24 are based on the 2022 pupil census, a return prepared annually for the Scottish Government. Past pupil numbers are historic data from past pupil censuses. Pupil projections are based on 3/5 years intake and updated post P1 registration.

Table 2 shows the historic and current pupil numbers for both Southend and Castlehill Primary schools:

Table 2:	Southend PS	Castlehill PS
	Roll	Roll
Capacity	50	459
2005-06	46	289
2006-07	41	276
2007-08	38	257
2008-09	33	243
2009-2010	32	218
2010-2011	27	195
2011-2012	22	189
2012-2013	22	178
2013-2014	18	180
2014-2015	17	184
2015-2016	16	188
2016-2017	18	182
2017-2018	5	197
2018-19	6	210
2019-20	7	205
2020 -2021	0	203
2021 -2022	0	194
2022-2023	0	189

Table 3 shows projected rolls for Castlehill Primary School and estimated numbers of pupils in the Southend Primary School catchment area according to figures held by Argyll and Bute Council:

Table 3:	Southend PS	Castlehill PS
	Roll	Roll
Capacity	50	459
2023 -2024	8	189
2024 -2025	8	180
2025-2026	8	173

* A prediction based on information available at December 2022. Southend information based on prediction available at December 2019

The Southend Primary School roll further dropped to 3 over the course of the 2019-20 school year (see Table 2, above) and was expected to reduce further at the point of mothballing in April 2021. Pupils within the catchment area (as set out in Table 3, above) did not reflect the number of pupils attending the

school because parents chose to send their children to schools within the Campbeltown area.

4.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Meetings

A Community Engagement Meeting was held in Southend Primary School, on 17th November, 2022 from 09:00-18:00 hours. This was to seek the views of the community on the future of Southend Primary School. This meeting was attended by 43 people. There was also a meeting in Dalintober Primary School to gather opinions from parents who will be impacted by any decision that is made in relation to Southend Primary School. Dalintober Primary School have 3 members of staff re-deployed from Southend PS to Dalintober PS. Virtual meetings took place with a young person from Campbeltown Grammar School who was impacted by the mothballing of Southend Primary School and the Head Teacher of Southend Primary School who currently teaches at Dalintober Primary School. The Head Teacher at Dalintober Primary School took part in a virtual meeting. Meetings were also offered to Castlehill and Drumlemble Parent Councils. Three secondary aged young people and one primary aged young person participated in the Community Engagement Meeting. The parent and toddler group within Southend were contacted on two occasions to be given the opportunity to feed into the preliminary engagement exercise. An email contact was also given to individuals during the Community Engagement event to encourage more feedback from this group. No response was received.

4.2 Content of Meetings

Attendees at the meetings were given an overview of the information that the Council would be using in this Options Appraisal, this included pupil projections, development information and local services and facilities.

The questions were as follows:

Over the last three years, what has been the effect of mothballing Southend School on you, your family and community?

In your view what are the pros/cons of the following options:

- *Continue with mothballing*
- *Re-open the school*
- *Close the school*
- *Re-open the school but widen the catchment area*

Attendees also noted questions regarding the future of the school, and points of information that should be considered in the Options Appraisal.

4.3 Feedback

There was a range of viewpoints on the future of Southend School:

- **Community and Parents**

The majority of the community felt that continuing to mothball the school was not an option. It was felt that a decision should be made as the building would only continue to deteriorate. A small number felt this might be beneficial to allow pre 5 children in the area to get to the stage where they were ready to attend school. The majority of the community believed that the most viable option is to formally close the school as decline in school roll at the school had been as a result of parents choosing to send their children to schools within the Campbeltown area. There was a small percentage of people in support of opening the school but said that they would need to see what this looked like before they were able to commit to sending their child to school there. There are 18 children who attend a local baby and toddler group. This was seen as a strong reason to keep the school open by some members of the community. The group was approached to provide feedback and members of the group were encouraged to discuss and provide feedback via direct email. Neither opportunity provided further feedback. The community were all in agreement that changing the catchment area would not be a viable option given the geographical area.

- **Children/young people**

The young people who were now at Campbeltown Grammar had voiced that they loved being at school at Southend Primary and had had a positive experience. A younger pupil reported that their transport to school at Castlehill had improved since Southend Primary School had been mothballed, they enjoyed being at Castlehill Primary school. Another pupil reported that they benefitted from more friends and a wider range of opportunities having moved from Southend to Castlehill Primary School. There are currently no pupils at Southend Primary and pupils felt that they did not want to give an opinion on what should happen to the school but did feel a decision should be made about the building, mothballing was not a viable option for them. A young person who had attended the school would have liked to have seen it re-open but recognised that this would cost money. A younger pupil did not want the re-opening of the school if it would impact on their transport to Castlehill Primary as they found service prior to mothballing stressful.

- **Staff**

Staff members were sad at the thought of the School being closed but felt that they had dealt with the most difficult period when the decision was made to mothball the school. Staff members felt that the low pupil numbers was not providing a rich educational experience for pupils.

General Comments:

“We would like to see parents choosing the school.”

“My child attends school in town and this has been good for her socially. My youngest is likely to follow her to the same school as opposed to attending Southend Primary”

“The school didn’t close due to lack of children, it closed due to parental choice.”

“We would only send our child to the school if numbers permitted.”

“Individual communities will be lost if there is an amalgamation (new large school campus). Communities are all diverse.”

“There is a lot of potential through the Pre 5 group.”

“In an ideal world it is great to see small schools but difficult to get staff.”

“We think it won’t re-open if we are being realistic. Can it be staffed?”

“Realistically, I can’t see it re-opening”

“The longer it is left mothballed, the more it will deteriorate.”

“I personally can’t see me moving my children if the school re-opened. I value the standardisation, social aspect and social contact in a big school. Schools in town have capacity to take increased numbers.”

5.0 THE PROPOSAL AND REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSAL AS CONSIDERED BY THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Southend Primary School has been mothballed for almost 2 years. The school roll had dramatically declined after 2017. Although the census information illustrates that in 2019-20 the school roll was 7 pupils (see Table 2, above), this reduced to 3 (2 of which were siblings) over the course of the year. Discussion took place with the Head Teacher and parent community at the time, who all acknowledged the limitations that pupil numbers were placing on the opportunity for social interaction. The decision was made by the relevant parents that the pupils would have the opportunity for increased social interaction at Castlehill Primary School. The decline in pupil numbers at Southend Primary School was as a result of placing requests to Castlehill Primary School, with a small number also choosing to attend Drumlemble

Primary School and Dalintober Primary School. A small number of parents with pre-school children are supportive of the school re-opening. Parents with children at Castlehill Primary School wished current arrangements to continue and reported that siblings would be attending Castlehill Primary School. There is very limited support for the reopening of Southend Primary School.

Whilst the building is mothballed it continues to deteriorate. The Community is very proactive and have positive suggestions as to how the building could be used. Along with several other rural councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. In January 2023 there were 15.9 fte vacancies for both Head Teachers and Teachers. Recruitment in the South Kintyre area is challenging due to the rural location.

The Council is required to consider the future of Southend Primary School. The following options are explored within this paper:

- a) Re-open Southend Primary School.
- b) Continued Mothballing of Southend Primary with the pupils zoned to Castlehill Primary School.
- c) Re-open Southend Primary School and realign its catchment area.
- d) Close Southend Primary School and realign its catchment area to Castlehill Primary School.

6.0 OPTION A: RE-OPEN SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL

6.1 Community Feedback

Of the 43 community members that attended the Options Appraisal engagement event, only 3 families wished for the school to re-open. There was concern expressed that they were being asked to give views on this without knowing fully what the school would look like. Pupil numbers and staffing would influence their final parental decision. It was also felt that the ELC needed to be in place for this to be a successful school as if pre-school children are attending an ELC in Campbeltown, they would progress to the same school in town as their peers as opposed to breaking up friendship groups. The community were divided in their opinions.

6.2 Pupil Numbers

If the school were to reopen in August 2023, the maximum pupil numbers from the catchment would be one. This would be one new pupil. All parents involved in the consultation stated that they would not move their child from another school as they were settled and friendships were established. Pupils currently within the catchment area of Southend Primary School either attend Castlehill Primary School, Drumlemble or Dalintober Primary School. It has been stated that without a viable number of pupils for the School parents would not be considering placing their children to attend Southend Primary School if it were to re-open.

If the school were to re-open sustainability may not be viable due to the fact that pupil numbers over the next four years are not predicted to rise and are well below the capacity of the school building. It has also been stated that parents would choose to place their children in a school within Campbeltown as older siblings were already attending school there or because it is more convenient for after school clubs.

Parents felt that the ELC may be beneficial to the area and that this may grow numbers for the school in the longer term. The ELC had previously been open part time. Four Children attended the ELC on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. During the pandemic, parents had to choose between Southend ELC and Campbeltown ELC as split placements were not permitted. This resulted in no pupils attending the Southend ELC. As friendships are formed at ELC, parents have chosen not to split friendships when children are progressing onto school, therefore Castlehill Primary becomes a preferred option.

Table 4: Pupil Numbers

Southend Primary	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
Approved Capacity	50	50	50
Roll Projection	8	8	8

6.3 Financial Information

The total amount including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration to re-open the school is **£139,024**.

The annual cost of mothballing Southend Primary School is **£5,936**.

The cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£7,300**.

6.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons why the future of Southend Primary School is being considered are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Southend Primary School to increase. Southend Primary School is currently mothballed. The mothballing of the school was due to decline in pupil numbers as a result of parental choice. Some members of the community (who did not have school age children) stated that the way to re-open the school was to insist that parents within the catchment area send their children to the school. However parents have the legal right to express a preference for a particular school that they want their children to attend, and the placing request system is in place to consider this.

