



## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

### CARE AND LEARNING SERVICE

#### REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A CATCHMENT AREA FOR BUN-SGOIL GHÀIDHLIG LOCH ABAR,

This report has been prepared following a review of the proposal to establish a catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period.
- Oral representations made to it (by any persons) at the public meeting held at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar on 27 February 2018.
- The report from Education Scotland.

This document has been issued by the Highland Council under the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

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## 1.0 Background

1.1 Highland Council's People Committee, at its meeting on 25 January 2018, agreed that a statutory consultation be undertaken on the proposal to establish a catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

1.2 **Appendix 1** is the original consultative paper and provides full details of the above proposal. **Appendices 1a and 1b** are the appendices to the original proposal.

## 2.0 Consultation process

2.1 The formal consultation period ran from Monday 29 January 2018 to Friday 16 March 2018. Written representations on the proposal were sought from interested parties as defined within the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

2.2 In accordance with statutory requirements, the following were consulted:

- (i) Parents of pupils attending Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar;
- (ii) Comhairle nam Pàrant Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar
- (iii) The Parent Councils of Banavie Primary School, Caol Primary School, Inverlochry Primary School, Invergarry Primary School; Lundavra

Primary School; St. Columba's Roman Catholic Primary School; Spean Bridge Primary School; Ardgour Primary School; Ardnamurchan High School; Kinlochleven High School; Ballachulish Primary School; Duror Primary School; Glencoe Primary School, and Kinlochleven Primary School;

- (iv) Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
  - (v) Staff of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar;
  - (vi) Trade union representatives;
  - (vii) All Community Councils in the school catchments of the schools listed at (i) and (iii) above;
  - (viii) Bòrd na Gàidhlig;
  - (ix) Education Scotland;
  - (x) Highland Youth Convener
- 2.3 The proposal document was advertised on the Highland Council website.
- 2.4 A public meeting was held at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar on 27 February 2018. The meeting was advertised in advance on the Highland Council website, and in the *Lochaber Times*.
- 2.5 Following receipt of written representations received by Highland Council and consideration of oral representations made at the public meeting, officials reviewed the proposals.
- 2.6 The outcome of this review process is reflected in the response, conclusion and recommendations outlined below.

### 3.0 Responses received

- 3.1 A list of those who responded in writing during the public consultation is at **Appendix 2**, whilst copies of the actual responses are at **Appendix 2a-2m**. A summary of the views expressed by the pupils attending Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar is at **Appendix 2i**.
- 3.2 Many of the pupils had either no comment or were happy with the map. Some thought that the area of entitlement should be larger and should include Invergarry, Ballachulish or Glencoe.
- 3.3 Thirteen written responses were received, although one of these, from Bòrd na Gàidhlig, was received after the closure of the public consultation period.
- 3.4 The majority of the written responses expressed concern over the limits to the proposed catchment area. A number expressed particular concern over the position of children in the Invergarry Primary School catchment or the catchments of Ballachulish, Duror, Glencoe and Kinlochleven Primary Schools, and felt that the exclusion of these areas from the proposed GM catchment would be a barrier to children accessing GME at the Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

3.5 The note of the public meeting is at **Appendix 3**. Only two members of the public attended and neither expressed any opposition to the Proposal.

#### 4.0 Issues raised during the consultation period

4.1 The main arguments opposed to the proposal are summarised below, together with the responses from the Council. In many cases different responses have made the same or very similar arguments, and where this occurs the arguments have been addressed only once.

##### **Issue 1**

A practical solution may be to allow Invergarry to be in the catchment without assisted travel.

Families in the Invergarry, Glencoe & Duror areas should be able to access Gaelic medium education if they wish. Since there is no other GME provision they can access locally, it is important that this transport restriction isn't viewed as an obstacle to accessing Gaelic Medium Education.

If the catchment area proceeds it should include Invergarry since it is part of the Lochaber ASG already. Also, since there is no GME provision in the South Lochaber area Ballachulish, Glencoe & Duror should be included in the designation.

I would ask that the HC be more flexible in allowing future pupils from Invergarry, Glencoe and South Ballachulish to attend Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar if requested. The reasons given against this is that the distances are too long for the pupils and the cost would be excessive. Many parents of pupils attending Gaelic Medium Education in Lochaber have done so by transporting their children 40-50 miles so that they could attend croileagan, Gaelic nurseries and after school activities all at their own expense and by considerable personal effort.

##### **Response 1**

The Council has given careful consideration to the position of Invergarry PS. The original suggestion in the Proposal Paper took account of the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Medium Education, which specifies (at paragraph 2.54) that:

*A catchment area for GME provision should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school, and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME provision for their children.*

Given the distances between the Invergarry catchment and Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar, our initial view was that the journey times did not meet the criteria of reasonable travel and being attractive to parents.

However, having considered the responses to the consultation exercise, Highland Council agrees that the Invergarry PS catchment should become part of the GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, although with certain restrictions on the provision of school transport. In coming to this view, we have taken particular account of the fact that Invergarry PS is part of the Lochaber ASG, and under the original Proposal would have been the only school within the ASG that was not part of the GM catchment.

**Appendix 4** shows the revised catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

The provision of transport from the Invergarry catchment to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar does raise logistical and financial issues for Highland Council. There would be obvious cost implications to providing dedicated transport over distances of 25 miles or more. School transport from the Invergarry PS catchment to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar will therefore be on the basis of utilising the existing transport for Lochaber High School. Dedicated transport by taxi or minibus will not be provided.

Ballachulish, Glencoe, and Duror Primary Schools are within the Kinlochleven ASG and are respectively 17, 18 and 21 miles from Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. These distances are beyond the informal "15 mile" limit historically operated by Highland Council for transport to GME. The Proposal Paper set out Highland Council's view that dedicated transport from the areas covered by these catchments could result in an unacceptably high level of additional cost.

