Argyll and Bute Council

Customer Services: Education

CONSULTATION REPORT

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

AUGUST 2019

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 Ashfield Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31st October 2019.

1.2 The pupils of Ashfield Primary School’s catchment area will continue to receive their education at Tayvallich Primary School.

1.3 The delineated catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School shall be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Ashfield 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:

- Ashfield Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is low and not predicted to rise in the near future. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £5,785.
- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 8.1 fte (full time equivalent) vacancies for teachers in Argyll and Bute.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for maintenance.

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 8th May 2019 at 7.00 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 March 2016, the Community Services Committee of Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Ashfield Primary School. The Council agreed that in the event there are no registered pupils by the commencement of session 2017/18, the school be considered for formal closure through the statutory process.


4.2 On 14th December 2017, the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an Options Appraisal for Ashfield Primary School.


4.3 The Community Services Committee received a report on 15th March 2018 presenting and outlining details of a potential formal consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended) and a broad timeline of this process.

4.4 On 11th December 2018, the Council considered the Options Appraisal carried out in line with the preliminary requirements of the 2010 Act and agreed that the Education Service would now formulate a draft proposal for approval.


4.5 On 14th March 2019, the Council approved the draft Proposal Paper, adopted the proposal as a “relevant proposal” in terms of the 2010 Act, and agreed to proceed with the statutory consultation process.


4.6 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 Ashfield Primary School is attached as Appendix 2.

5.2 The EQSEIA identifies no negative impact.

6. The Consultation Process

6.1 Following the Council’s decision of 14th March 2019 – 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/education-and-learning

6.2 A summary of that document was also provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the “affected schools” (Ashfield Primary School and Tayvallich Primary School)
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within two years of the date of publication of the Proposal Paper
- The pupils 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
- Community Councils
- 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 A copy of the Proposal Paper was also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
• Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
• Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
• The schools affected by the proposal

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

6.5 If members of the public wanted the document in another language or format, or if they required the services of an interpreter, this was made available.

6.6 There were 133 letters sent with the summary proposal, 15 letters sent which contained the full proposal, and 40 emails sent which contained the full proposal. These were sent 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.

6.7 The consultation ran from 18th March 2019 until the close of business on 17th May 2019 – a minimum of six weeks which included at least 30 school days, as required by Section 6(4) of the 2010 Act.

6.8 A public meeting was held at Ashfield Primary School on 8th May 2019 at 7.00pm. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting and participate was welcome to do so. 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.

6.9 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 5th September 2019.

7. Pupil Engagement

7.1 The proposal to close Ashfield Primary School could have an impact on pupils, parents and the community. Pupils’ views are a significant part of the consultation process of this proposal. To that regard, pupils that would attend Ashfield Primary School took part in a focus group with officers from the Education Service to share their views on the proposal.

7.2 The focus group consisted of 3 pupils from P1-P3 with a number of families choosing not to have their children take part in the focus group as they were happy with their children continuing to attend Tayvallich Primary school.

7.3 The pupils were given information regarding the Council’s proposal and asked for their thoughts and ideas through a series of questions.

7.4 Pupils in the focus group had never attended Ashfield Primary School but said:
• “My sister likes staying here (Tayvallich Primary School) because she has lots of friends.”
• “I don’t want it (Ashfield Primary School) to be closed because it’s a long way to travel.”
• “I think it’s better to go to a school close to your home.”
• “If you close it what will you make it into?”

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

8. Responses to the Consultation Exercise

8.1 There were 6 written responses received during the consultation period which were sent to the Head of Education, Learning and Teaching, Argyll House, Dunoon, PA23 8AJ. The responses requested that the Council continued to mothball the school to allow the community to consider their options. A survey that had been undertaken accompanied these responses. A summary of the responses can be found in Appendix 3. Oral responses to the proposal were gathered at the public meeting held at Ashfield Primary School on 8th May 2019. Three representatives from the local community attended along with officers from the Education Authority, Education Scotland and a local Councillor. Minutes of the public meeting are attached as Appendix 4. The 3 members of the public present intimated that they were in favour of the proposal and identified the potential of the vacant Ashfield Primary School to act as a community hub.

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

• Views were expressed that Ashfield Primary School should not be reopened for education provision.
• Views were expressed generally that children should continue to be educated at Tayvallich Primary School and that the use of the school building be developed for the future.
• Views were expressed that the school building should be subject to further mothballing in order that the community use of the building could be explored.

8.3 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 Question: What are the implications of closing the school and realigning the catchment area and what is the timeline?
Response: If the proposal goes ahead the school would be formally closed by 31st October 2019. The building would then be surplus to Council requirements. There are a number of options which could arise – the Council have previously received communication from the community of their interest in taking on ownership of the building and the Council would consider this. If no other alternative was proposed then the Council would dispose of land and building. It is not expected that there would be much interest from prospective purchasers.

9.2 Question: If the school is mothballed a while longer and we had the funds to rebuild the village hall, could we move the hall activities into the school building whilst the village hall is being rebuilt? What is the process for getting the information that you would like on the consultation?

Response: You can respond to the consultation on line, by e-mail or by post. The consultation closes on 17th May 2019 and responses must be received by this date. When officers review the proposal all reasonable alternatives will be considered in relation to all of the options contained within the Proposal Paper in addition to any further options suggested as part of the consultation process.

9.3 Question: When the consultation went live an e-mail with the link was sent to all the group’s contacts. Can we have the feedback from the pupils?

Response: Feedback from the pupils will be contained within the Consultation Report which will uploaded to the Council website prior to the Community Services Committee in September where it will be considered.

9.4 Question: When the September Community Services Committee takes a decision will this require to be ratified by Council?

Response: No. The Community Services Committee has the power to act as the Education Authority, therefore there is no requirement for this to be ratified by the Council.

9.5 Question: Will the Council consider further mothballing of the school until the consultants that the community group have engaged complete their work which will be outwith the current timescales?

Response: The Council considered this request when it reviewed the proposal and all reasonable alternatives at the end of the consultation period taking all views into account. We have concluded that closure of Ashfield Primary School remains the best solution to address the reasons for the proposal. 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 work with the Ashfield community, Knapdale Community Council and Village Hall Committee to develop a sustainable community facility that all will be able to benefit from.
10. Education Scotland Report

10.1 In accordance with 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 attended the public meeting on 8th May 2019 in connection with the Council’s proposal. They also visited Tayvallich Primary 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 notes that the proposal has clear educational benefits which are currently being experienced by children. Parents, children and staff are agreed about the educational benefits of the proposal.

   b) Education Scotland notes that in taking up the proposal the Council needs to continue to engage with all stakeholders and ensure that the local community is supported in exploring options for the alternative use of the Ashfield Primary School building.

11. Education Authority Response to Education Scotland Report

11.1 The Council welcomes the report from Education Scotland and accepts 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 notes that the proposal has clear educational benefits which are currently being experienced by children. Parents, children and staff are agreed about the educational benefits of the proposal.

   - The Council agrees that the educational benefits for current and future pupils are clear. Children benefit from access to a range of community facilities near Tayvallich Primary School and from the use of local woodland areas for outdoor learning enriching their curriculum experience. Other benefits include improved social interaction with more children of the same age supporting the development of mental, social, physical and emotional skills. Parents, children and staff are not in favour of being educated at Ashfield Primary School, preferring to continue to attend Tayvallich Primary School.

   b) Education Scotland notes that in taking up the proposal the Council needs to continue to engage with all stakeholders and ensure that the local
community is supported in exploring options for the alternative use of the Ashfield Primary School building.

- Argyll and Bute Council is open to engaging with the local community, Knapdale Community Council and the Village Hall Committee on its 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;
- 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.

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.

12.4 Officers of the Education Authority have listened carefully to the points made at the public meetings 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 other options as being reasonable alternatives to the proposal to close Ashfield 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 Ashfield Primary School. The overwhelming majority of consultation responses, community groups and pupils whose view were gathered are not in support of the school being reopened for education provision. Education Scotland’s report is also supportive of the proposal being implemented on the basis that the vacant building be considered for community use and that the local community is supported in exploring options for alternative use of the building.

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 Ashfield Primary School catchment area 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 work with the Ashfield community, Knapdale Community Council and Village Hall Committee to develop a sustainable community facility that all will be able to benefit from.

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 were no areas identified by the respondents as being inaccurate or omitted from the Proposal Paper. One area of inaccuracy identified by the Council is in regard to the implementation date of 21st October 2019, as stated in the Proposal Paper. Following the publication of the Proposal Paper, the date for the Community Services Committee meeting (where the Council will make its final decision on the proposal) was rescheduled to 5th September 2019. Accordingly a revised implementation date of 31st October 2019 should be noted in order to allow for the full 8 week statutory period prior to implementation of the proposal within which it can be called-in by the Scottish Ministers.
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 Ashfield Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31st October 2019. Pupils of Ashfield Primary School will continue to be educated at Tayvallich Primary School. The catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ashfield Primary School.

15.2 This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposal which are:

- Ashfield Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is low and not predicted to rise in the near future. Whilst Ashfield Primary School is a sound building, it will deteriorate during mothballing with limited budgets for maintenance. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £5,785;
• Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 8.81 fte vacancies for teachers in Argyll and Bute; and
• The Council needs to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services.

16. Recommendation

16.1 On the basis of the consultations 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 Ashfield Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31st October 2019. The pupils of Ashfield Primary School’s catchment area will continue to receive their education at Tayvallich Primary School. The delineated catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School shall be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Ashfield Primary School.
APPENDIX 1 - PROPOSAL PAPER

Argyll and Bute Council
Customer Services: Education

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: MARCH 2019

Review of Education Provision
Ashfield Primary School
Argyll and Bute Council
Proposal for the closure of Ashfield Primary School

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that education provision at Ashfield Primary School be discontinued with effect from 21st October 2019.

Pupils of Ashfield Primary School will continue to be educate at Tayvallich Primary School.

The catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ashfield School.

Reasons for this Proposal

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

- Ashfield Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is low and not predicted to rise in the near future. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £5,785

- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. After repeated advertising, both locally and nationally and across social media, Argyll and Bute Council was unable to appoint teaching staff, either Head Teacher or Class Teacher to the school, the school was then mothballed. The local and national staffing challenge has not improved. In October 2018 there were significant vacancies for both Head Teachers and Teachers

- Whilst Ashfield Primary School is a sound building, it will deteriorate during mothballing with limited budgets for maintenance.

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/education-and-learning

A summary of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children 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 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
• The Community Councils
• Community Planning Partnership
• Relevant users of the affected schools
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• List MSPs for the area
• The Constituency MP
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Jezeli chciałby Państwo otrzymać ten dokument w innym jazyku lub w innym formacie albo jeeli potrzebna jest pomoc Uumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgriobhainn seo ann an cânann no riodh eile, no ma tha sibh a’ feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

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

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से इव रमणीय डाउनलोड किंसे डेट काम हिस्ट सांगते डॅट स्प्रे हिस्ट सदसीए दे, सांगे डाउनलोड ऑफिस रस्तुतिपुट स्ट्रीट बिमे डिटेक्टिव झेट दे, उम जिम्मी मार्थ देंगे।

پیروط کاشی آر پی سی کی دیکور زبان پاکتیکا جی می‌گردد، یا آر پی کورت تیجان که خدامت پاکتیکا نام‌برای عربی پاسپورت کردن سـ
1 Introduction

1.1 On 10\textsuperscript{th} March 2016, the Community Services Committee of Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Ashfield Primary School. The Council agreed that in the event there are no registered pupils by the commencement of session 2017/18, the school be considered for formal closure through the statutory process.