6.4.1 Community Impact

The reopening of the school would enable the premises to be used by the community. It would also be a possibility that the school pupils would invite the community to specific events. The presence of a school and the facilities/activities that may be offered could make the area a more attractive place to live. Reopening the school may therefore encourage families with school age children to move to the community. This in turn may make the community more sustainable.

However the community have demonstrated that there is a limited desire for the school to reopen. The majority who attended the community engagement indicated the need for the school to become a facility for the community or local tourism to use rather than an educational establishment.

As Southend has an established community hall, Southend Primary School has not been used for community use since it has been mothballed. Respondents noted the negative impact of the school mothballing on the community as:

- The visual impact on the community of the mothballed school.
- The continued deterioration of the building.

If the school were to reopen as an educational establishment there would be an economic impact with respect to the expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard. There would also be costs relating to staffing, and ongoing maintenance. The reopening of the school and the potential relocation of families may have a positive effect on the wider economy of the community.

6.4.2 Travel Arrangements

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two years. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Southend community. Southend Primary School is situated outside of Southend village with no pavement running from the village to the school. If Southend Primary school was to reopen there could be a positive impact on the health and wellbeing and education of pupils who are able to walk or cycle to school but the lack of safe routes to the school limits this. Staff would either travel to the school by car, or if they live locally could walk or cycle. There may be a positive environmental impact as the use of vehicles to transport pupils may decrease. Conversely, there could be increased car usage by staff which may mean these travel arrangements have a negative environmental impact. The respective positive and negative impact may therefore balance.

6.5 Educational Benefits

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 the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

With respect to outdoor learning, community spaces could be used either in the school grounds or in the immediate neighbourhood if the school were to reopen. Outdoor learning is provided by all schools.

With continued mothballing of the building, there would be issues with respect to the current condition and suitability of the school buildings and facilities which would negatively impact learning and teaching.

6.6 Summary

The 43 people who attended the consultation were divided in relation to the reopening of Southend Primary as a school. If the school reopened, pupil numbers within the catchment area would be eight, as of the September 2022 census, and this is not predicted to rise over the next three years. The catchment numbers are similar to that when the school roll dropped to an unsustainable number in April 2021 when the school was mothballed. The catchment numbers do not reflect the school roll numbers.

There are financial implications if the school is to be reopened. The total amount including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration to re-open the school is **£139,024** with the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£7,300**.

If the School was to be reopened, the premises would be able to be used by the community, in addition to its use as an educational facility. However, with the village hall being in regular use, this impact would be limited. The reopening of the School may encourage families with school age children to move to the community, which may make the community more sustainable.

The travel distance (sourced from AA Route Planner) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. Adverse weather can be a factor, however this is the same for other local schools and areas. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost 2 years. Should the school reopen, there may be a positive environmental impact as the use of vehicles to transport pupils may decrease. Conversely, there could be increased car usage by staff which may mean these travel arrangements have a negative environmental impact. The positive and negative impact may balance.

There are no specific educational benefits from reopening the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

When considering the above alongside projected low pupil numbers, the challenges in recruiting teaching staff and the expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard and the limited local support for reopening Southend Primary School this is not considered to be a reasonable option.

7.0 OPTION B: CONTINUED MOTHBALLING OF SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS ZONED TO CASTLEHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Statutory Guidance for the 2010 Act, in relation to mothballing, states *“the maximum length of its duration is likely to depend on the location of the school and the desirability of maintaining capacity to re-open a school there, but it is unlikely that it should exceed 3 years in areas that are not very remote.”* Southend Primary School has been mothballed for 2 years.

7.1 Community Feedback

There are many ideas for the future of the building being discussed by the community as base for outdoor activities, gym and tourism facility. Only one person voiced that mothballing would not bother them as their child was not of school age yet. Everyone else at the community meeting felt that mothballing the school over a long period is wasteful due to deterioration of the property and should not be prolonged:

“As long as it’s maintained, we don’t care what happens to it.”

“The longer it is left mothballed, the more it will deteriorate.”

“Not viable. Decision needs to be made.”

“I don’t think there is any point to continuing to mothball the schools.” (Young Person)

“This wouldn’t bother me as my child isn’t quite ready to go to school.”

7.2 Pupil Numbers

Pupil numbers are not projected to increase over the next 4 years, as per Table 4 above.

7.3 Financial Information

The current annual cost (2022/23) to the Council of the mothballed Southend Primary School is **£5,936**. This includes electricity, heating oil, and ground maintenance, building maintenance and repair costs. It does not take into

account the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school which is **£7,300**. There is no current annual transport cost of taking pupils to alternative schools.

7.4 **Assessment of Rural Factors**

The reasons why the future of Southend Primary School is being considered are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Southend Primary School to increase. Southend Primary School is currently mothballed. Only a small number of parents whose children are within the catchment area attended the community engagement event. No parents planned on moving their child to Southend PS should the school re-open. To reopen the school would not in itself increase the pupil numbers.

7.4.1 Community Impact

If pupils are to continue their education in Castlehill Primary School there would be no change to the current impact on the community. If the mothballing of Southend was to continue the building would deteriorate further and eventually become unavailable. There is concern with regards to the deterioration of the property and the impact of this on the neighbouring residential property that has a shared wall. This could have a detrimental effect on the sustainability of the Southend community. As the school is situated outside of the village of Southend, the building and grounds are currently not being used. There were some signs of minor vandalism of outside planters on the school property. The community view the buildings and grounds as an opportunity to develop an outdoor learning facility for residential use or a bunk house/youth hostel accommodation. As the Kintyre Way is a popular tourist destination and the area lends itself to the active tourism industry, the community felt that this use may continue to benefit young people as well as attract tourism into the local economy. This may make the area a more attractive place to live.

7.4.2 Travel Arrangements

There is no change to the travel arrangements that are currently in place nor to the environmental impact from these. The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two years. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Southend community. Continued mothballing of Southend Primary School would have no effect on current staff travel. The small number of children has minimal effect on staffing within the receiving primary schools.

7.5 **Educational Benefits**

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 the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

Southend Primary School is a remote rural school, Castlehill Primary School has a central location and is therefore not classified as a rural school (Scottish Government classification). Children from Southend area, attending Castlehill Primary School are benefitting from learning with a number of peers at the same age and stage as themselves as opposed to a single classroom/multi composite classrooms. Pupils also benefit from increased friendship groups that a large school can offer. Outdoor learning is currently provided at Castlehill Primary.

The partnership between Campbeltown nursery and Castlehill Primary School enhances the transition process for the children moving from Nursery into Primary one, through liaison between the two settings. Transition to secondary school is enhanced through joint planning and educational experiences. A young person reported that the transition to secondary school was easier for them as they knew more people when moving from Castlehill to Campbeltown Grammar as opposed to if they had remained at Southend Primary School.

7.6 Summary

The majority of people who attended the community engagement event were not in favour of continuing the two year mothballing of Southend Primary School. There was a significant view at the community meetings that mothballing the school over a long period was wasteful due to deterioration of the property and potentially affected sustainability of the community. Pupil numbers are not predicted to rise in terms of pre-school children living within the catchment area. Mothballing had no positive impact on the reasons for the proposal.

The current annual cost (2022/23) to the Council of the mothballed Southend Primary School is **£5,936**. This includes electricity, heating oil, and ground maintenance, building maintenance and repair costs. It does not take into account the cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school which is **£7,300**. There is no current annual transport cost of taking pupils to alternative schools.

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. Adverse weather can be a factor, however this is the same for other local schools and areas. The travel arrangements have been in place for more than two years. Should the school continue to be mothballed these travel arrangements would continue.

There are no specific educational benefits from continuing the mothballing of Southend Primary school.

On the basis that pupil numbers are not expected to increase and the building's mothballing is not of benefit to the community or the Council, continued mothballing of Southend Primary School is not viewed as a reasonable option.

8.0 OPTION C: RE-OPEN SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL AND EXTEND ITS CATCHMENT AREA

8.1 Community Feedback

The existing catchment area for Southend Primary School is very rural and very sparsely populated. It already covers a broad area.

When considering the option to realign the catchment area of Southend, the map within Section 3.8, above, demonstrates that the boundary could only be moved closer to Campbeltown. Everyone within the community engagement event felt that this was an unrealistic proposal for Southend Primary School. They did not believe a change of boundary would make any difference. The community felt that by moving the boundary closer to town, you would be increasing transport time for pupils who already attended school within the Campbeltown area. Transport would go against the direction of travel for parents who were working within the Campbeltown area and where many after school clubs are based. Extension of any boundary into the Drumlemble catchment area would require an additional bus service and would impact on pupil numbers of another remote and rural school.

Community views are:

"Not viable"

"Cost of fuel needs to be considered"

8.2 Pupil Numbers

The pupil numbers within this new catchment area would not increase the roll significantly. As part of any possible forthcoming consultation, there would be discussions with the parent body of Castlehill Primary School regarding the future of Southend Primary School. During the preliminary engagement exercise there were views represented from the Parent Councils of Drumlemble and Dalintober Primary Schools. Both schools expressed their concern over the staffing of schools within the area. There was no representation from the Parent Council of Castlehill Primary School at the Options Appraisal Meeting or following. They were approached to give their views. It was felt by attendees at the meeting that moving the catchment area of Southend Primary School was not an option due to the remote nature of the location, the road and accepted direction of travel.

8.3 Financial Information

The total amount including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration to re-open the school is **£139,024**.

The cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£7,300**.

There would also be a financial cost associated with the recruitment of additional staff and ongoing associated costs.

8.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons why the future of Southend Primary School is being reviewed are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Southend Primary School to increase. Southend Primary School is currently mothballed and the pupils are rezoned to Castlehill Primary School.

To reopen Southend Primary School **and** realign its catchment area could increase the pupil numbers if families were to send their children to Southend Primary School however the geography of the local area and existing wide catchment area does not lend itself to this option.