Having carefully considered the responses to the consultation exercise, Highland Council agrees that the Ballachulish PS catchment should become part of the GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. Existing transport subsidised by Highland Council will be used to transport pupils from the Ballachulish catchment, wherever it is reasonable to do so.

In coming to this view, the Council has taken account of the fact that all of the Ballachulish PS catchment is within reasonable travelling distance from Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

Having considered the representations received in respect of the Glencoe and Duror catchments, Highland Council remains of the same view as set out in the Proposal Paper, that the Glencoe and Duror catchments should not become part of the GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

Although Glencoe Primary itself is very close to Ballachulish PS, the school catchment covers a wide area, stretching to Kingshouse and Glen Etive. The Council remains of the view that dedicated transport from these areas would result in an unacceptably high level of additional cost.

The above comments also apply to the whole of the Duror PS catchment. In both cases however, the Council would be willing to grant privilege places on existing transport to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar for pupils from the

Glencoe and Duror catchments. Parents would be responsible taking their children to the nearest pick-up and drop-off point to the transport provided.

### **Issue 2**

If a catchment area is put in place for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar, outlying villages, namely Ballachulish, Glencoe, Duror, Kinlochleven and Invergarry will be required to make a placing request which may not be accepted. At present we have 2 children travelling from Ballachulish, next year this is set to double with more children joining Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar after the summer. This number could increase year on year and if a catchment area is put in place this would be much less likely. There are no other GME options for the children in these villages.

I would like to propose the idea of a catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar be abandoned altogether or at the very least the catchment boundary be extended to include the villages mentioned above. Gaelic Medium Education must remain accessible to all.

The catchment area should be open.

I question the merits of creating a catchment area in the first place. We don't have the dense population of an urban environment so I don't see the need. GME provision should be open to all and there should be no barriers or difficulties of placing requests to overcome.

### **Response 2**

Whilst it is true that the Kinlochleven ASG does not currently offer GME, parents have the option of lodging a request for local provision of GME. Any such request would be assessed in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

In terms of creating a catchment area at all, the Council is responding to statutory guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which specified that local authorities should create Gaelic Medium catchment areas. As this is statutory guidance, Highland Council must comply with it.

In principle the Council is supportive to the idea that Gaelic Medium education should be accessible to all, and the Council has over many years sought to increase the number of schools that are able to offer GME. At the present time GME is offered by about 20 out of 171 operational primary schools. An expansion of this provision remains our long term aim. At present, the distances potentially involved in travelling to those schools that offer GME, mean it is not possible to offer access to every pupil in Highland.

### **Issue 3**

If we are going to offer free transport to pupils who live within the Kinlochleven ASG to be educated in the Lochaber High School ASG because they can

offer GME and Kinlochleven can't, then the same opportunity should be available to those who want to do the reverse and benefit from a course/subject/experience we offer and isn't available in Fort William.

There are a number of pupils now who do travel from Fort William to Kinlochleven every day, because they feel that KHS offers something different, and their families have to pay.

Clearly, it would be prohibitively expensive to make this offer and at a time when the council does not have any cash to spare. The current status quo does not prevent any parent from opting for GME for their child. However, it does maintain the fairness in that if parents opt out of their ASG, for whatever reason, the financial costs remain with the parent and not the council.

The key point for the Kinlochleven area is the importance of equality of opportunity and fairness. If we are going to offer GME to pupils in the St Bride's catchment area then we should also offer it to the pupils of all other catchment areas within the Kinlochleven ASG.

### **Response 3**

The Council has a legislative duty to support Gàidhlig Medium Education, which is recognised as the best hope for the survival of the Gaelic language. Education through the medium of Gaelic cannot be directly compared with the provision of different subjects in different secondary schools. There are very often technological solutions to making additional subjects available at secondary school level.

All of the St. Bride's PS and Ballachulish PS catchment areas lie within reasonable travelling distance of Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar. As such the proposal represents a pragmatic means of maximising access to GME.

### **Issue 4**

Any change to boundaries – or free transport to GME - should be discussed within the context of the wider Gaelic provision across all of Lochaber. It is important that parents see all the GM opportunities and successes in our various schools. Ardnamurchan High School provides considerably wider GM opportunities than Lochaber High at present.

Any child attending BSL would be entitled to transition to LHS. Therefore any GME Ardgour child, who is in the Ardnamurchan catchment, will have the entitlement to go to LHS. This is of some concern but at least, linking with Issue 5 above, it is important that the equal entitlement to come to Ardnamurchan High School is equally promoted with factual information re GME provision.

### **Response 4**

The Council has sympathy with this view, particularly in respect of any pupil

from within the Ardnamurchan ASG who opts to attend Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. It would be appropriate to make any such pupils aware of the opportunities for GME at Ardnamurchan High School, as they prepare for transition to secondary education. This could be carried out in discussion between the relevant Head Teachers, should the situation ever arise.

The council does not actively encourage pupils from one secondary school catchment to enrol in another, though parents are of course free to use the placing request process to do so.

### **Issue 5**

No offer of free transport is being made to parents in Ardgour who might wish their child to attend GME in Acharacle. This doesn't seem to be an equitable arrangement. This is especially marked in that the Head Teacher for Ardgour is also the cluster head for the GME provision in Acharacle.

To advertise and formalise a free mode of transport to a Fort William school and not fulfil the same provision for Acharacle school will bias parents to send their children to Fort William and continue there for secondary education. The assumption from the paper is that placing requests made to Lochaber High School would not be required from pupils living in the catchment area for Ardgour Primary School and attending Bun sgoil Loch Abair. This is entirely inappropriate and undermines the provision of rural education in the community in which a child lives.

