**RURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

This Rural Impact Assessment has been prepared on a proposal to discontinue education provision at Achfary Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Kinlochbervie Primary School.

 **Details of Consultation To Be Carried Out:**

 The Proposal will be the subject of statutory consultation from under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

 In accordance with statutory requirements, the following will be consulted:

(i) Parents of pupils in the catchment area of Achfary Primary School, and parents of pupils attending Kinlochbervie Primary School and Scourie Primary School, including parents of pre-school pupils;

(ii) All P4-7 pupils attending Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools.

(iii) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;

(iv) The Parent Councils of Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools.

(v) Staff of Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools.

(vi) Trade union representatives;

(vii) The community councils for the areas covered by the 3 schools;

(viii) Education Scotland;

(ix) Highland Youth Convenor.

(x) The Duke of Westminster (owner of the Achfary PS building).

(xi) Care and Learning Alliance (who operate the nurseries at Kinlochbervie and Scourie).

(xii) The Highland Community Planning Partnership

 The proposal document will also be advertised in the local press and on the Highland Council website.

 A public meeting will be held in Achfary on 26 April 2016. This meeting will be advertised in advance in the local press and on the Highland Council website.

**Describe what the change will mean in rural communities**

Although the proposal involves a formal closure of service, the service itself has not operated since the summer of 2012. In practical terms the proposal will not change the current position.

The relocation of service (which in practical terms has already taken place) involves moving local school provision from Achfary to Kinlochbervie.

Achfary School was mothballed when the pupil roll fell to 2. The Highland Council believes that educational benefits arise when schools have a sufficient number of children to allow pupils to work collaboratively and participate in team sports and wider activities; and where there are age appropriate peer groups of a sufficient size to allow a range of interactions and relationships to form and reform.

**How will people in rural communities be affected?**

**Accessibility of service –** since the “mothballing” of Achfary Primary School pupils of P1-7 age from the Achfary catchment have been provided with free school transport to Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools. The “mothballing” has meant reduced accessibility of service for parents of pre-school children, who are required to transport their children to Kinlochbervie or Scourie. It is also recognised that pupils from Achfary have less opportunity to walk or cycle to school than when Achfary School was in operation, and that there is occasional inconvenience for parents who wish to take their child to or from school during the school day.

Travel time to the service – The maximum additional travel time for school pupils is 21 minutes to Kinlochbervie – 14.9 miles.

Cost to access the service – Compared to when Achfary Primary was still open, parents of children aged 3 and 4 years have increased costs if they wish to access pre-school education.

**Fuel poverty** – The proposal will not have any impact on fuel poverty.

**Economic impact** – when the school ceased to operate in 2012, there were some negative impacts in respect of the loss of part-time employment opportunities such as school clerical and cleaning staff.

**Partner service delivery –** there has been no significant impact on partner service delivery to children from the change. Since the change has in practical terms already been implemented, there is no need to consult other partners.

**Other options or adjustments**

The above do not apply in the circumstances of a change already implemented for practical purposes.