8.4.1 Community Impact

The reopening of the school with a larger catchment area would enable the premises to be used by the community. It would also be a possibility that the school pupils would invite the community in to specific events. The presence of a school and the facilities/activities that may be offered could make the area a more attractive place to live. Reopening the school may therefore encourage families with school age children to move to the community. This in turn may make the community more sustainable. However, the community has given no support for this option.

If the school were to reopen as an educational establishment there would be an economic impact with respect to the expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard. There would also be costs relating to staffing, and ongoing maintenance. The reopening of the school and the potential relocation of families may have a positive effect on the wider economy of the community.

8.4.2 Travel Arrangements

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two

years. Any change in boundary would require a new bus route with expenditure associated with it. This is not a realistic proposal as it would be likely to have minimal impact on pupil numbers at Southend Primary School and parents reported that they choose to place children in schools closer to Campbeltown due to after school childcare or clubs and activities. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Southend community.

If Southend Primary school was to reopen there could be a positive impact on the health and wellbeing and education of pupils who are able to walk or cycle to school but the lack of safe routes to the school limits this. Staff would either travel to the school by car, or if they live locally could walk or cycle. The bus route for a small number of pupils would have a negative impact on the environment especially as this may result in increased car traffic at end of school day to get pupils to clubs on time. Conversely, there could be increased car usage by staff which may mean these travel arrangements have a negative environmental impact. The proposal could create a negative environmental impact.

8.5 Educational Benefits

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 the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

Southend Primary School is a remote rural school, Castlehill Primary School has a central location and is therefore not classified as a rural school (Scottish Government classification). Children from Southend area, attending Castlehill Primary School are benefitting from learning with a number of peers at the same age and stage as themselves as opposed to a single classroom/multi composite classroom. Pupils also benefit from increased friendship groups that a large school can offer. Outdoor learning is currently provided at Castlehill Primary.

The outdoor facilities either in the school grounds or in the immediate neighbourhood of Southend Primary School would offer the opportunity to develop a curriculum that maximises the use of the local environment supporting the individual needs of the learners.

8.6 Summary

There was no support, by those who attended the community engagement event, in favour of re-opening Southend Primary as a school, and realigning its catchment area due to the remote nature of the school's location.

There are financial implications if the school is to be reopened. The total amount including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration to re-open the school is **£139,024**. The cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open the school is **£7,300**. There would also be a financial cost associated with the recruitment of additional staff and ongoing associated costs.

If the School was to be reopened, the premises would be able to be used by the community, in addition to its use as an educational facility. The reopening of the school may encourage families with school age children to move to the community, which may make the community more sustainable.

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two years. Any change in boundary would require a new bus route with expenditure associated with it.

There are no specific educational benefits from reopening the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

Due to the geographic location of this very remote rural primary school it is unlikely that the catchment area could be made more sustainable. While this option could in theory contribute to sustainability of the community that may not be the case as most pupils in the neighbouring catchment area travel in the direction of Campbeltown, towards the larger centre of population, and not towards Southend. It would require pupils who may have already settled in Castlehill Primary School and Dalintober Primary School to move to Southend Primary School. Many Southend families have stated they would not move their children back to Southend as their children are currently settled in school. All families would be entitled to submit a placing request to attend Castlehill Primary School, Dalintober Primary School or Drumlemble Primary School. It is unlikely that pupil numbers would increase significantly.

When considering the above, alongside the challenges in recruiting teaching staff, the considerable expenditure needed to bring the building up to standard and the lack of local support for reopening Southend Primary School, this is not considered to be a reasonable option.

9.0 OPTION D: CLOSE SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA FOR CASTLEHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL TO INCLUDE THE CURRENT SOUTHEND CATCHMENT AREA

9.1 Community Feedback

The majority of people who attended the Options Appraisal meeting were not in favour of re-opening Southend Primary as a school. They commented that the closure of the school was not down to pupil numbers but parental choice. The small numbers of those in favour of the school re-opening wanted to know

what this would like in terms of staffing and pupil numbers before they would commit to sending their children there. Some members of the community with no children wished the school to open but wanted parents to use the local school as opposed to schools based in Campbeltown, it was explained that parental choice would mean that this is something that could not be enforced. Additionally, with respect to low numbers in future school roll projections, the sustainability of the School did not support re-opening of the School. Projected numbers are similar to the numbers when the school was mothballed. Comments in relation to the closure of Southend Primary School and attendance at Castlehill Primary School were positive:

"We think it won't re-open if we are being realistic. Can it be staffed?"

"My child attends school in town and this has been good for her social ly. My youngest is likely to follow her to the same school as opposed to attend Southend Primary"

"I think it should close."

"No one is saying to me that we should keep it open."

"Security and cost of current situation is too much."

"Realistically, I can't see it re-opening"

"I personally can't see me moving my children if the school re-opened. I value the standardisation, social aspect and social contact in a big school. Schools in town have capacity to take increased numbers."

"My two children attended Castlehill on placing request. We now have transport."

"Disappointing but understand why it had to happen."

"A small school is not equitable to a large school as there is 1 teacher between 4/5 pupils as opposed to larger class sizes"

"I lived there, I did not choose for my child to go to Southend. I have now moved out the area. My child wanted to be in the mix of pupils."

"I would hate to see it close but I have chosen to put my child elsewhere."

"I feel we have a lot of small schools. Our school has benefitted from the staffing. We are concerned about current staffing levels, re-opening the school would place further pressures on this."

"Money saved but not re-opening school could be used to support other schools"

"Large schools benefit from the social contacts."

“Socially, I feel it is better for children to be in a larger social group”

A number of parents commented on the wish for there to be an ELC or pre 5 facility. Members of the community commented that it was sad to see the building not being used at all and that a re-purposing of the building would be better for the community. Suggestions included for residential trips, bunk house or youth hostel type facility that would make use of the local environment for active tourism.

9.2 Pupil Numbers

Table 5: Schools Occupancy:

<i>Primary</i>	<i>2023/24</i>	<i>2024/25</i>
<i>Approved Capacity Castlehill Primary</i>	<i>459</i>	<i>459</i>
<i>Projected Roll Castlehill Primary</i>	<i>185</i>	<i>180</i>
<i>Southend Projected Roll</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Total Roll Projection Castlehill Primary</i>	<i>193</i>	<i>189</i>
<i>Occupancy</i>	<i>42%</i>	<i>41%</i>

Pupils from Southend Primary catchment area would attend Castlehill Primary School. As there is a declining school roll at Castlehill Primary School, the predicted occupancy rate for Castlehill Primary School is 41%, easily accommodating any additional numbers.

9.3 Financial Information

As there is an existing bus route for pupils to attend Campbeltown Grammar School, there is no additional service required to transport pupils in Southend to Castlehill Primary School. An existing West Coast bus means that there would be no additional annual transport costs. If Southend Primary School were to be closed it would generate savings of **£5,936**, the current annual cost of mothballing (2022-23) to the Council. This includes electricity, heating oil, and ground maintenance, building maintenance and repair costs.

9.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons why the future of Southend Primary School is being reviewed are as stated at Section 2 of this Report. There is no expectation for the pupil numbers at Southend Primary School to increase. Southend Primary School is currently mothballed and were there pupils they would be rezoned to other schools. To reopen the school would not increase the pupil numbers.

9.4.1 Community Impact

There was support in the community for the closure of the school. The community were realistic that given the current financial climate, the building may be sold off. Within Southend there is a village hall. The majority of those who attended stated the school building should be used to benefit young people in the area, support the local economy and not fall into further disrepair, as that would adversely impact on the visual impact of the village. While it is accepted that school closure may have an adverse effect on community sustainability to a degree, it was felt that the mothballing of the school and the building not being used at all was a bigger negative impact to the community. Southend community felt that they benefitted greatly from vibrant use of their local hall. A re-purposing of the building could potentially have a very positive impact on the sustainability of the community if this option were to progress. The buildings forming the school premises are situated within walking distance of the village. If the building was re-purposed for residential or tourism use, this would have a positive impact on the sustainability of the village. Formal closure of the school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed.

9.4.2 Travel Arrangements

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two years. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Southend community. This option would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Southend Primary School, in terms of travel would have a neutral effect on the environment. There is currently no annual transport cost for pupils to travel to Castlehill Primary School and the use of the existing West Coast Motors service bus would not incur additional costs in the immediate future.

9.5 **Educational Benefits**

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 as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children.

Southend Primary School is a remote rural school, Castlehill Primary School has a central location and is therefore not classified as a rural school (Scottish Government classification). Children from Southend area, attending Castlehill Primary School are benefitting from learning with a number of peers at the same age and stage as themselves as opposed to single classroom/multi composite classrooms. Pupils also benefit from increased friendship groups that a large school can offer. Outdoor learning is currently provided at Castlehill Primary. The pupils would be transitioning to Campbeltown Grammar School with an established friendship group.

In Castlehill Primary School 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 of their own gender, take part in team activities and move with their peers to secondary school. One pupil reported that they had increased opportunities as a result of being at a larger school. Another pupil reported that they were less stressed now because of the transport arrangements in place.

9.6 **Summary**

From those who attended the community engagement event, there was support for the closure of Southend Primary as a school, and realigning the catchment area of Castlehill Primary School due to the remote nature of the school's location. They also commented on the potential for the school premises to be used to attract people into the area for residential activities, travel and tourism.

Current capacity for Castlehill Primary School is 42%. As there are existing transport arrangements in place and transport is not currently in place for Southend Primary School, there is no increased annual cost to transport pupils to Castlehill Primary School and use of the existing West Coast Motors service bus would not incur additional costs.

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two years and this option would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Southend community. The closure of Southend Primary School would therefore have a neutral effect on the environment. Castlehill Primary School currently accommodates pupils from Southend Primary School and pupil numbers are not projected to increase significantly. Castlehill Primary School has capacity to continue to accommodate the projected pupil numbers.