Ardgour Primary School should not be included in the catchment area for Bun sgoil Loch Abair as this option, and their following attendance at Bun Sgoil Loch Abair, could significantly influence their decision to continue their education in Fort William to the detriment of Ardnamurchan High School. Ardgour and Achaphubuil Community Council wishes to see our young people being given the opportunity to be educated in the area designated by the Ardnamurchan High School catchment and this proposal does not give Bun-Sgoil Ath-tharracaill equal status in any parental decision making.

If a catchment area is being established for Bun Sgoil Loch Abair, then Bun-Sgoil Ath-tharracaill should be granted the same privilege. Parents of pupils at Ardgour primary School present at the Community Council meeting were not aware of their option to request transport to Bun-Sgoil Ath-tharracaill.

The Proposal should be challenged on a equality basis. If a catchment area is to be established for Bun sgoil Gaidhlig Loch Abair, then a catchment should be established for Bun Sgoil Ath Tharracail which mirrors the primaries in the Ardnamurchan High School catchment area.

This proposal is wholly inappropriate and extremely disappointing. The provision of an excellent facility in Ardnamurchan High School was wished for and worked for by the people of the Ardnamurchan Peninsula. The school is supported by the Highland Council and provides excellent Gaelic provision within the context of a West Coast community where Gaelic is alive and in



daily use. There is no reason to undermine the value of any of the work that has gone before and will continue to go on.

Since Ardnamurchan High opened it has sought to provide all children on the peninsula (and in the wider Lochaber area) with a broad, stimulating curriculum and school experience. Gaelic provision, and Gaelic Medium education, has been at the heart of this and indeed only last year, the school were winners of the prestigious Scottish Education Awards in the Gaelic Education category. Success in this is a result of the partnerships developed over many years with primary schools on the peninsula and wider partners, and cannot be viewed in isolation. Staff, parents, pupils and the wider community have worked so hard over many years to build on the good work done in the feeder primary schools and it would be incredibly unjust if this was taken away. The Ardgour community is very much part of the peninsula and it is proper it should fall in AHS catchment area.

Any change of boundaries or free transport arrangements which will result in Ardgour children being entitled to go to Caol and thereafter Lochaber High will have a serious and detrimental effect on AHS. When the school funding formula is based on the yearly pupil roll, AHS can ill afford pupils from our peninsula attending schools outwith the area and be funded to do this.

Any change would be inequitable as children in Lochaline or Ardgour are not currently offered free transport to attend the Gaelic Medium unit at Acharacle Primary School.

Whilst we acknowledge that every parent should have the right to choose where their child is educated, should that choice be an alternative to the designated school for where they live they should have to pay and the designated school should not suffer as a result of this. In this case an already fragile area would be.

### **Response 5**

The Proposal Paper did not suggest that the Ardgour Primary School catchment should be part of the GM catchment of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. It did however suggest a pragmatic solution to the issue of access to GME for pupils from Ardgour, taking into account the distances to the nearest GME provisions.

As set out in the Proposal Paper, within the Ardnamurchan ASG, primary school GME is offered at Acharacle Primary School, around 26 miles from Ardgour Primary. Part of the route is along a single track road with numerous blind bends and summits. Google Maps estimates a one way travel time of 48 minutes in normal conditions.

Ardgour Primary is located around 13 miles from Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, although the route also involves crossing Loch Linnhe via the Corran Ferry. After crossing the Loch, the estimated journey time is around 23 minutes.

As with Invergarry, the provision of transport from the Ardgour catchment to the GM provision at Acharacle Primary would raise logistical and financial issues for Highland Council. There would be cost implications to providing dedicated transport over a distance of approximately 26 miles. Unlike the situation at Invergarry, there is no existing transport that can be utilised to provide transport to Acharacle Primary School. There is however, accessible transport to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

As with the Glencoe and Duror catchments, the Council feels that the option set out in the Proposal Paper, to utilise existing transport arrangements, provides a pragmatic solution in terms of allowing access to GME for any pupils from Ardgour. It would be a parental responsibility to arrange for children to be at the bus stop at Corran Ferry Road End. From the north end of the catchment, the Treslaig – Ft Wm bus (or Camusnagaul Ferry) would be a more convenient route and transport could be offered from there on the same basis. Children could be offered transport on a “privilege” basis, free of charge. The Ardgour Primary School catchment would not, however, form part of the GM catchment of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Medium Education requires local authorities to set up GM catchment areas across the authority’s area. For logistical reasons this cannot be done by means of a single exercise. It is our intention to define a GM catchment area for Acharacle Primary School, and a statutory consultation exercise will be undertaken in due course. Whether or not this mirrors the primary school catchments within the ASG is a matter to be decided.

In the last 20 years only two children from the Ardgour PS catchment have opted for GME in Fort William. The solution offered in the Proposal Paper provides access to GME for pupils in Ardgour, but the evidence of past enrolments suggests the effect on the roll at Ardnamurchan High will be marginal.

#### **Issue 6**

Both appendices are unclear, particularly Appendix B, the very area you are proposing. I have looked at both the printed handout and the downloadable version online.

#### **Response 6**

The Highland Council’s school catchment maps can be found online at:

<https://tinyurl.com/y8bsyb44>

The site has a “zoom” facility (near the top left corner) which allows the viewer to focus on detailed points of reference.

The proposed catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar now incorporates

all of the English Medium catchment areas of Banavie PS, Caol PS, Invergarry PS, Inverlochry PS, Lundavra PS, Spean Bridge PS, Ballachulish PS, and St. Bride's PS.

A revised catchment map has been placed at Appendix 4 to this Report.

### **Issue 7**

In the introduction (p2) it is stated there would be, "...no "right" of access to transport" for those children currently enrolled at BSGLA from the North Ballachulish and Ardgour areas. 'Moving the goalposts' on those children currently enrolled is, I believe, unfair. Those children already enrolled and attending should be guaranteed continued access to transport if they receive it already. The proposed arrangement is open to withdrawing it in future years. I agree a catchment area must be set (I was very surprised to hear that one hadn't been set up already) but for those unlucky enough to fall out-with the proposed boundaries need some assurances, in writing, for their future years at BSGLA.