Ashfield Primary School – Mothballing Decision:-

1.2 On 14\textsuperscript{th} December 2017, the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an options appraisal for Ashfield Primary School. The Community Services Committee received a report on 15\textsuperscript{th} March 2018 presenting and outlining details of a potential formal consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended) and a broad timeline of this process.


1.3 The statutory process for the closure of a rural school is laid out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Act, as amended, introduced a presumption against closure of a rural school and details specific requirements which the education authority is required to follow if they are formulating a proposal to close a rural school. This includes the introduction of a preliminary consultation process.

1.4 In addition, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out a new right for community organisations to request the transfer of local assets into local community ownership/management. This may be something that the Community wish to consider as part of or as a consequence of this process. Public bodies including Councils must make a decision within six months of receiving a valid request.

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

1.6 There is a requirement to have special regard to 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.

1.7 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.

1.8 Over the next five years, our agreed priorities are to ensure that:

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

1.9 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” which is the Education Vision and Strategy for Argyll and Bute Council.

2 Proposal

2.1 It is proposed that education provision at Ashfield Primary School be discontinued with effect from 21st October 2019. Pupils of Ashfield Primary School will continue to be educated at Tayvallich Primary School from 21st October 2019. The catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ashfield Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

2.2 This is the best option to address the reasons for the proposal. These reasons are;

- Ashfield Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is low and not predicted to rise in the near future. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £5,785,

- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. After repeated advertising, both locally and nationally and across social media, Argyll and Bute Council was unable to appoint teaching staff, either Head Teacher or Class Teacher to the school, the school was then mothballed. The local and national staffing challenge has not improved. In October 2018 there were significant vacancies for both Head Teachers and Teachers,

- Whilst Ashfield Primary School is a sound building, it will deteriorate during mothballing with limited budgets for maintenance.
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 in the future;
- The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high;
- Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate;
- This proposal contains the Educational Benefits Statement.

3 Preliminary requirements

3.1 The Council is required to consider the future of Ashfield 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 were also considered. Some of these figures have been recalculated since the initial pre-appraisal took place.

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. When the school was mothballed, the community continued to have use of the facilities and this was also taken into consideration as part of the pre-consultation process.

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 continue to travel by bus to Tayvallich Primary School.
3.5 Four options were presented to the local community by the Council for consideration during the pre-consultation phase of this proposal, 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 favoured proposal by the Council;

   a) Re-open Ashfield Primary School
   b) Continued Mothballing of Ashfield Primary with the pupils zoned to Tayvallich Primary School;
   c) Re-open Ashfield Primary School and realign the catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School; and
   d) Close Ashfield Primary School and realign its catchment area to Tayvallich Primary School (the proposal).

3.7 Following from an initial options appraisal which was presented to Council on 11th December 2018, it was agreed that the preliminary requirements were satisfied enabling the draft proposal to proceed.

3.8 There were a range of viewpoints on the future of Ashfield Primary School, from parents, young people and members of the community.

3.9 The community reflected that Ashfield Primary School had been an integral part of the community, and there were contrasting views on the proposals for the future of Ashfield Primary School. However there is a will that the school be retained for community use and not be allowed to fall into disrepair.

3.10 The current travel arrangements for children and staff have been in place for two years. Closing the school would have no impact on staff or pupil travel from the current arrangement. There would be no alteration to the current environmental impact.

**Alternatives to the Proposal**

3.11 The community engagement process prior to the drafting of this proposal considered the views of members of the community who also considered any other alternatives to the closure of Ashfield Primary School. Full details from the community engagement and the findings from the preliminary requirements, including the alternatives to the Proposal are attached as appendix 5 and are also available to read here:


3.12 In conclusion, after the preconsultation with the community, the Council feels that the proposal to close Ashfield Primary School and realign its catchment area to Tayvallich Primary School is reasonable and further detail is provided in relation to educational benefits, travel, environmental impact, community impact and financial impact below.
4 Educational Benefits Statement

4.1 It is proposed that education provision at Ashfield Primary School be discontinued with effect from 21st October 2019. Pupils of Ashfield Primary School will continue to be educated at Tayvallich Primary School from 21st October 2019. The catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ashfield Primary School.

4.2 Ashfield Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is low and not predicted to rise in the near future. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £5,785.

4.3 Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. After repeated advertising, both locally and nationally and across social media, Argyll and Bute Council was unable to appoint teaching staff, either Head Teacher or Class Teacher to the school, the school was then mothballed. The local and national staffing challenge has not improved. At the time of writing, there are 14 vacancies for teachers and 2 vacancies for head teachers in Argyll and Bute.

4.4 The school roll has been significantly below its capacity for the last twelve years, and this is not predicted to increase in the foreseeable future. Whilst the school has been mothballed its condition continues to deteriorate with limited budgets for maintenance.

4.5 The Council needs to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services.

4.6 This proposal will bring educational benefits and assist in ensuring that the Education budget is more sustainable in the future,

4.7 The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high,

4.8 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 educational attainment of pupils,

4.9 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate.

4.10 As part of the preliminary requirements in the drafting of this proposal, the Council considered four other alternative options. Of the four options which were considered by the community and the Council; D is the favoured proposal by the Council.

   a) Re-open Ashfield Primary School;
   b) Continued Mothballing of Ashfield Primary with the pupils zoned to Tayvallich Primary School;
c) Re-open Ashfield Primary School and realign the catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School;
d) Close Ashfield Primary School and realign its catchment area to Tayvallich Primary School (the proposal).

4.11 Having considered these other alternatives the Council has made a decision that these are not viable alternatives to the closure proposal, and will proceed with the option to consult on the proposal to close Ashfield Primary School and realign its catchment area to Tayvallich Primary School.

4.12 The Council has undertaken an appraisal on impact if this proposal was to be implemented.

4.13 This includes an assessment of;

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

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 The Council has also taken special regard to the following factors if this proposal was to be implemented, as Ashfield Primary School is classified as a rural school.

- Likely effect on the local community to be assessed by reference to:
  - The sustainability of the community
  - 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.

- Financial Impact.

4.16 In addition, the Council has also considered how to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the implementation of this proposal.
5 **School roll**

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

5.2 The rolls of the schools included in this proposal have remained static or seen a decline in each school over recent years as the table below demonstrates. This shows the historic and current pupil numbers for both Ashfield and Tayvallich primaries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Roll</th>
<th>Ashfield PS</th>
<th>Tayvallich PS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll</td>
<td>Roll</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Predicted Roll**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicted Roll</th>
<th>Ashfield PS Without placing requests</th>
<th>Ashfield PS taking placing requests in to account</th>
<th>Tayvallich PS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-2021</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>24*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 In total there are ten pupils who live in the Ashfield Primary School catchment area. There are eight pupils who live in the Ashfield Primary School catchment area who currently attend Tayvallich Primary School. These children are all in receipt of Council transport to go to school.
6 Teacher numbers

6.1 Teacher numbers are improving nationally, with a 6.86% increase in the number of teachers nationally from 2013 - 2017. However in Argyll and Bute there has been a 1.28% reduction in the number of teachers from 2013 - 2017.

6.2 As the school has been mothballed for the last two years, the issue of recruitment of staff has not improved. At the time of writing this report there are 14 vacancies for class teachers in Argyll and Bute and 2 head teacher vacancies. Despite a sustained effort to secure permanent staff, there is no reason to think that staffing would not continue to be a considerable challenge for Ashfield Primary School.

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

7 Condition of the Building

7.1 Argyll and Bute Council’s School Estate Management Planning process identified in 2013 that the school was in satisfactory condition, and that there were no areas of significant concern at that time.

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 (Sc) 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.

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 Tayvallich Primary School, which is the school the majority of the Ashfield pupils have been attending since August 2016.

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 the
school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children, however the closure of the school and continued attendance of pupils at other schools allows children to experience a curriculum which is matched to their needs.

8.4 Both Ashfield Primary School and Tayvallich Primary School are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from Ashfield Primary School area, attending Tayvallich Primary School continue to benefit from education in a locality familiar to them, and still relatively close to home.

8.5 The co-location of the Early Learning Centre (ELC) and the primary classes at Tayvallich Primary School enables a strong transition process between the ELC and school and includes joint early level learning every week.

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.

9.2 Tayvallich Primary School offers a learning environment that encourages sound levels of achievement and provides a wide range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The school ethos is very positive and conducive to helping pupils succeed.

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. At Tayvallich 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.

9.5 Tayvallich Primary School is part of the Mid Argyll Cluster, which means that staff can be supported together, moderation and tracking of pupil progress is enabled and staff work across stage appropriate groups. Tayvallich Primary School is part of a shared headship which means that staff can be supported together in a clearly defined way and staff work closely as a team.

9.6 There is a planned programme of development activities and opportunities for quality professional dialogue on an ongoing basis at Tayvallich Primary School. All teachers have been actively involved in key developments. In a
recent curriculum review, curricular frameworks have been improved for Health and Wellbeing, Literacy and Numeracy, Science and Social Studies.

9.7 The shared headship approach allows staff to work together, not only as two schools but also as part of the area cluster towards improving policy and practice. The head teacher is experienced and in previous roles led initiatives at a national level. The principal teacher at Tayvallich Primary School is part of part of Argyll and Bute’s Leadership Network to support school self-evaluation and has taken the lead on specific areas of school improvement. The shared headship model supports a distributive leadership approach and provides staff with opportunities to lead aspects of the curriculum and make day to day management decisions.

9.8 In recent years children at Tayvallich Primary School have been taught in two classes composed of a number of children from more than one year group. They 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 their own age and gender, take part in team activities and move with their peers to secondary school. Pupils are close to one another and have formed strong social bonds. Former pupils of Tayvallich Primary School continue the friendships they made in primary school through their continuous education in high school and beyond.

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. Planning for Progress meetings are being further strengthened. These discussions between home and school improve parental engagement whilst focussing on next steps for learning.

10.2 Where appropriate, intervention is put in place, while working effectively with other agencies and parents to ensure the needs of each child are met. In the primary classes, standards of attainment have been maintained over the last three years. Most children are achieving national expectations in reading, writing, talking and listening, talking and numeracy.

10.3 A ‘Respect Me’ policy is built into class lessons and permeates the whole school ethos through assemblies and class work on rights and responsibilities.

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. In the Early Learning Centre (ELC) children enjoy a range of experiences. Staff know the children well and are sensitive to their individual needs.

11.2 There is a strong transition process in place between the ELC and school at Tayvallich Primary School and includes joint early level learning every week. Pupils from Pre-5 to P7 have taken on responsibilities which enhance the development of a positive ethos across the school.