In Castlehill Primary School, children benefit from a positive learning environment with learning and teaching which is better matched to the needs of the young people who attend the school. In addition there are more opportunities for personal and social development in this setting.

This has been identified as a reasonable option for further consideration.

10.0 OVERVIEW OF OPTIONS

Option	Option Description	Outcome
A	Re-open Southend Primary School with the existing catchment area.	Not a reasonable option.
B	Continued Mothballing of Southend Primary School with the pupils zoned to Castlehill Primary School.	Not a reasonable option.
C	Re-open Southend Primary School and extend its catchment area.	Not a reasonable option
D	Close Southend Primary School and realign the catchment area of Castlehill Primary School to include the current catchment area for Southend Primary School.	A reasonable option with strong representation that the school becomes a facility the community can develop.

11. DETAILED ANALYSIS OF REASONABLE OPTION: CLOSE SOUTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA FOR CASTLEHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL TO INCLUDE THE CURRENT SOUTHEND CATCHMENT AREA

11.1 Pupil Projections

<i>Primary</i>	<i>2023/24</i>	<i>2024/25</i>
<i>Castlehill Primary Approved Capacity</i>	<i>459</i>	<i>459</i>
<i>Castlehill Primary Projected Roll</i>	<i>185</i>	<i>180</i>
<i>Southend Primary Projected Roll</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Total Roll Projection</i>	<i>193</i>	<i>189</i>
<i>Occupancy</i>	<i>42%</i>	<i>41%</i>

11.2 Educational Benefits

This statement focusses on Castlehill Primary School, which is the school most Southend Pupils have been attending since May 2021.

11.2.1 Learning and Teaching

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 Castlehill 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. The learning environment encourages a high level of achievement, providing a wide range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential within the four contexts of learning.

In Castlehill Primary School children may be taught in single year group classes or composite classes composed of children from no more than two year groups. 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 through a variety of learning activities as well as take part in team activities and move with their peers to secondary school.

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.

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. At Castlehill 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. The school is part of a leadership structure arrangement in which the Head Teacher is responsible for three schools Castlehill Primary School, Drumlemble Primary School and Carradale Primary School. There is a Depute Head Teacher and Principal Teacher appointed to each of the three Primary Schools to support this

leadership structure. This structure provides increased opportunity for collegiate working. Castlehill Primary School is part of the Kintyre Schools Cluster and MAKI cluster, which means that staff can be supported to work together, moderation and tracking of pupil progress is enabled and staff work across stage appropriate groups. Colleagues within Castlehill 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.

Castlehill Primary School has been focussing on the development of Nurture and Rights Respecting Schools approach, both taking into consideration the incorporation of UNCRC into Scottish law. The focus on wellbeing and nurture is evident in activities such as reflection afternoons for pupils and parents. The impact of these approaches has been evidenced using SHANNARI webs. Castlehill Primary School encourages outdoor learning activities and learning through play. Partnership working with local employers and the Parent Council has helped to develop resources and outdoor learning zones to support this approach.

Castlehill Primary School is in a central location within Campbeltown, unlike Southend Primary which is a very remote rural school. However, as the Head Teacher is responsible for Carradale Primary and Drumlemble Primary, both of which are remote rural schools (Scottish Government classification), there is a strong understanding of the rural communities that the school serves.

The school has strong links with Campbeltown Nursery, with which it coordinates an active transition calendar, and with Campbeltown Grammar School with which it liaises, alongside all other South Kintyre schools, throughout the year to ensure a smooth transition for P7 pupils into S1.

11.2.2

Outcomes

Through the 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. Planning for Progress meetings are being further strengthened. 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 Castlehill Primary, like other schools in the Kintyre area, standards of attainment have been impacted by the pandemic. Whilst most children are achieving national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy, writing has been a specific area for development across the school but with a particular focus on the current P5 and P7 cohorts. Maths strategies include SEAL for P1-3 and Number Talks for P4-7. Castlehill Primary continues to develop positive relationships within the school through a focus on Nurture and Rights Respecting Schools. A larger staff, parent body and partner group by nature increases the breadth of talent and interest that may be available to share within a school setting. 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.

11.2.3 Experiences - Broadening the Range of Opportunities

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. Castlehill Primary has been restoring its community links as part of its Covid Recovery Plans, providing enhanced opportunities for social interaction and skills development.

11.2.4 Environment for Learning

Castlehill Primary School is a suitably-equipped and well supported school, situated in the town of Campbeltown. The school building is large and the grounds wrap around the building, providing ample space for play and outdoor learning. The building has facilities for pupils and visitors with special access needs.

11.3.1 Community Impact

Whilst there was some variance of community views within Southend, the majority of parents supported closure of the school. Suggestions for the building was for this to be retained for an ELC or used for residential trips or sold to be converted into a bunk house or youth hostel that would support the local tourist industry. There were suggestions that the play equipment could be moved to benefit the children in the local area. Other suggestions also included using the grounds for community gardens. Within Southend there is a Village Hall which houses community events. Almost all people who attended the Options Appraisal Meeting strongly stated the school building should be re-purposed and not allowed to fall in to further disrepair, as that would adversely impact on the neighbouring property and the visual impact of the

village. It is accepted that a school closure may have an adverse effect on community sustainability, but a change of use could be an asset to the community. The school premises are situated within walking distance of the village. If the local plans for the building progress, this would have a positive impact on the sustainability of the village. Formal closure of the school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed.

11.3.2 Travel Arrangements

The travel distance (AA route finder) from Southend Primary to Castlehill Primary is 8.7 miles via the B842. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes. The travel arrangements have been in place for almost two years. Travel is an accepted aspect of living in the Southend community. Pupils will travel on the existing West Coast Motors service bus and eventually all the pupils will travel to Castlehill Primary School. The environmental impact of travel will be minimal, as these arrangements are currently in place due to the mothballing of Southend Primary School. The closure of Southend Primary School, in terms of travel would have a neutral effect on the environment. There is currently no annual transport cost for pupils to travel to Castlehill Primary School as the route was already in place and the use of the existing West Coast Motors service bus would not incur additional costs in the immediate future.

11.4 **Assessment of Rural Factors**

The reasons why the future of Southend Primary School is being reviewed are stated at Section 2 of this report. There is currently no expectation for the pupil numbers to increase at the School. Southend Primary School is mothballed with no current pupils. Having considered all the alternatives above, the option to close Southend Primary School and realign the catchment area for Castlehill Primary School to include the former Southend Primary School catchment area is considered the most reasonable means to address the reasons identified at Section 2 of this report.

11.5 **Financial Impact**

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. As a result of the authority's policy for no Teacher redundancies it is presumed that the staff are deployed elsewhere within the authority and therefore their salary costs still exist with an increase to the receiving school's budget. This is also in line with the national priority of maintaining teacher numbers. This methodology also applies to the school's discretionary budget which again is formula based. The budget of the receiving school, in terms of any pupils being transferred, will have increased. The figures outlined below take account of the fact that the staffing and discretionary budgets have been adjusted to nil.

The annual running costs during mothballing of Southend Primary School are a total of **£5,936**.

Annual savings generated through closing Southend Primary School would be **£5,936**.

The costs/savings outlined above assumes all revenue expenditure would cease. This includes non-domestic rates, utility costs, insurances, etc. If the school was to be formally closed, this would allow the council to take steps towards selling the school premises to a third party or local community groups.

11.6 Environmental Impact

Pupils are currently travelling to Castlehill Primary School. However 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. The journey to Castlehill Primary is a relatively short journey. Travel is an accepted aspect of rural life.

12.0 CONCLUSION

Four alternative options have been reviewed in considering the future of Southend Primary School. For each option, information was collated and consideration was given to:

- Community feedback;
- Pupil numbers;
- Financial Information;
- Assessment of rural factors, including community impact, economic impact and travel arrangements, and
- Educational Benefits.

An authority that is contemplating a rural school closure proposal must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act before formulating a proposal.

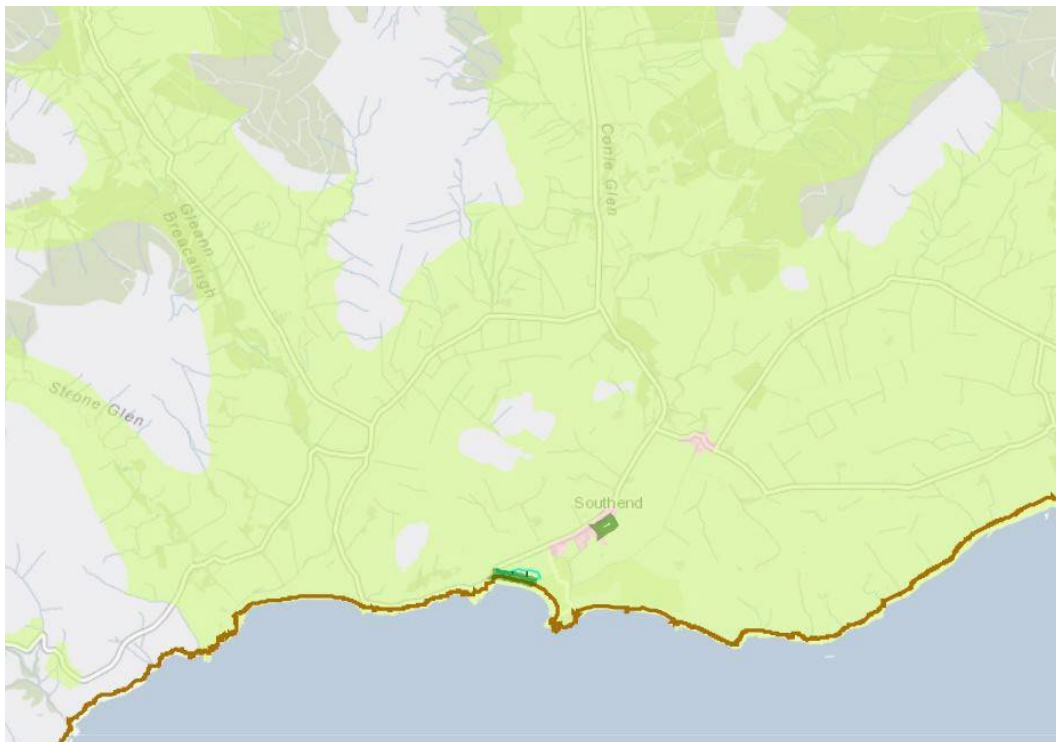
After consideration of the preliminary requirements, as set out in the Act, and the options, and having regard to the specific reasons identified at Section 2 of

this report, closing Southend Primary School and realigning the catchment area of Castlehill Primary School to include the current catchment area for Southend Primary School is put forward as the most reasonable option in order to address the underlying reasons for the possible proposal.