### **Response 7**

Under the revised proposal set out in this paper, the rights of those children who have attended Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar from the Ballachulish PS catchment will be protected.

### **Issue 8**

I support the general proposals in the consultation paper. However, I challenge the assertion that the general limit for travel to the Gaelic School (GME) should be 6-15 miles. Many past pupils attending GME have travelled much greater distances. My own children travelled 22 miles by road from Achaphubuil to attend the Fort William GMU. We also used the Camusnagaul ferry to do so. It is good that this will be free but pupils from South Locheilside should have the right to access from this transport link to Caol.

Other pupils have attended from Ardgour by crossing the Corran ferry. Again, they should have the right to transport from Nether Lochaber to Caol.

### **Response 8**

South Locheilside is within the Banavie PS catchment (as far as the Camusnagaul Ferry). The whole of the Banavie PS catchment is included within the proposed GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, and as such pupils from this area will have a right to transport to GME in that school.

The issue of enrolments and transport from the Ardgour PS catchment is addressed at Response 7 above. A number of responses to the consultation exercise expressed strong opposition to any enrolments and transfers from Ardgour to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. The Council's response is to adopt a pragmatic approach that we feel promotes access to GME for children from Ardgour, without undermining the excellent GME provision at

Ardnamurchan High School.

### Issue 9

The Highland Council's own Gaelic Committee, under the chairmanship of Cllr Hamish Fraser, provided the evidence that Gaelic Medium Units and Schools, once fully established after five years, were cheaper per pupil than English medium education. This was mainly because the support network for GME was much smaller. I would ask that this cost saving of attending the Gaelic School is used to offset the right to access transport from Corran and Camusnagaul and also to give serious consideration to any future requests for pupils from Invergarry, Glencoe and Ballachulish to attend GME. This will then allow more of our young people to access the benefits of bilingual education.

### Response 9

In June 2010 the Gaelic Committee considered a Report that provided a theoretical analysis outlining the current budgeted entitlements for teaching staff and Pre-school staff in those Primary Schools that provided Gaelic Medium Education.

The analysis was based on:

- The English Medium and Gaelic Medium rolls for each school
- The budgeted entitlement for the separate Gaelic Medium and English Medium units – Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for teaching staff and hours for Pre-school staff comprising assistants and auxiliaries
- The corresponding budgeted entitlement if these units were combined into English Medium units.

The analysis indicated that if the children being educated through the medium of Gaelic at that time had instead been educated through the medium of English that the saving in staffing would be as follows:

- Teachers – 15.92 FTE which was equivalent to £0.669M per annum
- Pre-school - 296.5 hours which was equivalent to between £0.175M and £0.200M per annum.

In relation to the Secondary sector, funding was identified for 20.3 FTE teachers, equivalent to £0.853M per annum. This funding was over and above the teaching budgets allocated to the Secondary devolved sector in which the roll related formulae assumes that all pupils are being taught through the medium of English.

In December 2010 the Gaelic Committee considered a further paper on overhead costs in schools that offered GME as well as education through the medium of English. These overheads were defined as support staff, property matters, travel, educational materials, and income. The Report concluded that the allocation of overhead expenditure was determined by the total

number of pupils in the school and not the language through which education was delivered. Consequently, no additional *overhead* costs were incurred as a result of Gaelic medium education, in schools which also offered English Medium education.

In April 2011, a discussion at the Committee recorded the comment that, although there could be additional costs when Gaelic Medium Units were initially established, ancillary costs such as teaching, cleaning, heating etc were the same as English Medium. Furthermore, support and resource costs were often less, particularly in long-established Gaelic Medium Units. Similarly, pupils in Gaelic Medium Units required to be transported to school regardless so it was incorrect to assume necessarily that Gaelic School Transport was an additional cost.

Since these discussions, the Highland Council has opened two new Gàidhlig Medium Primary Schools in Fort William and Portree.

The various discussions from 2010 and 2011 do not suggest that the Council saves money from providing GME.

#### **Issue 10**

Will Gairloch be within the boundary?

Will Roy Bridge be within the boundary?

#### **Response 10**

Yes to both questions.

### **5.0 Summary of the issues raised by Education Scotland**

- 5.1 In line with legislative requirements, Education Scotland was invited to submit comments on the Council's proposals. A copy of the report from Education Scotland is appended – **Appendix 5/5a**.
- 5.2 In their report, Education Scotland noted that the proposal is responding to legislation which requires catchment areas to be established for GME provisions, and that the council is taking forward a duty to support and promote GME. They further noted that, while most stakeholders generally support the overarching proposal, there is potential to increase some stakeholders' confidence in aspects of the proposal.
- 5.3 Education Scotland commented that the stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors spoke very positively of their commitment to Gaelic education and identified the Gaelic language as an important feature of the wider Lochaber area. As such, a few stakeholders felt that the consultation should have simultaneously covered the whole of the Lochaber area. This, they felt, would have resulted in a more holistic overview of GME across Lochaber. A number of

stakeholders were not convinced of the need to establish catchment areas for GME. Other stakeholders did not feel it necessary to define catchment areas so that access to GME remained open to all.

- 5.4 HM Inspectors also advised that some stakeholders identified potential issues of equity and equality should the proposal go ahead. There was a strong view that all of Kinlochleven High School's associated school group should be included in the GME catchment area and not just, as stated, St Bride's Primary School. Conversely, a few were concerned that this may have an adverse impact on the future roll of Kinlochleven High School. In the case of Ballachulish Primary School, stakeholders report that a few parents are interested in accessing GME for their children. This interest, they feel, would best be met through attendance at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar rather than the possible setting up of a GME provision as part of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.
- 5.5 Lastly, Education Scotland noted there was strong opposition to any proposal that may result in potential pupils for Ardgour Primary School being educated in GME outwith the catchment area for Ardnamurchan High School associated school group.