11.3 Children are provided with a variety of experiences to develop their sense of responsibility, independence, confidence and enterprising attitude. Tayvallich Primary School have had community and parental support input in outdoor education, science, health and well-being and circus skills over the past two sessions.

11.4 Across the school children are engaged with learning and contribute well in lessons. Staff promote positive relationships at all levels and also through the Young Sports Leaders programme, 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 Tayvallich Primary School is a well-supported school situated in the village of Tayvallich.

12.2 There has been substantial investment in recent years. The teaching area for Early Learning Centre has been upgraded. A second teaching area is being developed at present with a target completion date of January 2019.

12.3 While outside space is limited, pupils benefit from access to a range of community facilities which are in close proximity to Tayvallich Primary School including the village hall, shop and local businesses.

12.4 The school makes good use of the local woodland for learning. Both Ashfield Primary School and Tayvallich Primary School are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification).

12.5 The children maintain links with friends who live in their own village as well as creating links with children from two other rural communities.

12.6 Any mitigating effects around the adverse weather and transport issues are outweighed by the benefits of this proposal.

12.7 In summary, there are a range of educational benefits for children 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 Tayvallich 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 the teaching and ancillary staff who are currently deployed in Tayvallich Primary School.

13.2 If this proposal is implemented, the Council does not envisage adverse effects from the proposal. Should issues arise however, these will be mitigated through the Council Educational Management Team support structure.

Early Learning Centre – Pre Five Children

13.3 The co-location for the Early Learning Centre (ELC) and the primary classes at Tayvallich Primary School enables a strong transition process between the ELC and the school and includes joint early level learning every week.

Gaelic learners

13.4 Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS) is not currently offered in any of the schools in this proposal so there would be no effect if the proposals were implemented.

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, 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 would increase the roll of Tayvallich 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 Ashfield Primary School 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. Tayvallich Primary School meets all the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1996.

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.

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 Ashfield Primary School catchment area. However, children who live in this catchment area have been making this journey for the last two years, and families in the area do not feel this is a major consideration. Funded school transport would also be provided for pupils should this proposal be implemented.

17 Factors for rural school closures

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

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

17.2 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.

17.3 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

17.4 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.

17.5 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 Ashfield Primary School may be an important step in building community confidence, promoting growth and enabling communities to realise their aspirations.

17.6 Research 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.

17.7 It is important to recognise that a school's primary function is to provide pupils with the best possible educational experience. During initial consultation, there was some support from the community for closure of the school with the building and adjoining grounds being retained for community use.

17.8 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.

17.9 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 focus for activities and events.
On the availability of the school’s premises and its other facilities for use by the community

17.10 During the pre-consultation phase, some members of the community supported closure of the school with the suggestion that the building and adjoining grounds could potentially be retained for community use. Most people who attended the pre-consultation meeting felt that the school building should be retained for community use and not allowed to fall into further disrepair, as that would adversely impact on the community’s access to the premises.

17.11 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. Formal closure of the school would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community.

17.12 There have been some community lets in Ashfield Primary School in the last two years.

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements

17.13 There are no housing allocations or potential developments identified. The travel distance from Ashfield Primary School to Tayvallich Primary School is 8.58 miles. The travel distance from Ashfield Primary School to Lochgilphead Primary (Joint Campus) is 9.76. The travel time for this journey is approximately 20 minutes for both journeys. The current travel arrangements have been in place for two years. Closing the school would have no impact on staff or pupil travel. There would be no alteration to the current environmental impact.

17.14 This option would have no effect on the current travel arrangements of staff and pupils. The closure of Ardchatan Primary School, in terms of current travel arrangements would have a neutral effect on the environment. The current annual transport cost for pupils to travel to Tayvallich Primary School is £17,320.

17.15 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.

17.16 Walking to school does provide children with many health benefits, and there are benefits from exercise on behaviour, and self-esteem. However, children travelling to school by bus can also have a positive impact on the development of social skills and relationship building.

Environmental impact

17.17 Pupils will continue to travel by school transport to Tayvallich Primary School and through placing requests to Lochgilphead Primary School.
17.18 If this proposal was to be implemented there would be little or no impact.

**Financial Impact**

17.19 The full breakdown of the financial analysis is detailed in Appendix 4. Some of these figures have been recalculated since the initial pre-appraisal took place. This information gives details on the cost if Ashfield Primary School was still to be an occupied and operational establishment. However, as Ashfield Primary School is currently mothballed, the cost for the mothballing is £5,785. Should the school be reopened, occupied and operational, the running costs per year would be £141,071.

17.20 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.

17.21 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. On top of this there is estimated to be an increase to Tayvallich Primary School’s teacher entitlement to 0.83 FTE at a cost of £41,785. This methodology also applies to the school’s discretionary budget which again is formula based. The discretionary budget of the receiving school will have increased by £221. In the attached breakdown some of the costs noted in column 3 will not directly impact on Tayvallich Primary School but they will be a cost to the Authority as a whole, for example school transport, and the costs of the teachers employed in Tayvallich Primary School.

17.22 The annual running costs during the mothballing of Ashfield Primary School are £5,785. 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. Transport costs for pupils to attend Tayvallich Primary School are £17,320. Costs per pupil per year to attend Ashfield Primary School if it were to be reopened are £14,107 per year. Costs per pupil per year to attend Tayvallich Primary School are £9,111 per year.

17.23 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.

17.24 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 Ashfield Primary School is £255,192, and for Tayvallich Primary School this is £352,947.

17.25 Through the Scottish Government formula for the Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) process, the council would have no change to their settlement.

Summary of educational benefit assessment and statement

17.26 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 authorities assessment of other likely effects of the proposal and the reasons for that assessment are attached as appendix 5.

17.27 Whilst the positive educational benefits are numerous, there are also some negative aspects which arise from the children attending Tayvallich Primary School. These negative aspects are 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.

18 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 Island (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.

19 Consultation arrangements
19.1 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 11th December 2018 that, having specific regard to the reasons for formulating a prospective closure proposal, the option to close Ashfield Primary School and redraw its catchment area to Tayvallich Primary School is the most appropriate response to the specific reasons for the potential proposal.

19.2 This document was considered by the Education Authority on 14 March 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.

19.3 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:


19.4 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 and also The consultation period will be from 18th March 2019 until the close of business on 17th May 2019 which lasts for a minimum of 6 weeks and includes at least 30 school days.

19.5 A public meeting will be held at 2.30pm on the 25th April 2019 in Ashfield Primary School. 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 Head of Education, Learning and Teaching, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ and should be received no later than 17th May 2019.

19.6 Written representations may be made on the proposal and the alternatives to the proposal. Written representations may also suggest other alternatives to the proposal.
19.7 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.

19.8 After receiving Education Scotland’s report, the Education Authority will then prepare and publish a Consultation Report in accordance with Sections 9 and 10 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.

19.9 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.

19.10 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.

19.11 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.

20 Conclusion

20.1 It is proposed that education provision at Ashfield Primary School be discontinued with effect from 21st October 2019. Pupils of Ashfield Primary School will continue to be educated at Tayvallich Primary School from 21st October 2019. The catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ashfield Primary School.

20.2 This is the best option to address the reasons for the proposal. These reasons are:
• Ashfield Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is low and not predicted to rise in the near future. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £5,785;

• Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. After repeated advertising, both locally and nationally and across social media, Argyll and Bute Council was unable to appoint teaching staff, either Head Teacher or Class Teacher to the school, the school was then mothballed. The local and national staffing challenge has not improved. At the time of writing, there are 14 vacancies for teachers and 2 vacancies for head teachers in Argyll and Bute; and

• The school roll has been significantly below its capacity for the last twelve years, and this is not predicted to increase in the foreseeable future. Whilst the school has been mothballed its condition continues to deteriorate with limited budgets for maintenance.

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 and assist in ensuring that the Education budget is more sustainable in the future;

• The costs per pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high;

• Schools in the Council area are expensive to maintain and operate. Retaining unnecessary accommodation is a serious drain on the resources of the Council and diverts spending from areas that directly affect 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 position is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the extent of the estate.

• This proposal contains the Educational Benefits Statement.

20.3 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 Island (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 these matters in the decision making process.
Douglas Hendry  
Executive Director of Customer Services  

Louise Connor  
Head of Education: Learning & Teaching  

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly  
Policy Lead for Education and Lifelong Learning  

For further information contact:  
Alison MacDonald  
Education Manager  
alison.macdonald@argyll-bute.gov.uk  

February 2019  

APPENDICES  
Appendix 1 – Consultation letter  
Appendix 2 – Response form  
Appendix 3 – Map  
Appendix 4 – Financial template  
Appendix 5 – Options Appraisal
Dear Consultee,

**Review of Education Provision**  
**Notice and Summary of Proposal for closing Ashfield 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 Ashfield 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 18th March 2019 and will conclude on 17th May 2019. 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 Ashfield Primary School be discontinued with effect from 21\textsuperscript{st} October 2019. Pupils of Ashfield Primary School will continue to be educated at Tayvallich Primary School from 21\textsuperscript{st} October 2019. The catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ashfield Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

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

- Ashfield Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is low and not predicted to rise in the near future. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £5,591,

- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. After repeated advertising, both locally and nationally and across social media, Argyll and Bute Council was unable to appoint teaching staff, either Head Teacher or Class Teacher to the school, the school was then mothballed. The local and national staffing challenge has not improved. In October 2018 there were significant vacancies for both Head Teachers and Teachers,

- Whilst Ashfield Primary School is a sound building, it will deteriorate during mothballing with limited budgets for maintenance.