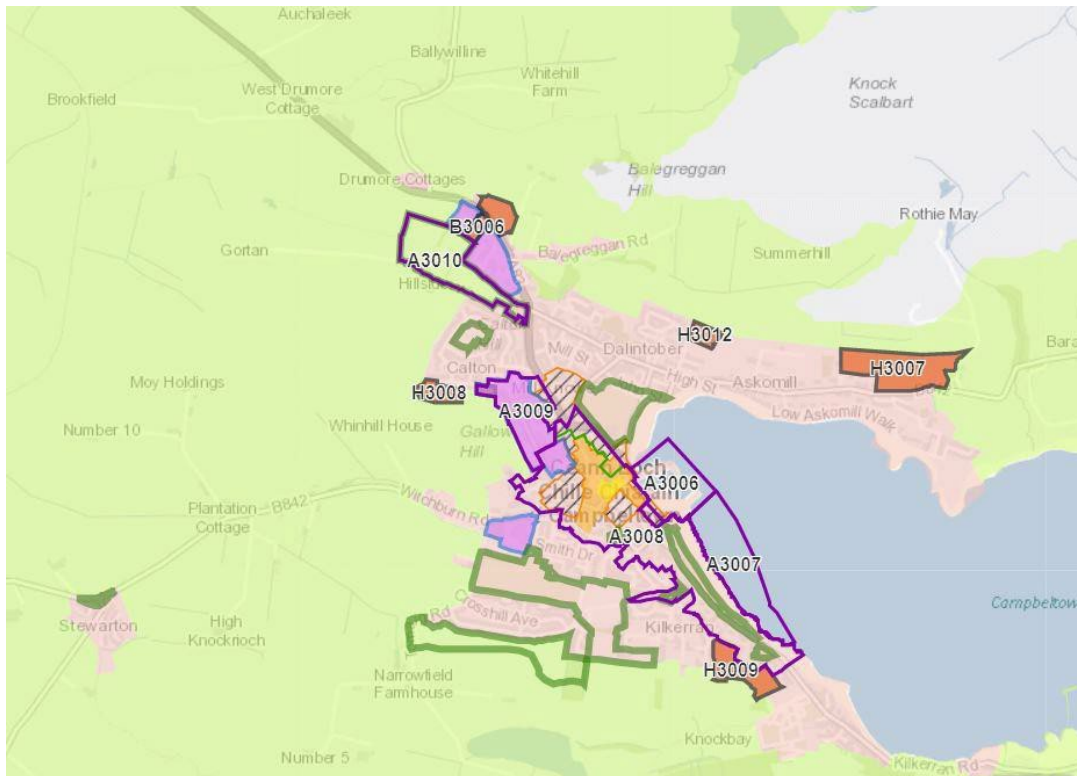
Members are asked to:

- Note the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements; and
- Agree that Officers now formulate a draft closure proposal that will come back to a future meeting of the Committee for approval by Members which would subsequently trigger the formal consultation process under the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

Appendix 1



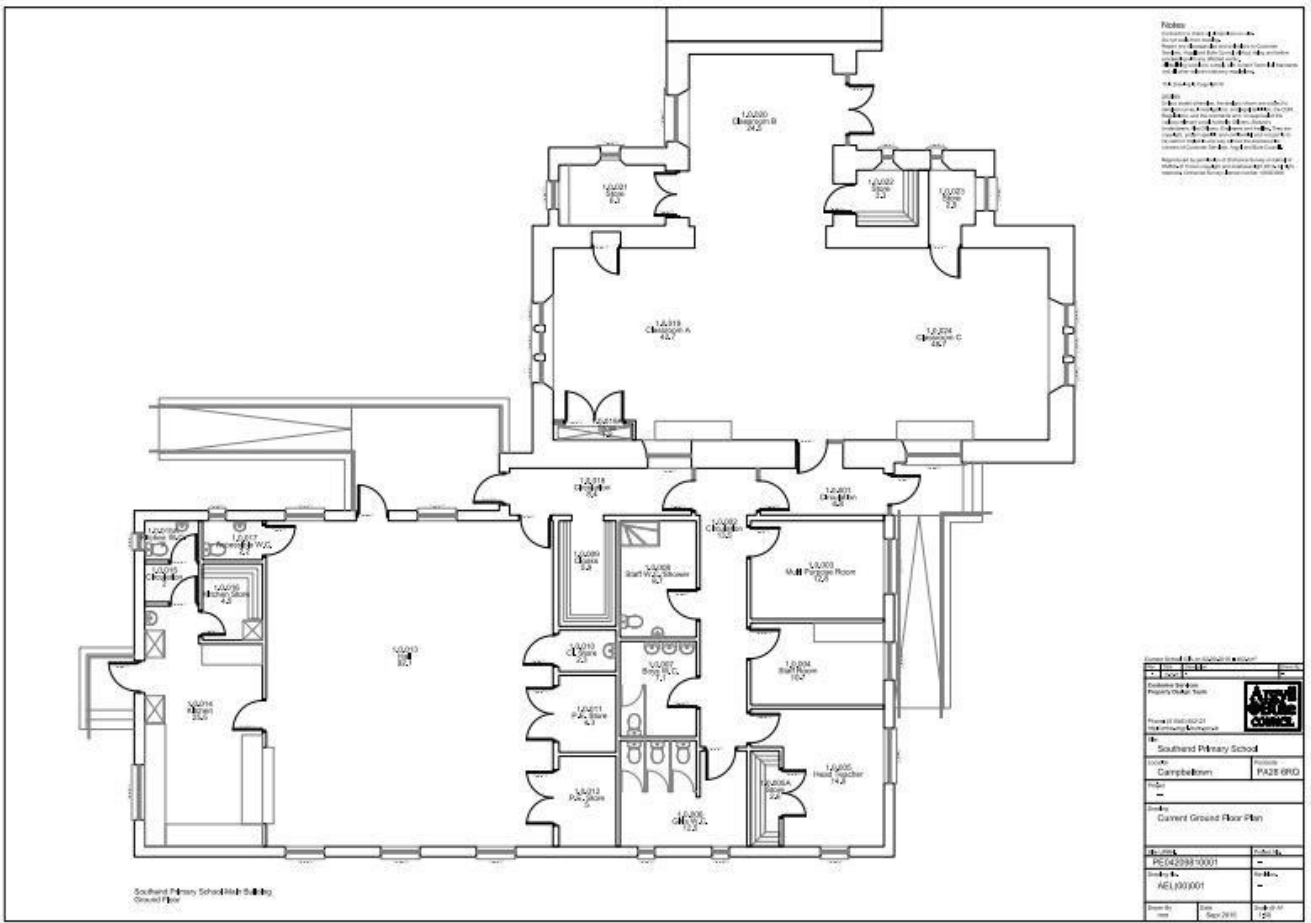
Appendix 2



Appendix 3

Transport Infrastructure 		Wild Land 		Tourism Infrastructure 	Marine Consultation Area Settlement & Spatial Strategy Areas Settlement Area Greenbelt Countryside Area Remote Countryside Area
Area for Action 	Allocations 	Garden Designed Landscape 	National Scenic Area 	Core Shopping Area 	
Strategic Economic Investment Location 	Potential Development Area 	National Nature Reserve 	Site of Special Scientific Interest 	Main Town Centre 	
Open Space Protection Area 	Conservation Area 	Special Area of Conservation 	Special Protection Area 	Edge of Town Centre 	
Strategic Masterplan 	Local Landscape Area 	Ramsar 	Established Business and Industry Area 	Waste Management Site 	