## 6.0 Responses to the Issues Raised by Education Scotland

### Issue 13

The council's statement on educational benefits needs to articulate the detail of how meeting this legislative requirement will benefit GME across the Lochaber area.

### Response 13

The Proposal was advanced because the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Medium Education requires local authorities to create GM catchment areas. In this case, compliance with the Statutory Guidance is the primary motivation for the Proposal.

Nevertheless, the Proposal forms part of Highland Council's overall approach to the promotion of Gàidhlig medium education. Up to now, Highland Council's admission arrangements to GME have been informal and based on a "reasonable distance" (often applied as a 15 mile radius) from each school offering GME. In some locations these radii have overlapped, and the "15 mile" principle has not always been applied consistently. The creation of GM catchment areas, extended throughout Highland, will mean that admissions to GME will in future be more formal and robust.

The Proposal therefore helps to consolidate our existing provision of GME, and allows for the more efficient use of resources. It should be considered alongside other measures being undertaken to promote Gaelic, and the benefits of bilingualism.

**Issue 14**

The Council's final report should clarify the criteria for setting a reasonable travelling distance for pupils. They should explain further how their principles for 'reasonable distance' promote entitlement to GME.

**Response 14**

Historically, GM schools and units within Highland have not had defined catchment areas, and our policy has been to provide transport "within reasonable travelling distance". This has often been interpreted as meaning up to 15 miles, but there are variations, and distances travelled are often longer.

The current Proposal will create a catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, which will be used to define the area within which pupils will be entitled to enrol at the school and receive transport. This will clarify our policy in comparison to the current rather vague criterion of "reasonable travelling distance".

Particular arrangements regarding enrolment and school transport in areas outwith the new catchment, e.g. Glencoe, Duror, or Ardgour, are set out at Responses 1 and 5 above.

**Issue 15**

The Council's final report should clarify how it intends to meet demands for setting up new GME provisions under the terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, meet demands for setting up new GME provisions.

**Response 15**

The Council would assess any such demand in accordance with the relevant legislation, and the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Medium Education issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

**Issue 16**

The Council needs to be clear that projections of parental interest in GME are underpinning their final decision on defining the catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. They should also ensure that they are putting in place arrangements which can satisfy future demand for GME, particularly in respect of schools in current catchment areas that are not included in the proposed GME catchment.

**Response 16**

The Council has given careful account to projections of parental interest in defining the catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. Under the

revised proposal set out in this paper, all of the children currently attending the school will be within the new catchment.

Realistically the size of Highland Council is such that some parts of Highland will end up being outside of GM catchment areas. It would be financially unrealistic for Highland Council to grant transport to GME for every pupil in Highland. Neither would it be educationally desirable for children to travel excessive distances to access GME. As mentioned above, the Council will take a pragmatic approach wherever possible, and any identified parental demand for local provision of GME would be assessed in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

#### **Issue 17**

In its final report, the Council should restate that their proposal does not include the English medium catchment area of Ardgour Primary School in the catchment area of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

#### **Response 17**

The Proposal Paper did not suggest that the Ardgour Primary School catchment should be part of the GM catchment of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. Issues around the Ardgour PS catchment are covered in detail at Response 5 above.

### **7.0 Effects on the Community**

7.1 The Proposal will not have any impact on the wider community.

### **8.0 Effects on School Transport**

8.1 Travel arrangements are already in place for journeys to the designated GM schools, wherever there is demand. The proposals will clarify entitlement to this travel, and provision will be made according to normal criteria within these catchments.

### **9.0 Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements**

9.1 The proposal is not expected to have any impact on staff and school management arrangements.

### **10.0 Alleged omissions or inaccuracies**

10.1 No alleged omissions or inaccuracies were identified during consultation.

### **11.0 Overall Review of Consultation Exercise**

11.1 The consultation exercise attracted a variety of responses. Many suggested that the proposed catchment should be widened to include the current catchments of Invergarry PS, Ballachulish PS, Glencoe PS, Duror PS, and



Ardgour PS. Conversely, all but one of the responses from the Ardnamurchan ASG opposed any suggestion that pupils from the Ardgour PS catchment should be assisted or enabled to travel to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

- 11.2 Highland Council has carefully considered all the views expressed in consultation. The Council's responses are set out above, and its conclusion is set out at Section 13 below.

## **12.0 Legal issues**

- 12.1 Throughout this statutory consultation Highland Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

- 12.2 As provided for in section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, it is the duty of the Council to ensure adequate and efficient provision of school education within Highland. The above, and all other legislative requirements, have been taken into account in the preparation of this Report.

## **13.0 Conclusion**

- 13.1 The consultation process has complied fully with legislative requirements and has provided an opportunity for all parties to identify key issues of concern. These issues have been fully considered and the Council's response detailed in section 4 above.
- 13.2 The Education Scotland Inspector visited Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar to speak to parents, pupils and staff. She also visited Ardnamurchan High School, Kinlochleven High School, and Lochaber High School to gather a variety of other views from schools within those ASGs. Education Scotland also had the opportunity to review in detail the proposal document, all written responses, and the note of the public meeting.
- 13.3 The Director of Care and Learning, on reviewing all of the submissions, the note of the meeting, and the Education Scotland report; concludes that the Proposal to create a catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar offers educational benefits and should be implemented. Having taken note of the responses to the public consultation, and the Report by Education Scotland, the Director has concluded that the Council should amend its original proposal to include the Invergarry PS and Ballachulish PS catchments within the GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. The reasons for this conclusion are set out above.