The Council’s education strategy

Our Children Their Future

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

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

Alternatives to the Proposal

The following alternatives to the proposal are set out in the proposal paper:

a) Re-open Ashfield Primary School,
b) Continued Mothballing of Ashfield Primary with the pupils zoned to Tayvallich Primary School,
c) Re-open Ashfield Primary School and realign the catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School,
d) Close Ashfield Primary School and realign its catchment area to Tayvallich Primary School (The possible 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 website https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/education-and-learning
- Holding public meetings 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 25th April in Ashfield Primary School at 2.30pm.
- 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: https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/education-and-learning
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 view 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 the children and young people would continue to be educated in Tayvalilch 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
- Public libraries in the vicinities of the schools affected
- Local area offices in the vicinities of the schools affected
- The schools affected by the proposal

Yours sincerely

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director of Customer Services
Appendix 2

Argyll and Bute Council
Customer Services: 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 Ashfield Primary School be discontinued with effect from 21st October 2019. Pupils of Ashfield Primary School will continue to be educated at Tayvallich Primary School from 21st October 2019. The catchment area of Ashfield Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Tayvallich 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 ☐ Child / Young Person ☐ Staff ☐ Other * ☐

Elected Member / MSP / MP ☐ Member of Community Council ☐

*Other: (please specify)

Please state your views on the proposal (continue overleaf if necessary)
APPENDIX 4 – FINANCIAL TEMPLATE

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Projected annual costs for full financial year 2019/20</th>
<th>Additional financial impact on receiving school Tayvallich Primary</th>
<th>Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching staff</td>
<td>81,698</td>
<td>123,483</td>
<td>-41,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support staff</td>
<td>12,819</td>
<td>2,676</td>
<td>10,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching staff training (CPD etc)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support staff training</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply costs</td>
<td>2,345</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>1,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building costs:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>property insurance</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non domestic rates</td>
<td>2,526</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water &amp; sewerage charges</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>energy costs</td>
<td>7,517</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cleaning (contract or in-house)</td>
<td>4,965</td>
<td>4,879</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building repair &amp; maintenance</td>
<td>3,759</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grounds maintenance</td>
<td>1,254</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facilities management costs</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revenue costs arising from capital</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other - refuse collection; telephones</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School operational costs:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning materials</td>
<td>2,978</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>2,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>catering (contract or in-house)</td>
<td>23,025</td>
<td>3,548</td>
<td>19,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQA costs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other school operational costs (e.g. licences)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transport costs:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home to school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17,320</td>
<td>-17,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other pupil transport costs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staff travel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>144,628</td>
<td>153,365</td>
<td>-8,737</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Income:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sale of meals</th>
<th>Lets</th>
<th>External care provider</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL</th>
<th>TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-3,557</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-3,557</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital costs</th>
<th>School proposed for closure</th>
<th>Receiving school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ashfield Primary</td>
<td>Tayvallich Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Life Cycle cost</td>
<td>255,192</td>
<td>352,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third party contributions to capital costs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>property insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non domestic rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water &amp; sewerage charges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>energy costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cleaning (contract or in-house)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>security costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building repair &amp; maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grounds maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facilities management costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-recurring revenue costs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on GAE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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 &lt; 70 pupils averaged over 2 years). The pupils from Ashfield are designated to attend Tayvallich which has a roll of &lt; 70 pupils. The additional pupils from Ashfield does not increase the Tayvallich roll above the threshold so there will be no impact on this GAE indicator. There will be no impact on other GAE indicators.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAE IMPACT</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CUSTOMER SERVICES: EDUCATION

OPTIONS APPRAISAL

ASHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL
1. INTRODUCTION

On 10 March 2016 the Community Services Committee of Argyll and Bute Council approved the mothballing of Ashfield Primary School. The Council agreed that if there were no registered pupils by the close of the registration period for session 2016/17 the Council would consult formally on the future of school provision at Ashfield.


On 14th December 2017, the Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary consultation and an options appraisal, for Ashfield Primary School. The Community Services Committee received a report on 15th March 2018 presenting and outlining details of a potential formal consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended) and a broad timeline of this process.


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 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 within a reasonable timescale to them.

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

On 14th December 2017, Community Services Committee agreed that the Education Service would undertake the preliminary requirements in relation to considering a rural school closure required and look at an options appraisal for Ashfield Primary School. This review will enable Community Services: Education to identify and consider the options put forward.
The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 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. REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

An authority that is 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.

The Authority’s reasons for formulating a proposal are;

1. Ashfield Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is low and not predicted to rise in the near future. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £5,591,

2. Along with several other rural councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. After repeated advertising, both locally and nationally and across social media, Argyll and Bute Council was unable to appoint teaching staff, either Head Teacher or Class Teacher to the school, the school was then mothballed. The local and national staffing challenge has not improved. In October 2018 there were significant vacancies for both Head Teachers and Teachers,

3. Whilst Ashfield Primary School is a sound building, it will deteriorate during mothballing with limited budgets for maintenance.

The Council is required to consider the future of Ashfield Primary School.

3. 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.

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.

3.3 Ashfield Primary School and the local setting of Achnamara
Ashfield Primary School was built in the 1956 and is situated in the attractive village of Achnamara on the shore of Loch Sween in Mid Argyll. The village was formally used as a basis for work in relation to the Forestry Commission. The school is co-educational and non-
denominational and has a catchment area extending along Loch Sween and part of the Crinan Canal.

3.4 The School within the Community
Ashfield Primary School was viewed by many as the hub of the community and when open the community was very active within it. The local community supported many school events and the children used the local area for a number of studies.

The community has few public buildings. There is a hall within the village of Achnamara which is available for community use and the local church building is currently for sale.

There is some concern within the community that the closure of Ashfield school will contribute to a perceived decline in the community, already exacerbated by the closure of the local community shop.

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 Ashfield area showing the changing population from census 2001 to census 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Resident Population</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% under 16</td>
<td>24.38</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 16 – 64 (pensionable age)</td>
<td>58.75</td>
<td>65.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% pensionable age and over</td>
<td>16.88</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is recognised that the census area and the catchment area of Ashfield School differ slightly.

3.6 Development and House Building
The current Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in March 2015. A new Local Development Plan (LDP2), which will set out planning and development proposals for the next 10 years from 2020
and a vision for 20 years, is currently being prepared. The Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan provides the local planning framework for the majority of the Council 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.

Appendix 1 shows the Local Development Plan for Achnamara. As a small settlement Achnamara is not identified for growth in the Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan (2015). There are no ‘housing allocations’ or ‘potential development areas’ identified in the plan in connection with the settlement, so any development opportunities would be confined to ‘windfall’ sites within the settlement boundary identified in the plan.

Appendix 2 shows the Local Development Plan for Tayvallich which identifies six potential development areas. Appendix 3 provides a key for the Local Development Plans.

There have been no planning permissions granted for dwellings within the settlement during the last three years, which is indicative of the lack of growth potential. There may be some isolated opportunities for dwellings in the countryside within reasonable travelling distance of the school site, but to satisfy settlement strategy policy these would need to be on appropriate sites within defined ‘rural opportunity areas’. These are very limited in both distribution and extent and would not be likely to afford many credible opportunities within the wider area.

3.7 **Ashfield Primary School**

Ashfield Primary School was built in the 1956 and is situated in the attractive village of Achnamara on the shore of Loch Sween in Mid Argyll. The village was formerly used as a base for work in relation to the Forestry Commission. The school is co-educational and non-
denominational and has a catchment area extending along Loch Sween and part of the Crinan Canal.

Appendix 4 shows Ashfield Primary School Floor Plan. Ashfield Primary School building is in good operational order. Before mothballing there was one Primary 1 to Primary 7 classroom. There is a large hall for PE, drama etc. It is set in considerable grounds, with a generous playground and has the advantage of substantial playing fields.

The Scottish Government’s Rural School List 2016 classifies Ashfield Primary School as 'very remote rural'.¹ 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. Ashfield Primary is one of a group of 9 primaries associated with Lochgilphead High School.

### 3.8 Tayvallich Primary School

Tayvallich Primary School is a small school, built in 1894, on a hill overlooking a secluded bay surrounded by the picturesque and peaceful village of Tayvallich. There is a very strong community spirit and the school plays an integral part in the life of the village. While outside space is limited, the school comprises of one main stone-built classroom and a very recent, purpose built, spacious Pre-5 building. There are current plans in place for the adjoining cottage to be converted to a teaching area.

Appendix 5 shows Tayvallich Primary School Floor Plan. The school is an important part of Tayvallich and the wider community.

The school regularly integrates the work of local groups into the curriculum and use local partnerships to enhance learning. The school works closely with Taynish Nature reserve, Scottish National Heritage, Historic Scotland and Kilmartin Museum to promote their work and enhance learning. Pupils have opportunities to take part in wider-curricular activities through Mid-Argyll’s Active Schools Network.

The map below shows the Tayvallich and Ashfield Primary Schools' catchment areas:

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¹ Scottish Government urban Rural Classification 2016, published March 2018
3.9 Pupil Numbers

Pupil projections, and data for 2017 - 2018 are based on data from the 2017 pupil census, a return prepared annually for the Scottish Government. Past pupil numbers are historic data from past pupil censuses. Pupil projections for future P1 intakes are from NHS data taken from children registered with GP practices in the area. This data is anonymised.

Table 2 shows the historic and current pupil numbers for both Ashfield and Tayvallich primary schools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ashfield PS</th>
<th>Tayvallich PS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows projected rolls for Tayvallich Primary School and estimated number of pupils for the Ashfield catchment area according to figures held by Argyll and Bute Council:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ashfield PS Without placing requests</th>
<th>Ashfield PS taking placing requests into account</th>
<th>Tayvallich PS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-2021</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>24*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Prediction based on information available May 2018.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Meetings
Meetings were held in Ashfield Primary on Thursday 29th March 2018 (2pm – 7pm) and Monday 9th April 2018 (5pm-6pm) to seek the views of the community on the future of Ashfield Primary School. The meetings were attended by 30 people, including 5 pupils. The Council is grateful to the Community Council for assistance in the planning and publicity for these meetings. It also appreciates the additional information in relation to the Achnamara Village Survey, provided by the Community Council. There were also discussions with the 8 pupils within the Ashfield catchment area currently attending Tayvallich Primary School and Lochgilphead Joint Campus.

4.2 Content of Meetings
Attendees to the sessions were given an overview of information that the Council would be using in this options appraisal, including pupil projections, future development, local services and facilities.
The questions were as follows:

Over the past two years, what has been the effect of mothballing Ashfield Primary School to you, your family and community? What do you think should happen next? Specifically, in your view what are the pros/cons of the following options?

- Continue with mothballing
- Re-open the school (current catchment)
- Close the school
- Re-open the school but widen the catchment

4.3 Feedback

The community consultations generated a range of viewpoints on the future of Ashfield Primary School, which can broadly be categorised into the following three main opinions offered by members of the community;

- Some families felt strongly that the school should reopen as a school with Pre-5 provision for local children.
- Some parents who felt that the current arrangement for their children attending Tayvallich was more than satisfactory and that the use of the school building should now be developed for the future.
- Members of the community felt that they would like to work with the authority should the school continue to be mothballed or closed to organise a purposeful use of the building that would be of benefit to the community.

There was strong opinion that the community did not want the school estate to fall into disrepair.

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

Ashfield Primary School has been mothballed for two years. After repeated advertising, both locally nationally and across social media, Argyll and Bute Council was unable to appoint a Head Teacher or class teacher to the school. Consequently the school was mothballed. Since the mothballing of the school, there are still significant challenges in the appointment of teachers both locally in Argyll and Bute and nationally. In October 2018 there were significant vacancies for both Head Teachers and class teachers.

The school roll has been significantly below its capacity for the last 12 years, and this is not predicted to increase in the foreseeable future.
Whilst the school has been mothballed its condition continues to deteriorate.

The Council is required to consider the future of Ashfield Primary School. The options are explored within this paper;

A: Re-open Ashfield Primary School,
B: Continued Mothballing of Ashfield Primary with the pupils zoned to Tayvallich Primary School,
C: Re-open Ashfield Primary School and realign the catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School,
D: Close Ashfield Primary School and realign its catchment area to Tayvallich Primary School (The possible Proposal).

6. OPTION A: RE-OPEN ASHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

6.1 Community Feedback

There were a range of views on the future of Ashfield Primary School. Some of the people who attended the consultation meeting felt that the school should re-open;

‘If there are children living locally, the school should open for them. The option should be there for a school – if parents want their children to be educated here, then it should open again. More families are moving here.’