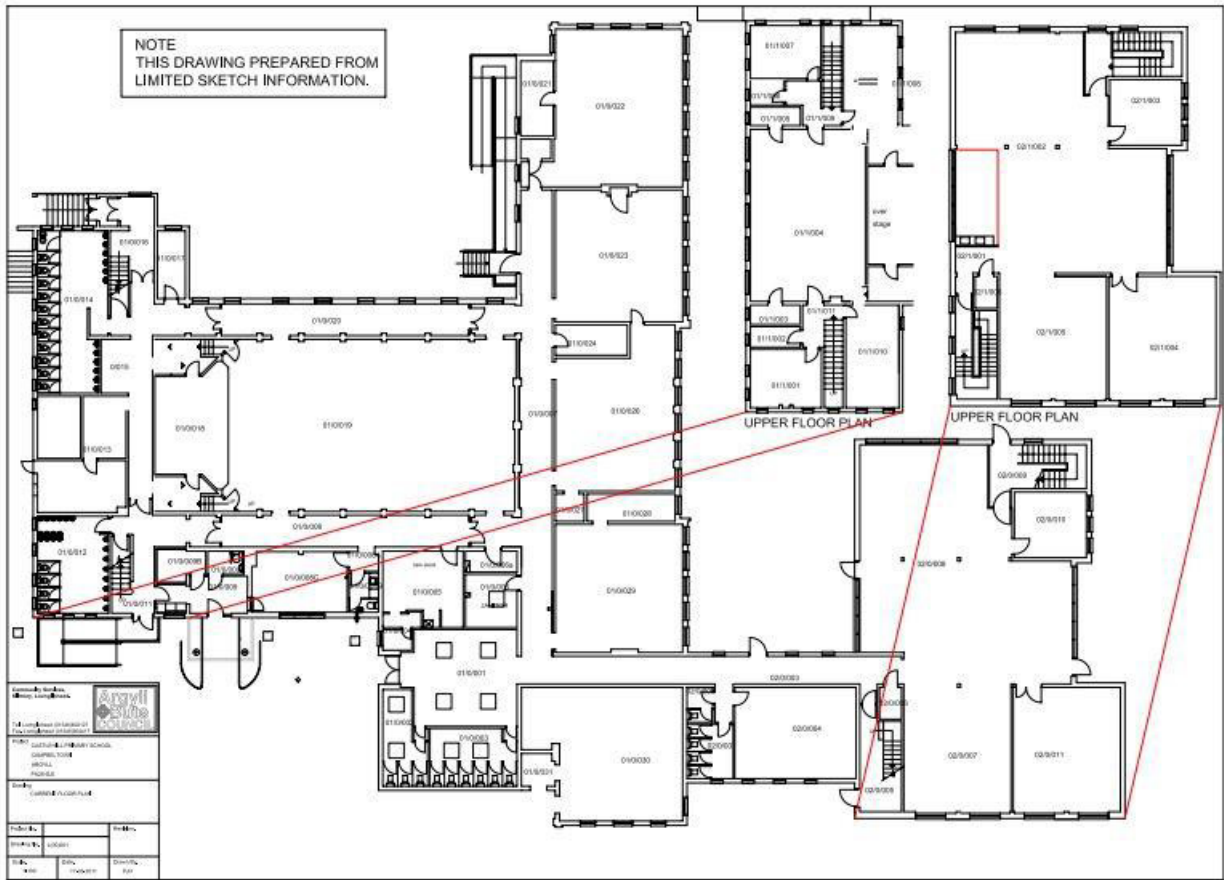
Appendix 4



Notes:
 1. All dimensions are in millimetres.
 2. All dimensions are to the centre of the wall unless otherwise stated.
 3. All dimensions are to the finished floor level unless otherwise stated.
 4. All dimensions are to the finished ceiling level unless otherwise stated.
 5. All dimensions are to the finished ground level unless otherwise stated.
 6. All dimensions are to the finished external ground level unless otherwise stated.
 7. All dimensions are to the finished internal ground level unless otherwise stated.
 8. All dimensions are to the finished internal ceiling level unless otherwise stated.
 9. All dimensions are to the finished internal floor level unless otherwise stated.
 10. All dimensions are to the finished internal wall level unless otherwise stated.
 11. All dimensions are to the finished internal ceiling level unless otherwise stated.
 12. All dimensions are to the finished internal floor level unless otherwise stated.
 13. All dimensions are to the finished internal wall level unless otherwise stated.
 14. All dimensions are to the finished internal ceiling level unless otherwise stated.
 15. All dimensions are to the finished internal floor level unless otherwise stated.
 16. All dimensions are to the finished internal wall level unless otherwise stated.
 17. All dimensions are to the finished internal ceiling level unless otherwise stated.
 18. All dimensions are to the finished internal floor level unless otherwise stated.
 19. All dimensions are to the finished internal wall level unless otherwise stated.
 20. All dimensions are to the finished internal ceiling level unless otherwise stated.

Project Information	
Project Name	Southard Primary School
Client	Campbelltown
Phase	Phase 010
Drawing Information	
Drawing Title	Current Ground Floor Plan
Scale	1:100
Author	PE4259810001
Check	AC1100001
Date	2023/01/12

Appendix 5



Argyll and Bute Council: Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

Section 1: About the proposal

Title of Proposal

Closure of Southend Primary School

Intended outcome of proposal

The proposal is to close Southend Primary School permanently from 31 st May 2024. The school has been mothballed since June 2021.
--

Description of proposal

Consideration of this proposal means that a decision is being taken about permanently closing Southend Primary School. As per the legislative guidance set out in the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010, Argyll and Bute Council has sought views on the following proposal, namely:
--

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That education provision at Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024.• The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School. |
|--|

Reasons for this proposal

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

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Southend Primary School has been mothballed for over 2 years. The school roll is very low 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 10.84 fte vacancies for both teachers and headteachers 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 £27,270. |
|--|

On 24 th August 2023, the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an Options Appraisal for Southend Primary School. This consultation was open from the 31 st August 2023 with a public meeting taking place in Southend Primary School on 27 th September 2023. In person focus groups were also held with children at Castlehill Primary School on 27 th September to ensure that their views are taken into account.
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Business Outcome(s) / Corporate Outcome(s) to which the proposal contributes


Argyll & Bute's Annual Business Plan 2023-24:

Attaining and achieving at all stages; we will improve outcomes for our children and young people.
--

Lead officer details:

Name of lead officer

Rosie Mackay

Job title	Education Manager
Department	Customer Services: Education
Appropriate officer details:	
Name of appropriate officer	Jenifer Crocket and Wendy Brownlie
Job title	Head of Education
Department	Customer Services: Education
Sign off of EqSEIA	
Date of sign off	14/02/2024

Who will deliver the proposal?

Should the closure go ahead, there will be in fact no change to the current arrangements which have been in place since the school has been mothballed in June 2021.

The Head Teacher of Castlehill Primary School will be the senior officer of the Council who provides the leadership of the educational experience for the children attending the school, who would have otherwise attended Southend Primary School. The Education Central team of the Council will be responsible for the support and challenge of the school as per standard protocols.

Transport colleagues will be responsible for any travel arrangements for children who are entitled to this, and this has already been in place since the school was mothballed.

Consultation / engagement

The consultation period took place from 31st August 2023 and concluded on the 27th October 2023. A public meeting was held on the 27th October 2023 and pupil focus groups were held at Castlehill Primary School on the same day. Stakeholders have had the opportunity to submit their views. This has been prepared by Local Authority Officers, with input from Education Scotland. This report will be presented to the Community Services Committee (CSC) for their decision.

Under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, if a local authority proposes to close a school it must undertake a statutory consultation with the 'relevant consultees' affected by this proposal. In this instance; Southend Primary School is the 'affected school'.

The formal consultation on the proposal within this document has been undertaken under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 ("the Act"). The consultation period began on 31st August 2023 (with due written notice of the proposal issued to the relevant consultees listed in Appendix 1) and ended on 27th October 2023. Written representations were requested by this date in order to be taken into account. There were 4 written responses received.

A copy of the proposal document was provided to the following 'relevant consultees' in terms of the Act:

- 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 1 (South Kintyre)
- Campbeltown Community Council and Southend Community Council
- Community Planning Partnership
- 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

The steps listed below have also been taken to ensure that the proposal is widely available:

- The proposal document was published on the Argyll and Bute Council website;
- This document was made available in alternative forms or translated by contacting Argyll House, Dunoon, tel: 01369 708576 or argyllhoureception@argyll-bute.gov.uk;

The proposal paper has also be available at the following locations;

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Campbeltown Public Library, Kinloch Road, Town Centre, Campbeltown, PA28 6EG
- Lochgilphead Service Point, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD
- Castlehill Primary School, Ralston Road, Campbeltown, PA28 6LE
- Dunaverty Hall, Southend, Campbeltown, Argyll & Bute, PA28 6RF

There was a public meeting held on the 27th September 2023 at 6.00pm in Southend Primary School.

The catchment area for Southend Primary School is classed as remote rural. The definition for remote rural are settlements with a population of less than 3,000 with a greater than 30 minute drive time to the nearest settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.

Data

The catchment area for Southend Primary School is classed by Scottish Government as very remote rural. The definition for very remote rural are settlements with a population of less than 3,000 with a greater than 60 minute drive time to the nearest settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.

Source: [Mid-2021 Small Area Population Estimates for 2011 Data Zones | National Records of Scotland \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/mid-2021-small-area-population-estimates-for-2011-data-zones)

The National Records of Scotland statistical report (link above) notes that only 5% of Scotland's population live in remote rural areas and that Scotland's population is gaining. Rural and island areas experience more aging than cities. Despite statistics showing that there has been a post pandemic migration away from cities to rural areas, this has not impacted in demand for Southend School.

Remote rural areas have a lower percentage of the population in the 0-15 and the 16-44 age groups but a higher proportion of people aged 45-64. For example, in 2019 27% of the population in remote rural areas and 30% of the population in accessible rural areas were 16-44 year olds, compared to 38% in the rest of Scotland. The table below shows how the age profile is reflected in the Kintyre Trail profile.



Conversely, 58% of the population in remote rural areas and 52% of the population in accessible rural areas were aged 45 and over, compared to 45% in the rest of Scotland.

In 2019 the proportion of people aged 65 or over was 21% in accessible rural areas and 26% in remote rural areas compared to 18% in the rest of Scotland.¹

¹ Source: <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics/2021/02/rural-scotland-key-facts-2021/documents/rural-scotland-key-facts-2021/rural-scotland-key-facts-2021/govscot%3Adocument/rural-scotland-key-facts-2021.pdf?forceDownload=true>

² Source: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/53409/transport-and-travel-in-scotland-2021.pdf>

Other information

Evidence for this proposal was found in the Equality Evidence Finder, and in the Guidance for the Fairer Scotland Act.

Additional evidence was found in the School (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, in terms of legislative compliance. Education management circulars, 1.33 on capacity, 3.01 on admission and 3.09 on transfers were also consulted. The circular 3.23 on child protection and safeguarding was also considered.