**14.0 Recommendation**

- 14.1 It is therefore recommended that Highland Council proceeds with the course of action set out at Paragraph 13.3 above.

**Bill Alexander**  
**Director of Care and Learning**  
**11 June 2018**

## **THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**The proposal is to establish a catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, and a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Lochaber High School**

### **EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT**

**THIS IS A PROPOSAL PAPER PREPARED IN TERMS OF THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY'S AGREED PROCEDURE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Highland Council is proposing, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process:

- To establish a catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. The new Gàidhlig Medium (GM) catchment will overlay the current catchments of Banavie Primary School, Caol Primary School, Inverlochy Primary School, Lundavra Primary School, Roy Bridge Primary School, Spean Bridge Primary School, and St. Bride's Primary School
- To formalise the current arrangements relating to Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME) in related secondary schools, under which the catchment area for Lochaber High School will apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium education, and under which pupils from the St. Bride's PS catchment (part of the Kinlochleven Associated School Group) have the right to attend Lochaber High School to access GME, provided they have previously attended Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.
- Existing primary school catchments for the provision of English Medium education will be unaffected.
- The proposed changes, if approved, will be implemented at the conclusion of the statutory consultation process.

If implemented as drafted, the proposed catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar will include all of the primary school catchments within the Lochaber ASG, except for that of Invergarry Primary School. The distances and travel times to Fort William from locations within the Invergarry catchment make it unlikely that GM provision would be attractive to parents of primary school age children, and dedicated transport from the Invergarry catchment could result in excessive cost being incurred.

Any identified parental demand for local provision of GME from within the Invergarry catchment would be assessed in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

GME is not offered within the Kinlochleven ASG, which is adjacent to the Lochaber ASG. One of the schools within the ASG, St. Bride's PS, has a catchment area that extends between 6 and 15 miles from Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. These

distances are within the range of the current informal transport entitlement for the purpose of access to GME.

There are four other EM catchment areas within the Kinlochleven ASG – Duror, Ballachulish, Glencoe and Kinlochleven Primary. Dedicated transport from the areas covered by these catchments could result in an unacceptably high level of additional cost.

Currently there are children travelling from these catchments to GME in Fort William, using a bus from North Ballachulish and making their own way to there. Highland Council are prepared to continue this arrangement, subject to space being available. If so, children would be transported free of charge but parents would need to arrange to transport their children to the Lochaber High bus. There would however be no “right” of access to transport.

Any identified parental demand for local provision of GME from within the Kinlochleven ASG would be assessed in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

Similarly, there is currently demand from Ardgour, (within the Ardnamurchan ASG) to attend GME in Fort William. Highland Council are prepared to continue this arrangement and grant access to existing High School transport from Nether Lochaber. This would be on the basis that the provision in Fort William is more accessible than the GME provision for the ASG, located at Acharacle Primary. It would be a parental responsibility to arrange for children to be at the bus stop at Corran Ferry Road End. From the north end of the catchment, the Treslaig – Ft Wm bus (or Camusnagaul Ferry) would be a more convenient route and transport could be offered from there on the same basis. As with Kinlochleven, children would be transported free of charge but there would be no automatic right to transport.

Any identified parental demand for local provision of GME from within the Ardgour Primary catchment would be assessed in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

## SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

### PUBLICATION INFORMATION

#### Proposal Paper Published

The proposal paper will be available for inspection, free of charge, at:

- Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar
- Fort William Public Library
- Caol Public Library

and published on the Highland Council website:

[www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations](http://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations)

Copies of this Proposal Paper are also available on request from:

Business Support Team  
Care and Learning Service  
Highland Council  
Camaghael Hostel  
Fort William  
PH33 7NE  
E-mail: [Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk](mailto:Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk)

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, audio formats, or suitable language, please also contact the Business Support Team, Care and Learning Service, Camaghael Hostel, Fort William, PH33 7NE

Formal notice of the Proposal and relevant information will be given and be made available, free of charge, to the consultees listed as follows:

- (i) Parents of pupils attending Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (ii) Staff of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar;
- (iii) The Parent Councils of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar; Banavie Primary School; Caol Primary School; Invergarry Primary School; Inverlochy Primary School; Lundavra Primary School; St. Columba's RC Primary School; Spean Bridge Primary School; Lochaber High School; Ardgour Primary School; Ardnamurchan High School; Ballachulish Primary School; Duror Primary School; Glencoe Primary School; Kinlochleven Primary School; Kinlochleven High School; and St. Bride's Primary School
- (iv) The Head Teachers of each of the schools listed above.
- (v) Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
- (vi) Trade union representatives;
- (vii) All Community Councils for the areas covered by the Proposal;

- (viii) Bòrd na Gàidhlig;
- (ix) Comunn na Gàidhlig;
- (x) Education Scotland;
- (xvii) Highland Youth Convenor
- (xviii) Fèisean nan Gàidheal
- (xix) Croileagan Grianach
- (xx) Stramash Outdoor Nursery
- (xxi) Little Learners Nursery

### **Advertisement in Local Media**

A notice announcing the public meeting will be placed in the *Lochaber Times* and on the Highland Council's Facebook page.

### **Consultation Period**

The consultation for this Proposal will run from Monday 29 January 2018 and will end on Friday 16 March 2018. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

### **Public Meeting**

A public meeting will be held, the details of which are set out below:

Bun-sgoil Gàidhlig Loch Abar, 27 February 2018 at 6.30pm.

Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council, will be chaired by a senior elected councillor, and will be addressed by officers of the Care and Learning Service.

The meeting will be an opportunity for the public to hear more about the proposal; to ask questions about the proposal; and to have the views of all stakeholders recorded so that they can be taken into account. A note will be taken at the meeting of questions asked and views expressed. This note will be published on the Council website. The meeting will also be recorded.

The note will be forwarded to Education Scotland, along with other submissions and comments received by the Council during the consultation process.