‘School should open again to local families – there are plenty of children who would attend. Fantastic facilities and outside grounds. Feels safe. Children love the playground and the space that other schools cannot provide. School at the heart of the community.'

‘There are children who are living locally that would attend. One parent has identified that she has 3 children that she would register if the school was open.’

Several attendees highlighted that to make the school viable we ‘Need a pre-school’.

However, some parents felt that the current arrangements of their children attending Tayvallich was ‘more than satisfactory and that the use of the school building should now be developed for the future.’

6.2 Pupil Numbers

If the school were to reopen in August 2019, the maximum pupil numbers from the catchment would be 6 pupils, taking into account the
placing requests submitted before and since the school was mothballed. Pupils currently within the catchment area attend Tayvallich and Lochgilphead Primary Schools. In addition pupil numbers in the area over the next three years are not predicted to rise significantly. Some families have indicated they would not move their children back to Ashfield Primary as the children are established at Tayvallich Primary; whilst some have indicated they would want their children to attend Ashfield Primary if it were an option.

Table 4: Pupil Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ashfield Primary</th>
<th>2019/2020</th>
<th>2020/2021</th>
<th>2021/2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved Capacity</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll Projection</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 Financial Information
The total amount including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration is **£115,683**.

The cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard is **£53,000**.

6.4 The Assessment of Rural Factors
The reasons for the proposal are stated at Section 2 of the report. Re-opening the school would not adequately address those. Ashfield Primary School is currently mothballed, and reopening the school would not increase pupil numbers.

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 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.

‘Having an operational school in the village would attract more families to the area’.

‘A shame the school has closed – it was a thriving, great wee school. Fantastic fund raising and concerts, community and
The village hall in Achnamara is in a state of disrepair. Several consultees suggested many options for use of the building if it became a community hub.

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
If Ashfield 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. 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 positive and negative impact may balance. In terms of impact on other users of the school, there would be no other impact on their travel arrangements.

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 in the school grounds if the school were to reopen. Outdoor learning is provided by all schools.

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 **Staffing**

After repeated advertising, both locally nationally and across social media, Argyll and Bute Council was unable to appoint a Head Teacher or class teacher to the school. Consequently the school was mothballed in March 2016. Since the mothballing of the school, there are still significant challenges in the appointment of teachers both locally in Argyll and Bute and nationally. In October 2018 there were significant vacancies for both Head Teachers and class teachers.

The last permanent Head Teacher left post in December 2012. During the next two sessions there have been two acting Head Teachers, followed by a retired Head Teacher who was employed on a supply basis. The education authority has also worked collaboratively with the Parent Council and other local schools in finding creative solutions to staff Ashfield Primary School adequately, however this has not proven to be sustainable. Pupils have attended Tayvallich Primary School from August 2014, initially part time, then from October 2014 full time.

At present, Argyll and Bute faces a significant challenge to recruit teachers and Head Teachers for existing schools. There is a national shortage of teachers and leaders in education, the reality of which has considerable impact on the day to day educational provision across authorities. The Scottish Education Council in a joint paper by COSLA and Learning Directorate (Teacher and Head Teacher Supply, Recruitment and Retention, January 2018) highlight,

‘It is clear that it is becoming increasing challenging to recruit and head teachers in many parts of Scotland, particularly in remote, rural areas.’

On 8th October 2018:

- There were 51 Teacher vacancies in Argyll and Bute.
- There were 6 Head Teacher vacancies in Argyll and Bute.
- 36 of the vacancies were in Primary Schools; 24 in small rural schools, similar to Ashfield Primary School.

Argyll and Bute are working with other authorities, institutions including the University of the Highlands and Islands, and the Scottish Government towards finding a solution regarding staffing. However the situation remains a serious challenge as detailed above.

The staffing challenge would have significant impact on an attempt to reopen Ashfield Primary School.
6.7 Summary
If the school were to reopen in August 2019, the maximum pupil numbers from the catchment area would be 6 pupils, taking into account the placing requests submitted before and since the school was mothballed. As a small settlement Achnamara is not identified for growth. Some families have indicated they would not move their children back to Ashfield Primary School as the children are established at Tayvallich Primary. However, others have indicated they would want their children to attend Ashfield Primary if it were an option. The current travel arrangements have been in place successfully for two years.

There are financial implications if the school was to be reopened. The total amount including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration is £115,683. The cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard is £53,000.

If the school was to be reopened, the premises would be able to be used by the community as a hub, 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.

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.

The recruitment of staff is an ongoing challenge in both Argyll and Bute and other rural authorities. The staffing challenge would have significant impact on an attempt to reopen Ashfield Primary School.

Based on the above factors and considering the reasons for the proposal, with particular emphasis on recruitment, this is not a reasonable option.
7. **OPTION B: CONTINUED MOTHBALLING OF ASHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH THE PUPILS ZONED TO TAYVALLICH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Statutory Guidance for the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, 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.” Ashfield Primary School has been mothballed for 2 years.

7.1 **Community Feedback**

There was a view at the community meetings that mothballing the school for another shorter period of time may be desirable as it gives the community time to assess next steps in the development of a plan to take community ownership of the school building.

‘If the school does not re-open for educational purposes, the community would like to look at plans on how the building could be used effectively to support the community.’

‘Concern expressed that another local service has been lost – reflecting the recent social decline in the geographical area.’

‘Consider extending the mothballing period to evaluate demand for local schooling further and to allow the local community to put plans in place for possible community ownership of the building.’

‘Consider mothballing for another 5 years and re-evaluate. Hard to attract families.’

The Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out a 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 within a reasonable timescale to them. The village hall in Achnamara is in a state of disrepair and the community may be looking to the school as the hub for activities.

7.2 **Pupil Numbers**

Table 2, at Paragraph 3.9 shows the historic, current and projected pupil numbers for both Ashfield and Tayvallich primaries should Ashfield remain mothballed.
7.3 **Financial Information**
The annual cost when Ashfield School is mothballed is £5,591. The annual transport costs to alternative schools is £16,246.

7.4 **Assessment of Rural Factors**
The original reason for the proposal was due to being unable to adequately staff the school. Staffing continues to be a challenge for authorities across Scotland. Continued mothballing the school would not alter this situation, however it would not be necessary to staff Ashfield Primary School.

7.4.1 *Community Impact*
There was a view at the community meetings that mothballing the school for another shorter period of time could be an option as it gives the community time to assess next steps in the development of a plan to take community ownership of the school building, should it not re-open for educational purposes. If the community had a facility for activities this could make the area a more attractive place to live, and long term more sustainable. However, mothballing would not address the reasons for the proposal. There would be no change to the current economic impact of maintaining the mothballed Ashfield Primary School. The current cost of mothballing Ashfield Primary School is £5,591. The annual transport costs to alternative schools is £16,246.

7.4.2 *Travel Arrangements*
The travel distance from Ashfield Primary to Tayvallich Primary is 8.58 miles. The travel distance from Ashfield Primary to Lochgilphead Primary (Joint Campus) is 9.76 miles. The travel time for this journey is approximately 20 minutes for both journeys. The current travel arrangements have been in place for two years. If the school were to continue to be mothballed there would be no change in the existing arrangements either to staff at Tayvallich Primary School or to Ashfield catchment area pupils. There would be no alteration to the environmental effect which would be neutral against the current arrangements. In terms of impact on other users of the school, there would be no other impact on their travel arrangements.

7.5 **Staffing**
There are no staffing implications for this option as there would be no change to present arrangements.
7.6 **Educational Benefits**

Tayvallich Primary School offers a learning environment that encourages sound levels of achievement and provides a wide range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

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 Tayvallich 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. Tayvallich Primary School is part of the Mid Argyll Cluster, and a smaller local cluster which means that staff can be supported together, moderation and tracking of pupil progress is enabled and staff work across stage appropriate groups. Tayvallich Primary School is part of a shared headship which means that staff can be supported together in a clearly defined way and staff work closely as a team.

At Tayvallich Primary School pupils from Pre-5 to P7 have taken on responsibilities which enhance the development of a positive ethos across the school. Children are provided with a variety of experiences to develop their sense of responsibility, independence, confidence and enterprising attitude. Across the school children are engaged with learning and contribute well in lessons.

7.7 **Summary**

There was a view at the community meetings that mothballing the school for another shorter period of time could be an option as it gives the community time to assess next steps in the development of a plan to take community ownership of the school building, should it not re-open for educational purposes. The school has been mothballed for 2 years and pupils have settled well into other schools, some parents are happy with this arrangement. As a small settlement Achnamara is not identified for growth.

A number of community members stated that the community would like to work with the authority to assume some access to the school building and develop it to the advantage of local residents, should the school continue to be mothballed or be closed. The Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out a new right for
community organisations to request the transfer of local assets into local community ownership/management.

If plans to acquire the building were to progress, this would potentially have a positive impact on the sustainability of the community.

There is a financial implication in the continued mothballing of the school. The current annual cost of mothballing Ashfield Primary School is £5,591. The annual transport costs to alternative schools is £16,246.

If the school were to continue to be mothballed there would be no change in the existing arrangements either to staff at Tayvallich Primary School or to Ashfield catchment area pupils. There would be no alteration to the environmental effect which would be neutral against the current arrangements.

There are no specific educational advantages to the continued mothballing of Ashfield Primary School.

There are no staffing implications for this option as there would be no change to present arrangements.

On the basis that pupil numbers are not expected to increase, that developing the buildings and grounds to benefit the community may be a consideration, that this proposal would address the reasons as stated above and have a neutral environmental impact against the current arrangements, continued mothballing is not considered as a reasonable option.

8. OPTION C: RE-OPEN ASHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA OF TAYVALLICH PRIMARY SCHOOL

8.1 Community Feedback
As part of any future consultation it would be proposed that there will be discussions with the parent body of Tayvallich and Lochgilphead Primary Schools regarding the future of Ashfield School. There was no representation from the Tayvallich or Lochgilphead Parent Councils at the public meetings. It was felt by attendees that moving the catchment area was not an option due to the remote nature of the location, the roads around the area and the accepted direction of travel. The community council then asked for this to be considered. Realigning the boundary for Ashfield School may have an effect on several other
remote rural schools and very little effect on the roll of Ashfield Primary School.

‘If there are children living locally, the school should open for them. The option should be there for a school – if parents want their children to be educated here, then it should open again. More families are moving here.’

‘School should open again to local families – there are plenty of children who would attend. Fantastic facilities and outside grounds. Feels safe. Children love the playground and the space that other schools cannot provide. School at the heart of the community.’
‘There are children who are living locally that would attend. One parent has identified that she has 3 children that she would register if the school was open.’

8.2 Pupil Numbers
Table Two, at 4.5 shows the historic, current and projected pupil numbers for both Ashfield and Tayvallich primaries should Ashfield remain mothballed.

8.3 Financial Information
The annual running costs if the school were to be reopened is £115,683 which includes employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration.

The cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard is £53,000.