The national policy of GIRFEC – Getting it Right for Every Child, was also considered in the formation of this proposal as was the Argyll and Bute Education vision and strategy, Our Children, Their Future.

Gaps in evidence

There are no gaps in evidence.

Section 3: Impact of proposal**Impact on service users:**

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:				
Age		X		
Disability		X		
Ethnicity		X		
Sex		X		
Gender reassignment		X		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		X		
Pregnancy and Maternity		X		
Religion		X		
Sexual Orientation		X		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population			X	
Island populations		X		
Low income				X
Low wealth				X
Material deprivation				X
Area deprivation				X
Socio-economic background				X
Communities of place	X			
Communities of interest				X

If you have identified any impacts on service users, explain what these will be.

Whilst there are some disadvantages around travel the requirement for pupils to travel further to school, there is no change in the transport arrangements required for taking the children to and from school as the service was coming from the town out to the rural areas anyway. Parents did report in the engagement phase that attending Castlehill Primary school decreased transport as they did not need to take their children from school, into Campbeltown to attend after school activities.

Pupils and parents all felt that there were positives in the social aspect of attending a large

school. Parents and pupils welcomed the opportunity for broader friendship groups. There was some concern expressed in relation to Southend Primary School building being left empty and this being detrimental to the community and the adjoining property. There was also concern that not having a school within Southend village may make the village less attractive to families. Community solutions for the property highlighted a strength of feeling that it should be to benefit young people in some way such as an outdoor activity centre.

If any 'don't know's have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?

If the proposal is accepted, there will be no immediate impact on pupils and families, as the children are already currently attending Castlehill Primary School, who would otherwise have attended Southend Primary School.

The Education Management team will use their existing quality assurance procedures to monitor the education provided in the school.

Impact on service deliverers (including employees, volunteers etc):

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:				
Age		X		
Disability		X		
Ethnicity		X		
Sex		X		
Gender reassignment		X		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		X		
Pregnancy and Maternity		X		
Religion		X		
Sexual Orientation		X		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population				X
Island populations		X		
Low income				X
Low wealth				X
Material deprivation				X
Area deprivation				X
Socio-economic background				X
Communities of place				X
Communities of interest				X

If you have identified any impacts on service deliverers, explain what these will be.

If any 'don't know's have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?

How has 'due regard' been given to any negative impacts that have been identified?

In looking at the educational benefits statement of this proposal these have been considered. All information is contained in the proposal paper.

[Southend Primary School Proposal Paper Aug 23 \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](http://argyll-bute.gov.uk)

Section 4: Interdependencies

Is this proposal likely to have any knock-on effects for any other activities carried out by or on behalf of the council?	Yes
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Details of knock-on effects identified

Transport is already in place for children travelling from the Southend catchment area to Castlehill Primary School, there is no knock on effects for any other activities carried out by the council.

Section 5: Monitoring and review**How will you monitor and evaluate the equality impacts of your proposal?**

The Education Central Team including locality Education Managers will monitor the impact this catchment area change would have. Education Managers will monitor through the standard quality assurance processes to ensure that the arrangements are impacting positively on the quality of educational experience children have.



**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.

Proposal

It is proposed that:
Education provision at Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Castlehill Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Southend Primary School.

This part of the form must be completed for a valid response:

Name: Kenneth Galbraith

Address:
Coleran
Southend
Campbeltown
Argyll

Post Code: PA28 6RF

I agree that my response can be made publicly available

Signature: k.galbraith

Date:
21/9/23

YOUR INTEREST: (please tick)

Parent (yes) <input type="checkbox"/>	Child / Young Person <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Other * <input type="checkbox"/>
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Elected Member / MSP / MP

Member of Community Council

*Other: (please specify)

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

I believe Southend school should remain shut and the council focus on building a new primary school in Campbeltown to replace both Castlehill and Dalintober. It is no secret that both these school buildings are in a poor state of repair.

One primary school building fit for purpose would reduce the overhead costs for the council.

In the meantime, I would urge the council to provide free transport to both primary Schools in Campbeltown. I have a daughter who attends Dalintober primary school.

The bus passes our house with the service terminating beside Dalintober so the cost to the council to provide this service for my family and others in Southend would be minimal. I have 2 other younger children who are not of school age. My wife is also a schoolteacher and I am a farmer so transport to and from school are essential to suit the childcare we have in place.

APPENDIX 4 - PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Southend Primary School Public Consultation Meeting

Held in Southend Primary School on 27 September 2023 at 6pm

Panel

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director

Jen Crocket, Chief Education Officer/Head of Education-Wellbeing, Inclusion and Achievement

Wendy Brownlie, Head of Education – Performance and Improvement

In attendance

Graeme McMillan - Transformation Programme Manager

Rosie MacKay – Education Manager

Simon Ross – Education Scotland

Admin:

Fiona Ferguson – Directorate Support Officer

Laura Blackwood – Directorate Support Officer

7 members of the public

Welcome and introductions were made by Mr Hendry. Mr Hendry then outlined the objective of tonight's meeting, to hear the views of the community/parents. He set out the proposal which is being consulted on, that education provision at Southend Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31 May 2024 and provided information on the statutory process which the Education Service must follow.

Ms Crocket and Mrs Brownlie then spoke to a presentation which included:-

The special considerations as Southend is a rural school.

Information on the pre-consultation stage.

How the views of the community, parents and children have been collected.

The background to the proposal.

The assessed impact of the proposal on a range of factors.

The educational benefits.

Mrs Brownlie advised that focus groups were held with the pupils today, and the outcome from these discussions will also be feed into the process. Mrs Brownlie also advised that the consultation runs until 27 October and any feedback/comments on the proposal should be submitted by then.

The audience was then invited to ask questions.

Audience

What was the outcome of the consultation with the children today?

Panel Response

Children were spoken to in 3 groups-

Primary 1 – 3 pupils treated the building as a person and were worried about it.

Primary 4 and 5 pupils were protective of the facility, liked the benefits of a bigger school and were making more friends. 2 pupils were of the view that it should stay open.

Primary 6 and 7 pupils unanimously stated that they wished the school to close.

Audience

Travel time stated in the documents is 20 minutes but this is more like over 40 minutes for the children to get to Campbeltown.

Disappointed that more of the younger people with children are not here tonight. Can see the benefits of schools in the town. Lots of children attend the nursery in the village.

Panel Response

The officer dealing with this piece of work offered, informally, at the pre-consultation stage to visit the group in person or to discuss over the phone. This was also revisited before this event today.

The Service have went beyond what we are required to do in terms of engagement.

Audience

Parents did have a view and took part in the consultation process and felt that they didn't require anything further. Parents are put off putting children to Southend as there is no nursery provision. Short sighted not to have pre-school in the area.

Like the idea of a local school, but know it is not practical. Need to be realistic and not sentimental.

Audience

The children need the socialisation that they didn't have during Covid, it's not good for their personal development.

Audience

Congratulated to the Council on the process.

The future of the community without a school is going to age even faster. No young family would want to move to the area if there is no school. Would it not be more sensible for local groups to use the school?

This building has had money spent on it over recent years and it could be used by the toddler group. It wouldn't cost too much to mothball it for a few more years.

The latest inspection on Carradale Primary School was very good and they have a small school. If they can do it we can do it here, we just need that chance. Mothball it for another two or three years.

Panel Response

The school is available for lets and officers can provide contact details if anyone would like them.

We are unable to operate an ELC from this building. 1140 hours were implemented and care inspectorate rightly changed the requirements which a building must have to operate an ELC and this building does not comply with these.

Lots of things which you say ring true, peoples' ways of life are changing and a lot of traditional rural communities are feeling this. The most recent Census report highlighted this as an issue for the whole area. The number of school age children are dropping and there is an increase in the number of older people. This is a much wider issue for society.

Wider factors are impacting on communities in Argyll and Bute.

Audience

Feel that local ways would disappear if the school closes permanently, and that would be a pity.

Panel

As mentioned before these issues are wider than education, although it does have a part to play.

Rural education is very important and agreed that there are good inspections in rural schools.

Being able to engage is key, as communities are very different. It is particularly important to have this process so we can have this conversation.

Parents have the right to the education they wish for their children.

Audience

This proposal is the most logical one.

Would be hesitant to put my kids to this school if there were only 1 or 2 kids in the school. Frustrating that the two schools in Campbeltown are in disrepair. What is the future for a single primary campus in Campbeltown?

Unrealistic to think that this school could be kept open.

Panel

The panel actually visited both Castlehill and Dalintober today.

Pleased that the Council has invested money in both schools but it is clear that the buildings, by virtue of their age and construction, will require further investment, and no matter how much money is spent on these buildings more will need to be spent.

A local councillor was making the point recently that the rolls of both schools are going downwards and this also impacts on the Grammar School. Our view as a Service is that we would like to look at options for the future of schooling in

Campbeltown but there is nothing specific at this time or any plans to bring something forward at present.

Audience

Who took the decision that there would be no pre-school in Southend if the school reopened?

Panel

We are not able to provide pre-school education in this building as the legislation around accommodation and statutory provision for pre-school children has changed. The various requirements which need to be met by the Services for this type of establishment were provided.

Audience

Don't see why ELC children need something different from school children.

Panel

The Service are required to follow the legislation which the Scottish Government sets out.

Nurseries don't have catchment areas and parents can choose where they go. In Campbeltown parents can chose from Aqualibrium, Campbeltown Nursery, Meadows and Dalintober. There is also provision in Carradale and Drumlemble Primary Schools.

Audience

I was a teacher in a school similar to this with 10 children and very supportive parents. Sad to see a school potentially close down. Attracting young people to the area will be difficult if it closes, great to promote the area, very sad to see.

Panel

If the decision is to proceed with the closure of the school and the community were interested in taking the building over this is a conversation which the Council would welcome.