### **Meetings with Pupils and Staff**

School staff will arrange to discuss the proposal with pupils (who are considered to be of a suitable age and maturity) in the affected schools. A record of questions, responses and views will be taken and this will be published in the Consultation Report.

## **Responses to the Proposals**

Interested parties are invited to respond to the Proposals by making written or electronic submissions on the Proposals to:

Norma Young  
Area Care and Learning Manager (West)  
Camaghael Hostel  
Fort William  
PH33 7NE  
Email: [Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk](mailto:Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk)

Or via an online form, a link to which can be found on

[www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations](http://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations)

When responding, you are invited to state your relationship with the school – for example, “pupil”, “parent”, “carer”, “relative”, “former pupil”, “teacher in school”, “member of the community” etc. However it is not compulsory to do so.

Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically should know that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be made publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: “I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Councillors and Council Officers of Highland Council”. Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available. All written responses must be received by the last day of the consultation period, Friday 16 March 2018 at 5.00pm.

## **Involvement of Education Scotland**

When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland by the Council. Education Scotland will also be sent, by 16 April 2018, a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period. Education Scotland will also receive the summary note of the public meeting that will be held and so far as is practicable a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 4 May 2018. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may visit the affected schools and make such enquiries of people there as they consider appropriate.

## **Review of Consultation Exercise**

Highland Council will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland Report, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made at the public meeting. It will then prepare a Consultation Report. This Report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be sent to anyone who submitted a written representation during consultation. It will be available on the Council website as well as at the affected school and local library, free of charge. The Report

will include a summary of the written and oral representations made during consultation and a copy of the Education Scotland Report, together with the Council's considered response to the issues raised. The Report will include details of details of any alleged inaccuracies and/or omissions and how these have been handled. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to being submitted to the Council's People Committee, who will make a recommendation to the full Highland Council.

In publishing the report the Council will invite any person or party to make further representations to the Committee prior to its meeting. A notice to this effect will also be published on the Highland Council website.

At the present time the Council intends to publish its Report in June 2018, prior to submission to the Council's People Committee on 29 August 2018. However, this timescale may change depending on the nature of issues raised during consultation, and the need to give full consideration to those issues. In the latter event, the Report may not be submitted until a later Committee meeting.

Any proposal approved by the People Committee would require to be confirmed by a subsequent meeting of the full Highland Council.

#### **Note on Corrections**

If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this Proposal paper, either by the Council or any other person, the Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or, if the paper contains an inaccuracy. The Council will then take appropriate action, which may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of the Proposal or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period, if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and HMI will be advised.



## **PROPOSAL**

### **Legislative Background**

- 1.1 The proposal is advanced within the context of all applicable legislation. Amongst other duties, education authorities are required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (S.1 of the Education Act 1980); to publish or otherwise make available information as to their arrangements for the placing of children in schools under their management (S.28 of the 1980 Act) and to promote and support Gaelic Medium education and learning (S.15 of The Education (Scotland) Act 2016. Statutory Guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig early in 2017 specifies that local authorities should establish catchment areas for Gàidhlig Medium education. The Guidance goes on to say that a catchment area for GME provision should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school, and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME provision for their children. Catchment areas for GME provision will normally overlay a number of school catchment areas.

### **Reason for the Proposal**

- 2.1 This proposal is being advanced for the following reasons:
- Highland Council has never previously specified catchment areas for GME. This has led to a lack of clarity for parents in respect of entitlement to GME, (see paragraph 2.2 below).
  - Bòrd na Gàidhlig has issued statutory guidance recommending that local authorities create catchment areas for GME.
- 2.2 The current criteria for providing transport to GME in Highland are not particularly well defined, and have evolved over time. The minimum distance and road safety criteria are the same as for English Medium education. The Council currently has an informal arrangement under which transport to GME can be provided “within reasonable travelling distance”. This has been generally interpreted as meaning up to 15 miles, but there are numerous variations.

### **Informal Consultation**

- 3.1 Informal discussions have been held with the Head Teacher and Chair of the Parent Council of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, with local elected councillors, the Head Teachers of other local schools, and with Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Questions have been raised regarding points of detail but no opposition has been expressed.

### **Current and Planned Provision of Gàidhlig Medium Education within the Lochaber ASG**

- 4.1 At secondary school level, Lochaber High School offers GME.

- 4.2 There are 9 primary schools within the ASG, one of which, Roy Bridge Primary, is currently mothballed. Within the ASG, Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar is the only primary school to offer GME.

### **Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar**

- 5.1 Bun Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar (Lochaber Gaelic Primary School) is situated in the village of Caol, part of the Greater Fort William urban area. Children from across the Lochaber area attend the school. The roll at present is 78 pupils in P1-7 and 31 pupils in the Sgoil-àraich (Nursery). The school, which opened in August 2015, is a newly built stand-alone Gaelic School - the first of its kind in Lochaber. The school has excellent space, accommodation and facilities for a positive and inclusive education for all. There are four teaching classrooms (with capacity for expansion), a well-equipped gymnasium, an art/music room, a large resource base, a spacious library, a fully equipped nursery (Sgoil-àraich) and an after-school childcare facility. The school also has extensive grounds including a spacious nursery garden and outdoor sports pitch.

### **Proposed School Catchments for GME**

- 6.1 Of the 9 primary schools within the Lochaber ASG, one is mothballed and another is Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar (BSGL) itself. Five of the remaining 7 primary schools are located within Greater Fort William, whilst Spean Bridge PS is located just over 8 miles away, albeit with a wide catchment area. As specified above, the statutory guidance specifies that a catchment area for GME provision should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school, and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME provision for their children.
- 6.2 Currently, the 109 pupils attending the primary and nursery classes at the school, have home addresses distributed across school catchments as follows:

<b>Primary School Catchment Area</b>	<b>No. of School Pupils and Nursery Children attending BSGL</b>
Banavie Primary	25
Caol Primary	21
Inverlochy Primary	18
Lundavra Primary	33
Roy Bridge/Spean Bridge Primaries	9
Ardgour Primary	1
Ballachulish Primary	2

- 6.3 All but 12 of the children attending the school have home addresses within the catchment areas of the 4 non-denominational primary schools located within the Fort William urban area (albeit that 3 of those schools have catchments

extending into more rural areas, and Banavie Primary has an extensive rural hinterland to its catchment).