8.4 Assessment of Rural Factors
The reasons for the proposal are stated at Section 2 of this report. Realigning the catchment area and reopening the school would be a challenge.

8.4.1 Community Impact

‘Having an operational school in the village would attract more families to the area’.

If there was an active school and the community had a facility for activities this may make the area a more attractive place to live, attract families, and the community may be more sustainable. This proposal would, however not address the reasons for the proposal or the issue difficulty in staffing
8.4.2 *Travel Arrangements*

If Ashfield 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. Local members of staff could also walk or cycle to school. There would be an increase in the number of pupils at the school and therefore an increase in staff numbers. There could be increased car usage by staff resulting in a negative environmental impact. In terms of other users of the school, there would be no other impact on their travel arrangements.

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 and rezoning the catchment area, 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 in the school grounds if the school were to reopen. Outdoor learning is provided by all schools.

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.

8.6 *Staffing*

After repeated advertising, both locally and nationally and across social media, Argyll and Bute Council was unable to appoint teaching staff, either Head Teacher or Class Teacher to the school, the school was then mothballed in March 2016. The last permanent Head Teacher left post in December 2012. During the next two sessions there were two acting Head Teachers, followed by a retired Head Teacher who was employed on a supply basis. The Area Education Manager worked alongside the Parent Council and other local schools attempting to staff Ashfield Primary School adequately. This was unsuccessful. Pupils have attended Tayvallich Primary School from August 2014, initially part time, then from October 2014 full time.

At present, Argyll and Bute faces a significant challenge to recruit
teachers and Head Teachers for existing schools. There is a national shortage of teachers and leaders in education, the reality of which has considerable impact on the day to day educational provision across authorities. The Scottish Education Council in a joint paper by COSLA and Learning Directorate (Teacher and Head Teacher Supply, Recruitment and Retention, January 2018) highlight,

‘It is clear that it is becoming increasing challenging to recruit and head teachers in many parts of Scotland, particularly in remote, rural areas.’

On 8th October 2018:
• There were 51 Teacher vacancies in Argyll and Bute.
• There were 6 Head Teacher vacancies in Argyll and Bute.
• 36 of the vacancies were in Primary Schools; 24 in small rural schools, similar to Ashfield Primary School.

Argyll and Bute are working with other authorities, institutions including the University of the Highlands and Islands, and the Scottish Government towards finding a solution regarding staffing. However the situation remains a serious challenge as detailed above.

8.7 Summary
If the school were to reopen in August 2019, the maximum pupil numbers from the catchment would be 6 pupils, taking into account the placing requests submitted before and since the school was mothballed. As a small settlement Achnamara is not identified for growth. Some families have indicated they would not move their children back to Ashfield Primary School as the children are established at Tayvallich Primary. However, others have indicated they would want their children to attend Ashfield Primary if it were an option. The current travel arrangements have been in place successfully for two years.

There are financial implications if the school was to be reopened. The total amount including employee; premises; supplies and services and catering consideration is £115,683 per annum. The cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard is £53,000.

If the school was to be reopened, the premises would be able to be used by the community as a hub, 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.
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.

The recruitment of staff is an ongoing challenge in both Argyll and Bute and other rural authorities. The staffing challenge would have significant impact on an attempt to reopen Ashfield Primary School.

Due to the geographic location of Ashfield, a very remote rural primary school, it is unlikely that the catchment area could be made more sustainable. A boundary realignment would include pupils who are at present settled in Tayvallich, Glassary and Lochgilphead Primary Schools. Two of these schools are also classified as very remote rural. Some Ashfield families have stated they would not move their children back to Ashfield if it reopened. Although there may be a positive impact in regard to environmental impact and sustainability, this proposal would not address the reasons for the proposal and the current mothballing and with particular regard to staffing challenges and the possible effect on other remote schools, this is not a reasonable option.

9. **OPTION D: CLOSE ASHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL, ZONE PUPILS TO TAYVALLICH PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN ITS CATCHMENT AREA**

9.1 **Community Feedback**

The community reflected that Ashfield Primary School had been vibrant and an integral part of the community, and there were contrasting views on the proposals for the future of Ashfield Primary School;

‘*Feel that the children get a better education when in schools with higher numbers of pupils.*’

‘*Village Hall is old and tatty – would be great to use the school as community, as a hostel, a business, a café, art gallery – need to attract visitors.*’

‘*Needing to send pupils to Tayvallich, which is fine.*’
There was a strong sense from the attendees at the pre-consultation sessions that if the school were not to re-open for educational purposes, it should be retained for community use and not allowed to fall into disrepair. The community are becoming organised to enable them to assess whether they could feasibly take over the building for the benefit of the wider community.

9.2 Pupil Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018/2019</th>
<th>2019/20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tayvallich Primary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved Capacity</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tayvallich Projected Roll</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ashfield Projected Roll</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Roll Projection</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tayvallich Occupancy</strong></td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.3 Financial Information

The annual cost to transport pupils to Tayvallich School is £16,246. There would be savings to the Council of £5,591 should the school be closed.

9.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

The reasons for the proposal are stated at Section 2 of this report. Staffing continues to be a challenge for authorities across Scotland. Closing Ashfield Primary School would not require any additional staffing in other schools as the children are already placed within school.

9.4.1 Community Impact

It is accepted that while school closure may have an adverse effect on a community, a vibrant community hub could be an asset to a community. Therefore the closure of the school could potentially have a very positive impact on sustainability of the community if this option were to progress. If the community wished to create a community hub, they would require to find a mechanism to acquire the property from the Council and deliver that aspiration.
The buildings forming the school premises are situated within walking distance of the village.

9.4.2 Travel Arrangements
The travel distance from Ashfield Primary to Tayvallich Primary is 8.58 miles. The travel distance from Ashfield Primary to Lochgilphead Primary (Joint Campus) is 9.76. The travel time for this journey is approximately 20 minutes for both journeys. The current travel arrangements have been in place for two years. Closing the school would have no impact on staff or pupil travel from the current arrangement. There would be no alteration to the current environmental impact. In terms of other users of the school, there would be no other impact on their travel arrangements.

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 from reopening the school as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of children, however the closure of the school and continued attendance of pupils at other schools allows children to experience a curriculum which is matched to their needs.

Both Ashfield and Tayvallich are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from Ashfield area, attending Tayvallich Primary School are benefitting from the broader rural environment, whilst not moving their learning to a school that is completely different to their home environment.

The co-location of the early learning centre (ELC) and the primary classes at Tayvallich enables a strong transition process between the ELC and school and includes joint early level learning every week.

9.6 Staffing
As in paragraph 8.7 above, there are considerable challenges with securing staffing for Ashfield Primary school.
9.7 Summary
The community reflected that Ashfield Primary School had been vibrant and an integral part of the community, and there were contrasting views on the proposals for the future of Ashfield Primary School. However there is a will that the school be retained for community use and not be allowed to fall into disrepair.

The current travel arrangements have been in place for two years. Closing the school would have no impact on staff or pupil travel from the current arrangement. There would be no alteration to the current environmental impact.

Tayvallich and Lochgilphead Schools currently accommodate pupils from Ashfield School, and both schools have an early learning provision. Pupil numbers in the Achnamara area are not projected to increase significantly, and Tayvallich Primary School has capacity to continue to accommodate the projected pupil numbers.

The annual cost to transport pupils to Tayvallich School is £16,246. There would be annual savings to the Council of £5,591 should the school be closed.

Staffing Ashfield school continues to be a significant difficulty. This option is considered to be reasonable and further detail is provided in relation to educational benefits, travel, environmental impact, community impact and financial impact below.

10. OVERVIEW OF OPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Option Description</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Re-open Ashfield Primary School with its existing catchment area</td>
<td>Not a reasonable option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Continued Mothballing of Ashfield Primary School with the pupils zoned to Tayvallich Primary School</td>
<td>Not a reasonable option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Re-open Ashfield Primary School and realign the catchment area of other adjoining schools.</td>
<td>Not accepted as a reasonable option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Close Ashfield Primary School and zone pupils to Tayvallich Primary School</td>
<td>Accepted as a reasonable option</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. DETAILED ANALYSIS OF REASONABLE OPTION: CLOSE ASHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA FOR TAYVALLICH PRIMARY SCHOOL TO INCLUDE THE FORMER ASHFIELD CATCHMENT AREA
11.1 Pupil Projections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tayvallich Primary</th>
<th>2018/2019</th>
<th>2019/20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Approved Capacity</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tayvallich Occupancy</td>
<td></td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.2 Educational Benefits

This statement focusses on Tayvallich Primary School, which is the school the majority of the Ashfield pupils have been attending since 2016.

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.

Tayvallich Primary School offers a learning environment that encourages sound levels of achievement and provides a wide range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The school ethos is very positive and conducive to helping pupils succeed.

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 Tayvallich 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. Tayvallich Primary School is part of the Mid Argyll Cluster, and a smaller local cluster which means that staff can be supported together, moderation and tracking of pupil progress is enabled and staff work across stage appropriate groups. Tayvallich Primary School is part of a shared headship which means that staff can be supported together in a clearly defined way and staff work closely as a team.

There is a planned programme of development activities and opportunities for quality professional dialogue on an ongoing basis at Tayvallich Primary School. All Teachers have been actively involved in key developments. In a recent curriculum review, curricular frameworks have been improved for Health and Wellbeing, Literacy and Numeracy, Science and Social Studies. The shared headship approach allows staff to work together, not only as two schools but also as part of the area cluster towards improving policy and practice. The Head Teacher is experienced and in previous roles led initiatives at a national level. The Principal Teacher at Tayvallich is part of part of Argyll and Bute’s Leadership Network to support school self-evaluation and has taken the lead on specific areas of school improvement.

The shared headship model supports a distributive leadership approach and provides staff with opportunities to lead aspects of the curriculum and make day to day management decisions. In recent years children at Tayvallich Primary School have been taught in two classes composed of a number of children from more than one year group. They 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 their own age and gender, take part in team activities and move with their peers to secondary school. Pupils are close to one
another and have formed strong social bonds. Former pupils of Tayvallich continue the friendships they made in primary school through their continuous education in high school and beyond.

11.2.2 Outcomes
Through the GIRFEC practice mode, 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 the primary classes, standards of attainment have been maintained over the last three years. Most children are achieving national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and numeracy. 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 eg PE, language, science, expressive arts teaching. Tayvallich have had community and parental support input in outdoor education, science, health and well-being and circus skills over the past two sessions.

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. In the Pre 5 Unit children enjoy a range of experiences. Staff know the children well and are sensitive to their individual needs. There is a strong transition process in place between the ELC and school at Tayvallich and includes joint early level learning every week.
Pupils from Pre-5 to P7 have taken on responsibilities which enhance the development of a positive ethos across the school. Children are provided with a variety of experiences to develop their sense of responsibility, independence, confidence and enterprising attitude. Across the school children are engaged with learning and contribute well in lessons.

Staff promote positive relationships at all levels and also through the Young Sports Leaders programme, the impact of this being that children enjoy good relationships with their peers, young leaders feel confident and entrusted to take these developments forward. A ‘Respect Me’ policy is built into class lessons and permeates the whole school ethos through assemblies and class work on rights and responsibilities.