Mr Hendry thanked everyone for their attendance and expressing their views, he reminded them of the closing date and that notes from tonight's meeting will be fed into the consultation process and closed the meeting.

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Argyll and Bute Council to permanently close Southend Primary School.

November 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Argyll and Bute Council's proposal to permanently close Southend Primary School. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers and the special provisions that apply to proposals to close a rural school.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 27 September 2023 in connection with the council's proposal;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- visits to the site of Southend Primary School (PS), Castlehill PS, Dalintober PS and Campbeltown Grammar School, including discussions with relevant consultees.

1.4 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of any reasonable alternatives to closure of Southend PS, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of any changes to existing travelling arrangements.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Argyll and Bute Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 Argyll and Bute Council agreed to mothball Southend PS in June 2021 when the total school roll reduced to zero pupils. The school has remained mothballed since this time. The council completed a pre-consultation and engaged with the local community in November 2022. This phase considered a number of options such as the reopening of Southend PS or realigning the catchment area of the school. The majority believed the most viable option was to formally close the school. They recognised the decline in school roll had been as a result of parents choosing to send their children to other schools within the Campbeltown area. The statutory consultation on the proposal to discontinue education provision in Southend PS ran from 31 August until 27 October 2023. A public meeting was held in the school on 27 September 2023, where seven members of the public attended. The attendees had mixed views on the proposal. A few attendees indicated that the proposal was logical. However, a few attendees highlighted concerns including the variation in journey time for those children travelling from Southend area to the primary schools in Campbeltown for children; the perceived lack of early learning and childcare provision in the area; and concern about attracting new families to the local community.

2.3 The council received four written responses to the online consultation, most of which were against the proposal. Of the responses received, the majority indicated that they would prefer the continued mothballing of the school to allow time for the community to evolve. Children attending Castlehill PS were also consulted by council officers, including children who live in the Southend catchment area. A few children expressed interest in Southend PS reopening. However, most children said their preference would be to remain at their current school if Southend PS did reopen. They indicated the benefits of attending a larger school, which increases their opportunities to socialise with a wider group of friends.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 HM Inspectors agree with the council's educational benefits statement and support the permanent closure of Southend PS. Currently, almost all children from the Southend catchment attend Castlehill PS. HM Inspectors agree that children are benefitting from a broad range of experiences including team activities, as well as the increased social aspects of attending a larger school. Children benefit from a wider range of active learning strategies and strong transition processes into primary school and secondary school. Primary school staff also benefit from support across the Mid-Argyll and Kintyre cluster which supports moderation and tracking of pupil progress across stage appropriate groups.

3.2 HM Inspectors met with children and young people, parents, staff, including headteachers and other stakeholders. Almost all were supportive of the council's proposal.

3.3 Almost all of the primary-aged children who met with HM Inspectors had attended the nursery class at Southend PS. None of the children had attended Southend PS for any part of their primary school education. Overall, children are happy attending their current schools, which include Castlehill PS and Dalintober PS. In particular, older children recognise the benefits to being in a larger school community. They feel that they have lots of opportunities to participate in clubs and after-school activities and benefit from having a wide friendship group.

3.4 Overall, parents of primary-aged children that spoke to HM Inspectors are in favour of the proposal. They acknowledge that the permanent closure of Southend PS could be seen as a loss for the local community. However, they feel that their children are settled and happy at Castlehill PS and Dalintober PS. They feel that reopening Southend PS would not be feasible if early learning and childcare provision was not included. They also recognise the challenges for Argyll and Bute Council in recruiting and retaining teachers in the local area. They feel that council resources would be better allocated in Castlehill PS and Dalintober PS. However, a few parents, who through placing requests have sent their children to Dalintober PS, are unsure about the

future of their children's places at this school. They would like clarity from the council around existing placing requests and whether home to school transport would be extended to all children living in the current Southend catchment area.

3.5 Staff who have been redeployed from Southend PS to other schools are welcomed and valued as members of the school communities. However, they are disappointed in the proposed permanent closure of the school. They feel the school has had an important role in the local community over many years. This includes hosting social and community events which have now moved to Dunaverty Hall which is more centrally located in Southend village. Nevertheless, staff recognise that parental choice, alongside other social factors outwith their control, has led to a significant reduction in the school roll over time.

3.6 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of the factors to which it should have special regard. Castlehill PS and Dalintober PS are both currently under capacity and the school rolls are predicted to remain fairly stable over the next five years. Southend is a small settlement and is not identified as an area for growth in the Local Development Plan. Currently, children residing in the catchment of Southend travel to school either by private car or school transport. As Southend PS is not located in a village, the implementation of the proposal would have little effect on almost all children. The proposal, should it proceed, would have a neutral effect on the environment. Most stakeholders accept the rationale for the school closure. Most stakeholders indicated that, should the proposal go ahead, they would like a positive outcome to be found for the use of the existing Southend PS building, that could be of benefit to the community.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal by Argyll and Bute Council will result in educational benefits for children living in the Southend PS catchment area. Children from the Southend area are settled in their current environment and value learning alongside their peers in larger schools. Parents and staff agree that children's experiences are broad and that they benefit from strong social connections. There is consensus amongst almost all stakeholders consulted that the closure of the school is inevitable, however, they recognise it will be a loss to the community. Should the proposal go ahead, the council should work with the local community to explore the potential future use of the school building. The council should provide clarification on existing placing requests and home to school transport arrangements for the parents of children from the Southend catchment who currently attend Dalintober PS.

**HM Inspectors
November 2023**

APPENDIX 6 - PUPIL FOCUS GROUP

RESPONSES

Date of Visit – 27/09/23

School for proposed closure – Southend Primary School

Staff member(s) Leading – Rosie Mackay

Pupils – 28 pupils (9 of which are within Southend

Catchment area) – Consultation took place at Castlehill

Primary School

Description	Response
Background information for pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am meeting with you today because the Council want to find out your views, about Southend Primary School being closed. This process of asking for your views is called a consultation. • This consultation is anonymous – which means your words and ideas may be used in public reports that are written, but your name won't be written with your words and ideas. • We want to consult with you to find out what you think about the Council's proposal to close Southend Primary School. The Council is proposing this because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There aren't many pupils that live near Southend Primary School and parents were choosing to send their children to other schools. from the area that would go to Southend and this number isn't going up. - It's getting expensive to keep looking after a building that isn't being used. • It is important that we find out your thoughts and opinions because some of you are from the Southend area and attend this school. If Southend Primary School closed, children from the area would attend Castlehill Primary School. Your views are important and this will help us make a decision for pupils that would be future pupils at Southend Primary School. • Closing the school isn't the only option for Southend Primary School – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could re-open. - It could continue to be 'mothballed' – which means it's temporarily closed like it is now.
What do you think about Southend Primary School being closed? Is it a good idea? Why or why not?	<p>P1-3 (10 pupils)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think if you are in Southend, you should be able to go to the school • If no one wants to go to the school it is not worth it. • I think it is a bad idea to close the school as no one can go there. • There would be more teachers to teach in Castlehill. • Don't need to spend the money. • If it was open, it might give someone a job. • If the school was closed we could use it in another way. • A small school might be liked by those pupils who want a calmer school. <p>P4-5 (8 pupils)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think it is a good idea to go to Castlehill as Southend wouldn't give you many people to socialise with. • I think there would not be many people who would want to work in Southend (e.g. teachers) because of the travel. • I think it should stay open as all teachers there helped me, it is a good place and you had fun. • There would be a lack of teachers in Southend.

Description	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Southend you might not get the same/ as much education as in Castlehill because there are more staff. • If it is a small school, there is not enough space for all year groups. • If they move to Castlehill, they might get more education. • These ideas are all really good but the Council need to use their money wisely. • I think I got a good education- (at Southend) and it had more pupils than some other schools. • Southend didn't have any security. <p>P6-7 (10 pupils)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think it is a good idea to close Southend Primary (x10 pupils) • Shut it down • Castlehill is much larger so you can make more friends • There is not many teachers in Southend – this is bad as you don't have a lot of people to learn from. • I think it should close for good. • No one goes to it, it is just left. • There are enough pupils in Southend but people are not choosing to go there for a reason.
<p>What might be good or not good about pupils who would have gone to Southend Primary Schools going to Castlehill School?</p>	<p>P1-3 (10 pupils)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it was closed, people can just come to Castlehill School. • I prefer a large school (8/10 pupils agreed with this.) <p>P4-5 (8 pupils)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I want to stay in Castlehill because the teachers are kind. (4 pupils from Southend agreed with this) • There is not a playground, in Castlehill we have space to play. <p>P6-7 (10 pupils)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castlehill has a gym hall • Castlehill has separated classes for separate years. • Castlehill is a great school. • It can be far to drive from Southend to Castlehill • Castlehill has a Nurture Room. We like all the rooms here. • We can have more friends and space in Castlehill. • Castlehill has kindness.
<p>Do you have any other ideas or thoughts about this?</p>	<p>P1-3 (10 pupils)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe the building would have a different job. • You could turn it into a play park or nursery. • It could be turned into a Grammar School. <p>P4-5 (8 pupils)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Astro turf would be good in the grounds of Southend. • There could be activities in the building instead such as football or hula hoops. • It could be a bit like the Aqualibrium – turn 1 section of Southend into a swimming pool. • It could be a pupil council meeting room.

Description	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It would be good to turn into a shop and we could make it.• It could be turned into a house.• It could be a charity, a museum or an inside beach.• I think it should be a nursery.• I think it should be for old people, giving them a place to live with an outdoor area for them. <p>P6-7 (10 pupils)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It could be a nursery• It could be a school trip destination/activities• It could be a greenhouse/garden – trees could be planted in the area• It could be a shelter for school trips• The building should be used for something else.• The building could maybe be used for entertainment or as a café.