11.2.4 Environment for Learning

Tayvallich Primary School is a well-supported school situated in the beautiful village of Tayvallich. The school is at the heart of the community. There has been substantial investment in recent years. The teaching area for Pre5 has been upgraded. A second teaching area is being developed at present with a target completion date of January 2019. While outside space is limited, pupils benefit from access to a range of community facilities which are in close proximity to Tayvallich Primary School including the village hall, shop and local businesses. The school makes good use of the local woodland for learning.

Both Ashfield and Tayvallich are remote rural schools. Each school is set within a remote rural area (Scottish Government classification). Children from the Ashfield area, attending Tayvallich Primary School are benefitting from the rural broader environment, whilst not moving their learning to a school that is completely different to their home environment. The children maintain links with friends who live in their own village as well as creating links with children from two other rural communities.

11.3 Assessment of Rural Factors

One of the original reasons for considering a closure proposal was due to being unable to adequately staff the school. Staffing continues to be a challenge for authorities across Scotland. Closing Ashfield Primary School would not require any additional staffing in other schools as the children are already placed within school.
11.3.1 **Community Impact**

It is accepted that school closure may have an adverse effect on a community, a vibrant community hub could be an asset to a community. If the local plans for the building progress, this would have a positive impact on the sustainability of the village. Formal closure would mean that these plans could potentially be progressed by the community. Although school closure can have a negative impact, the potential use of the school as a community asset could have a positive impact on the sustainability of the community. The community are considering future uses for the building, which may enhance the community giving a focus for activities and events.

The school roll is low and would not be predicted to rise in the future. Achnamara is a small settlement and is not identified for growth in the local development plan. There are no housing allocations or potential developments identified.

11.3.2 **Travel Arrangements**

The travel distance from Ashfield Primary to Tayvallich Primary is 8.58 miles. The travel distance from Ashfield Primary to Lochgilphead Primary (Joint Campus) is 9.76. The travel time for this journey is approximately 20 minutes for both journeys. The current travel arrangements have been in place for two years. Closing the school would have no impact on staff or pupil travel. There would be no alteration to the current environmental impact.

11.4 **Financial Impact**

The main elements included within a school budget are Teacher employee 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 the mothballing of Ashfield Primary School are £5,591.

The annual savings generated through closing Ashfield Primary School would be £5,591.

The costs/savings outlined above assumes all revenue expenditure would cease. This includes non-domestic rates, utility costs, insurances, etc.

11.5 Environmental Impact
Pupils will continue to travel by school transport to Tayvallich School and through placing requests to Lochgilphead Primary School. This will continue.

Steps taken to address the reasons for the proposal.
Ashfield Primary School was mothballed because despite repeated advertising, both locally and nationally and across social media, Argyll and Bute Council was unable to appoint teaching staff, either Head Teacher or Class Teacher to the school.

12. CONCLUSION
Four alternative options have been reviewed in considering the future of Ashfield Primary School. Information was collated and consideration was given to pupil numbers, housebuilding, finances, the school premises, travel arrangements, environmental impact and the local area and community - which all informed the respective options.

An authority that is 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. After consideration of the preliminary requirements, as set out in the Act, and the options, and having regard to the specific reasons for the proposal as set out at Section 2 of this report, it is recommended that closing Ashfield Primary School and redrawing its catchment area to Tayvallich Primary
School is the most reasonable option having regard to all the relevant factors and in order to address the Reasons for the possible proposal.

Members are asked to note the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements and that officers will come back to a future meeting of the Committee with a report and draft proposal paper for approval by members which would subsequently trigger the formal consultation process under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
Appendix 1: Local Development Plan - Achnamara
### Local Development Plan Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settlement Zone</td>
<td>Waste Management Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenbelt</td>
<td>Open Space Protection Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Opportunity Area</td>
<td>Open Space Protection Area (Part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countryside Zone</td>
<td>Wild Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Sensitive Countryside</td>
<td>Ramsar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Masterplan Area</td>
<td>Special Area of Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation</td>
<td>Special Protection Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Development Area</td>
<td>SSSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Town Centre</td>
<td>National Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edge of Town Centre</td>
<td>Local Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Shopping Area</td>
<td>Local Nature Conservation Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Industrial &amp; Business Location</td>
<td>National Scenic Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edge of Town Centre &amp; Bus. &amp; Ind. Area Overlap</td>
<td>Garden &amp; Designed Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established Business &amp; Industry Area</td>
<td>Area of Panoramic Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area for Action</td>
<td>Conservation Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Road Action Area</td>
<td>Special Built Environment Area (SBEA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Management Area</td>
<td>Valued Tourist Areas Vulnerable to Change of Use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix 3: Key for Local Development Plans
Appendix 4: Ashfield Primary School floor plan
Appendix 5: Tayvallich Primary School floor plan
Title of Proposal

To close Ashfield Primary School.

Intended outcome of proposal

The proposal is to close Ashfield Primary School.

Currently, we are in the consultation phase, at this stage it is vitally important that we seek the views of all stakeholders affected by this proposal. Once this has been done, there will be a consultation report prepared on the issue by Local Authority Officers, with input from Education Scotland. This report will be presented to the Community Services Committee (CSC) for their decision.

Ultimately, the intended outcome the closure of the school, which has been mothballed for 4 years. If after consultation the stakeholders involved in the process, Education Scotland, and the CSC feel that the closure is not a reasonable option, then the closure would not take place.
Description of proposal
Consideration of this proposal means that a decision is being taken about permanently closing Ashfield Primary School.

As per the legislative guidance set out in the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2015, Argyll and Bute Council is seeking views on the following proposal, namely:

**It is proposed that education provision at Ashfield Primary School be discontinued with effect from 21st October 2019.**

**Pupils of Ashfield Primary School will continue to be educated at Tayvallich Primary School.**

**The catchment area of Tayvallich Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Ashfield Primary School.**

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

- Ashfield Primary School has been mothballed for four years. The school roll is very low and not predicted to rise in the near future. The annual cost of the mothballing of the building is £2,147

- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 14 vacancies for teachers and 2 vacancies for head teachers in Argyll and Bute.

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

On 14th March 2019, Argyll and Bute Council’s Community Services Committee agreed that a consultation with all stakeholders be undertaken on the proposal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Outcome(s) / Corporate Outcome(s) to which the proposal contributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BO108: All our children and young people are supported to realise their potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate outcome: Education, skills and training maximise opportunities for all.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead officer details:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of lead officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate officer details:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of appropriate officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job title</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

The Head Teacher of Tayvallich Primary 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 Ashfield 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.

Section 2: Evidence used in the course of carrying out EqSEIA

Consultation / engagement

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;

**Tayvallich Primary School**

Is the ‘affected school’.

The formal consultation on the proposal within this document will be undertaken under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (“the Act”). The consultation period will start on **18th March 2019** (with due written notice of the proposal issued to the relevant consultees listed in Appendix 1) and end on **17th May 2019**. Written representations must be received by this date in order to be taken into account.

A copy of the proposal document will be 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;
• A copy of the proposal will be provided to all Early Years Establishments in the local area, giving access to parents who have children expected to attend the affected schools within two years of the publication of this proposal paper;
• The pupils at the affected schools (in so far as the Education Authority considers them to be of suitable age and maturity);
• All Argyll and Bute Council employees at the affected schools;
• Trade union representatives of employees at the affected schools;
• Community Councils within the affected locality;
• Local churches;
• All relevant users of the affected schools, and
• Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partners.

A copy of the proposal document will also be made available to:

• All Elected Members of Argyll and Bute Council;
• Argyll and Bute Youth Forum;
• Education Scotland (formerly Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education, HMIe);
• The Constituency MSP of the affected schools;
• List MSP for the area of the affected schools;
• The MP of the affected schools;
• Police Scotland;
• NHS Highland;
• Argyll and Bute School Transport;
• Senior Local Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Services, and
• Care Inspectorate

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

• Notice of the proposal and of publication of this proposal document will be placed within local newspapers;
• The proposal document will also be published on the Argyll and Bute Council website;
• This document can be made available in alternative forms or translated by contacting Argyll House, Dunoon, tel: 01369 708576 or argyllhousereception@argyll-bute.gov.uk;

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

A. Council offices
B. All libraries in Oban and Lorn
C. All Oban and Lorn area/locality offices
D. The schools affected by the proposal

There will be a public meeting held on the 2nd May 2019 at 7.00pm in Ashfield Primary School.
**Data**

The catchment area for Ashfield Primary School is a remote rural school. Remote rural areas have seen a -0.1% decrease in population in the most recent data available, which is in the period between 2001 and 2013. This contrasts with a 1.0% increase in the same period in Accessible Rural and 0.2% increase in the rest of Scotland.

Rural areas have a lower percentage of the population in the 16-34 age group but a higher proportion of people aged 45 and over. For example, in 2017 18% of the population in remote rural areas and 19% of the population in accessible rural areas were 16-34 year olds, compared to 25% in the rest of Scotland. Conversely, 57% of the population in remote rural areas and 52% of the population in accessible rural areas were aged 45 and over, compared to 35% in the rest of Scotland.

In 2017 the proportion of people aged 65 or over was 21% in accessible rural areas was and 25% in remote rural areas compared to 18% in the rest of Scotland.

**Source:** Population Estimates by Urban Rural Classification 2011-17 (Last updated: August 2018)

52% of journeys to school were made by walking or cycling in 2017. 59% of those aged 4-11 and 43% of those aged 12-18 usually walked or cycled to school. For those aged 4-11 the next most popular mode was as a passenger in a car or van (30%). For those aged 12-18, the next most popular was school bus (23%). 8% of children aged 4-11 usually used school transport. 21% of children living in the most deprived SIMD areas (centile 1 and 2) used school transport. 33% of children living in remote rural areas used school transport. Transport and Travel in Scotland 2017 (Last updated: September 2018).

**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:

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<th>Protected characteristics:</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Sex</td>
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<td>Gender reassignment</td>
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<td>Religion</td>
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<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
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<td><strong>Fairer Scotland Duty:</strong></td>
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<td>Island populations</td>
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<td>Low income</td>
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<td>Low wealth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Material deprivation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area deprivation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socio-economic background</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communities of place?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communities of interest?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protected characteristics:</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>No impact</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
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<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Sex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender reassignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marriage and Civil Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregnancy and Maternity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fairer Scotland Duty:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainland rural population</td>
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<tr>
<td>Island populations</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>Low income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socio-economic background</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communities of place?</td>
<td></td>
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<td>x</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
If any ‘don't knows 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 Tayvallich Primary School, who would
otherwise have attended Ashfield Primary School.

There may be families who move into the revised catchment area who would then
require transport, and in addition this may lead to changes in staffing levels in
Tayvallich Primary School.

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

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.

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? Potentially on transport, as more children may
require transport who may move into the
catchment area.

Details of knock-on effects identified

Increased number of children requesting free school transport may add pressure to
the transport system.

Section 5: Monitoring and review

How will you monitor and evaluate the equality impacts of your proposal?

The education management team, supported by education officers will monitor the
impact this catchment area change would have, if implemented.
The statutory consultation on the proposal to close Ashfield Primary School commenced on the 18th March 2019 and closed on 17th May 2019.

Response Forms

Six response forms were received, two of these were from Knapdale Community Council and Achnamara Village Hall Committee. All responses were not in favour of reopening the school but disagreed with the Council’s proposal that it should be permanently closed requesting mothballing of the school for a further period to allow the Community to consider options for a sustainable future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONDENT GROUP</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONSES</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Members</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Council</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achnamara Village Hall Committee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ashfield Public Consultation Meeting
Ashfield Primary School
8 May 2019

Panel
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
Louise Connor, Head of Education – Learning and Teaching
Anne Paterson, Head of Education – Lifelong Learning and Support
Councillor Yvonne McNeilly, Policy Lead for Education
David Logan, QIM Special Projects

Admin:
Fiona Ferguson
Susie Sinclair
Shona Taylor – Education Scotland
3 members of the public – (Graham Walker Vice Chair Hall Committee)
Councillor Philand

Question 1
What is the implications of closing the school and realigning the catchment area and what is the timeline?

Panel Response
If proposal went ahead the school would be formally closed by 31 October. The building would then be surplus to Council requirements. There are a number of options which could arise – the Council have previous received communication from the community of their interest in taking on ownership of the building and the Council would consider this. If no other alternative was proposed then the Council would dispose of land and building.
It is not expected that there would be much interest by prospective purchasers.

Question 2
Are you familiar with the community interest in the long term future of Achnamara?

Long term future of village is being looked at and the community recognise the aging population and are trying to change that to make sure we have a thriving community. Community surveys have been undertaken and consultants have been engaged, via grant funding, looking at options for the community and what could be done with the assets in the village.

The village hall is at the end of its life, forestry perhaps looking for housing in the village. This is a work in progress.

The community group would like to see the mothball continue for a further period, until the consultants have completed their work and a conclusion has been reached. As the
current timeframe to come to a decision on the closure of the school is sooner than when this work would be completed.

**Question 3**

View that the consultation document is light on impact on the community. The village has already lost the church, shop and outdoor education centre, which has just been left derelict. It is hoped that there might be scope to extend the mothballing while work takes place on the regeneration of village, this however is a long term plan over a number of years.

In community survey we asked what should happen to the school and the response were as follows - 6 reopen school 9 closure 38 extend mothball. The report to Committee in 2016 said that the community could use building, however this has no happened.

If the school is closed could it be reopened in future should population change? Just closing it now would close off an avenue to the community.

**Panel Response**

Yvonne reference worked that the Tighnabruaich Community Development Group is doing regarding regeneration work in their community working with Till hill Forestry. Suggested that it might be an idea to contact them and discuss what they have done to regenerate their area.

This however has not impacted on school roll in Tighnabruaich - it is still declining.

**Question 5**

The community recognise that the demographics are going the wrong way for a school. Don’t want another derelict building in the village.

**Panel Response**

Reference was made to the Ashfield proposal and how the community there would like to use the school as a community asset which they don’t have.

The Council require a formal response to the consultation from the group - this would be helpful for us to get all the detail on what you are proposing.

We need to look at various ways in which we sustain quality education to the children when it is difficult to recruit teachers.

EQESIA will be produced and will have more detail on the impact on the community.

**Statement**

Happy to share the survey which was carried out by the community.
Panel Response

735 is the number of teachers shortages in Scotland – the Council is part of the Northern Alliance – looking at how we tackle getting the curriculum into the school using technology.

Example - Supporting small schools by using technology – Gaelic in Bunessan is delivered by a teacher in Jura – looking at lots of ways of sustaining small schools.

Statement

Buildings being multi-functional and groups sharing space. Collaborating with Sandra Clarke in regard to looking at all options. Communities in some area have used school buildings for housing.

Panel Response

To build on what has been said – The Council are going through a statutory process and this is the time when the community need to provide an alternative proposal with sufficient detail.

Statement

Community Council meeting has been brought forward to discuss this before consultation closes. It was felt that the community council rather than the community group was the most appropriate vehicle to respond to the consultation.

Panel Response

Consultation closes 17th May – need information before then so we know what your proposal is and this can be included in the Council report.

Education Scotland provide a report to the Council which will also be picked up in our final report which then goes to the Committee for a decision.

Statement

If the school is mothballed a while longer and we had the funds to rebuild the village hall, could we move the hall activities into school while the village hall is being rebuilt. Community Trust is ready to go.

What is the process for getting the information that you would like on the consultation?

Panel Response

You can go on line or send in a response by e-mail or post the timescale is set out in consultation document. Consultation closes on 17th May.

Very few responses to the consultation currently.
Statement

When the consultation went live an e-mail with the link was sent to all the group’s contacts.

Can we have feedback from the pupils?

Panel Response

Do not have this yet as it is being worked on.

To provide assistance – you need to dislodge the current proposal and provide a clear picture with details and a timescale which can be considered by the Committee. At a previous Committee meeting a further period of mothballing was put forward by Councillor Philand, but he did not have the detail to provide to the Committee at that time why this would be required. You need to explain further what you require. Hope this is positive and helpful.

Very clearly you have long term aspirations as a community for the village but do not have a 10 year plan.

Question 6

September Community Services Committee will take a decision does this then need to be ratified by Council?

Panel Response

No, the Community Services committee has the power to act as Education Authority, no need to go to Council.

Journey starts with one step and hope this has been helpful tonight and has been positive.

Statement

Do understand constrains of Council.

Policy Lead thanked those who attended for coming along and their participation tonight.
Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Argyll and Bute Council to close Ashfield Primary School and permanently extend the Tayvallich Primary School delineated catchment area to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Ashfield Primary School.

June 2019
1. **Introduction**

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her 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 close Ashfield Primary School and permanently extend the Tayvallich Primary School delineated catchment area to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Ashfield 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 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 8 May 2019 in connection with the council’s proposals;
- 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 Tayvallich Primary School and Ashfield Primary School, including discussion 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 Ashfield Primary School, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements of the proposed closure.
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 The mothballing of Ashfield Primary School was approved by the Community Services Committee of Argyll and Bute Council on 10 March 2016, following a progressive drop in its roll and lack of success in appointing staff to teacher or headteacher posts. There have been no pupils attending the school since December 2014 and none have been enrolled since the mothballing was approved. The potential school roll is low and it is not predicted to rise in the near future. The majority of catchment children have been attending Tayvallich Primary School since 2016. The consultation relating to the proposal for closure ran from 18 March to 17 May 2019. The council placed an advert in the local press and sent a letter to all relevant consultees. Information was placed on the council website, along with an electronic means of responding to the consultation. Responses were also invited by letter, written response form or email. A small group of pupils who would previously have attended Ashfield Primary School were consulted on 26 April 2019. A public meeting was held in Ashfield Primary School on 8 May 2019, which was attended by council staff and three members of the public. There were four written responses to the consultation from members of the local community, each of which requested an extension to the mothballing of the school so that community use of the building could be explored. There were also responses from North Knapdale Community Council and Achnamara Village Hall Committee.

3. **Educational aspects of proposal**

3.1 Tayvallich Primary School is a well-supported school at the heart of its community which has had substantial investment in recent years, including upgrading the early learning provision and extending primary provision. Children benefit from access to a range of community facilities near the school and from the use of local woodland areas for outdoor learning. The school offers a learning environment which encourages achievement and provides a good range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential and to develop their independence, confidence and enterprising attitude.

3.2 Children who would previously have attended Ashfield Primary School who spoke to HM Inspectors enjoy coming to Tayvallich Primary School and being with their friends. None of them would be keen to see Ashfield Primary School reopened.

3.3 Parents of children who would previously have attended Ashfield Primary School who spoke to HM Inspectors understand the circumstances which led to the mothballing of the school and accept that this was the most appropriate course of action for the council. They agree with the proposal to close the school.

3.4 Staff at Tayvallich Primary School who spoke to HM Inspectors agree with the proposal. They think that children who would previously have been educated at Ashfield Primary School have benefited from being part of a larger school and developing their social skills.

3.5 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.

3.6 The council considered four options, including the proposal: reopening Ashfield Primary School; continued mothballing of Ashfield Primary School; reopening Ashfield Primary School with the catchment area realigned to Tayvallich Primary School; closing Ashfield Primary School and realigning its catchment area to Tayvallich Primary School. The council held community engagement meetings in March and April 2018 to consider each of these options. As a result of
these meetings, the council concluded that the most appropriate option would be the last of these. Whilst accepting that the permanent closure of the school could have an adverse effect on the local community, the potential use of the school building as a community facility could have a positive impact on the sustainability of the village. The travel time from Ashfield Primary School to either Tayvallich Primary School or Lochgilphead Primary School is approximately 20 minutes. These travel arrangements have been in place for two years and have had no adverse effect on learners.

4. Summary

Argyll and Bute Council’s proposal to close Ashfield Primary School and permanently extend the Tayvallich Primary School delineated catchment area to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Ashfield Primary School has clear educational benefits which are currently being experienced by children. Parents, children and staff are agreed about the educational benefits of the proposal. In taking the proposal forward, the council needs to continue to engage with all stakeholders and ensure that the local community is supported in exploring options for alternative use of the Ashfield Primary School building.

HM Inspectors
June 2019
Feedback from pupil focus groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Visit</th>
<th>26/04/19</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School for proposed closure</td>
<td>Ashfield (Tayvallich pupils – 3 pupils – 1 P1, 1P2, 1P3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member(s) Leading</td>
<td>S McAdam</td>
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**Background information for pupils**

- We are meeting with you today because we want to find out your views, about Ashfield 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 Ashfield Primary School. The Council is proposing this because
  - There aren’t many pupils from the area that would go to Ashfield and this number isn’t going up.
  - Finding staff is quite difficult and the school would need a teacher and a HT to reopen.
  - 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 you would be the current pupils at that school so your views are important and this will help us make a decision for pupils that would be future pupils at Ashfield Primary School.

**Tell us a little bit about Tayvallich Primary school.**

* At break time there isn’t much to play with.
* We have break and we get to play football.
* I like it because I have friends that I hardly ever fall out with.
* It’s fun playing football and doing our spelling.
* We learn lots and do topics.
* We are learning about germs in science.

**What do you think the positive things would be if Ashfield PS school closed?**

* My sister likes staying here because she has lots of friends.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any concerns about if Ashfield PS closed?</td>
<td>* I don’t want it to be closed because it’s a long way to travel.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* I think it’s better to go to a school close to your home.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* If you close it what will you make it into?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* The time it takes on the bus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What might other people be concerned about or think was positive if Ashfield PS closed?</td>
<td>Not asked due to group (only P1-3 pupils)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Ashfield PS closed is there anything that would help make this easier for pupils from Ashfield going to Tayvallich PS?</td>
<td>No answers to this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any other comments about this that you want to add?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If you have more ideas please let your teacher know and she call tell me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If anything we have chatted about today has made you worried remember you can talk to your class teacher or your parents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>