- 6.4 Taking the criteria of travelling distances and “attractiveness” into account, Highland Council considers that the Spean Bridge Primary catchment should be included within the new GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.
- 6.5 As Roy Bridge PS is currently mothballed, its catchment area is effectively part of the Spean Bridge catchment. Whatever the future holds for the school itself, the Council proposes to include the catchment area of Roy Bridge within the GM catchment of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.
- 6.6 The remaining primary school within the ASG is Invergarry Primary, located around 24 miles from Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, but with a very wide catchment area. No pupils from the Invergarry PS catchment currently attend Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, and the travel distances involved will be too long for most primary school pupils. Taking these factors into account, the Council does not propose to include the Invergarry PS catchment within the GM catchment of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. Highland Council may be willing to offer funded transport via the existing High School bus, should this ever be requested. Parents would need to arrange to transport their children to the Lochaber High bus. There would be no “right” of access to transport for pupils wishing to attend Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar from within the Invergarry PS catchment.
- 6.7 The position of the Kinlochleven ASG is also mentioned above. There are 5 primary schools within the ASG, and GME is not offered within any of them. Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar represents the nearest provision within the Highland Council area, at the following distances:
- Ballachulish PS – 17.4 miles  
 Duror PS – 21.4 miles  
 Glencoe PS – 18.4 miles (but with a wide catchment area extending to Glen Etive, up to 41 miles away)  
 Kinlochleven PS – 23.8 miles  
 St. Bride’s PS – 14.6 miles
- 6.8 As St. Bride’s PS is located within the current 15 mile radius for providing transport to GME, it is proposed to include the catchment area of this school within the GM catchment of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. Enrolment to St. Bride’s PS for English Medium education will be unaffected.
- 6.9 As highlighted above, it is not proposed to include the catchment areas of the remaining schools within the Kinlochleven ASG within the GM catchment of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. It is proposed that any demand for GME from within this area are met by the arrangements set out in the “Introduction” section above.
- 6.10 The catchment area of Duror Primary extends to the local authority boundary between Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council. The latter Authority

offers GME at Appin Primary School, which is closer to Duror than is Fort William. Over the years several parents from the Duror PS catchment have lodged placing requests for Appin Primary, in order to access GME. It is therefore not anticipated that there will be significant demand for pupils from Duror to attend Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

- 6.11 Any identified parental demand for GME from within the Kinlochleven ASG would be assessed in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.
- 6.12 Ardgour Primary School is part of the Ardnamurchan ASG. At the primary school stage GME is offered within the ASG at Acharacle Primary School, located around 26 miles from Ardgour Primary. Part of the route is along a single track road with numerous blind bends and summits. Google maps estimates a one way travel time of 48 minutes in normal conditions.
- 6.10 Ardgour Primary is located around 13 miles from Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, although the route also involves crossing Loch Linnhe via the Corran Ferry. After crossing the Loch, the estimated journey time is around 23 minutes.
- 6.11 Taking all of the above into account, the Council does not propose to include the EM catchment areas of Ardgour Primary within the GM catchment of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. It is proposed that any demand for GME from within this area are met by the arrangements set out in the "Introduction" section above.
- 6.12 Maps of the current school catchments for the Lochaber ASG are at **Appendix A**. No changes are proposed for these catchments in respect of English Medium education.
- 6.13 The proposed new GM catchment is shown at **Appendix B**.
- 6.14 For the purposes of GME, the Lochaber High School catchment will be the same as the school's English Medium catchment, but with the addition of the St. Bride's PS catchment, in cases where pupils from that catchment had attended Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. Pupils from the rest of the Kinlochleven ASG and the Ardgour PS catchment will be offered transport on the same basis as for the Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. They would also have the opportunity to enrol at their catchment secondary school. Ardnamurchan High School currently offers GME, and apart from Gàidhlig itself, offers Geography, History, Modern Studies and RME through the medium of Gaelic.

## Educational Benefits

- 7.1 The Proposal forms part of Highland Council's overall approach to the promotion of Gàidhlig medium education. Up to now, Highland Council's admission arrangements to GME have been informal and based on a "reasonable distance" (often applied as a 15 mile radius) from each school offering GME. In some locations these radii have overlapped, and the "15

mile” principle has not always been applied consistently. The creation of GM catchment areas, extended throughout Highland, will mean that admissions to GME will in future be more formal and robust.

- 7.2 The Proposal therefore helps to consolidate our existing provision of GME, and allows for the more efficient use of resources. It should be considered alongside other measures being undertaken to promote Gaelic and the benefits of bilingualism.

### **Effects on School Transport**

- 8.1 Within the Lochaber ASG, any current transport to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar will either utilise existing arrangements or arrangements that serve Lochaber High School. In the latter case, there may be an exception for Friday afternoons, when dedicated transport may have to be provided.
- 8.2 It is possible that in future the Council will receive applications from within the defined catchment that require new transport arrangements. Such instances are expected to be rare.

### **Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements**

- 9.1 There is not expected to be any impact on the schools within the Lochaber ASG, since pupils from most of the ASG are already able to enrol in Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.
- 9.2 Similarly, the arrangements proposed for the Kinlochleven ASG, and the Ardgour PS catchment, reflect current informal practice. Only a very small number of children currently travel from these areas to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

### **Effect on the Local Communities**

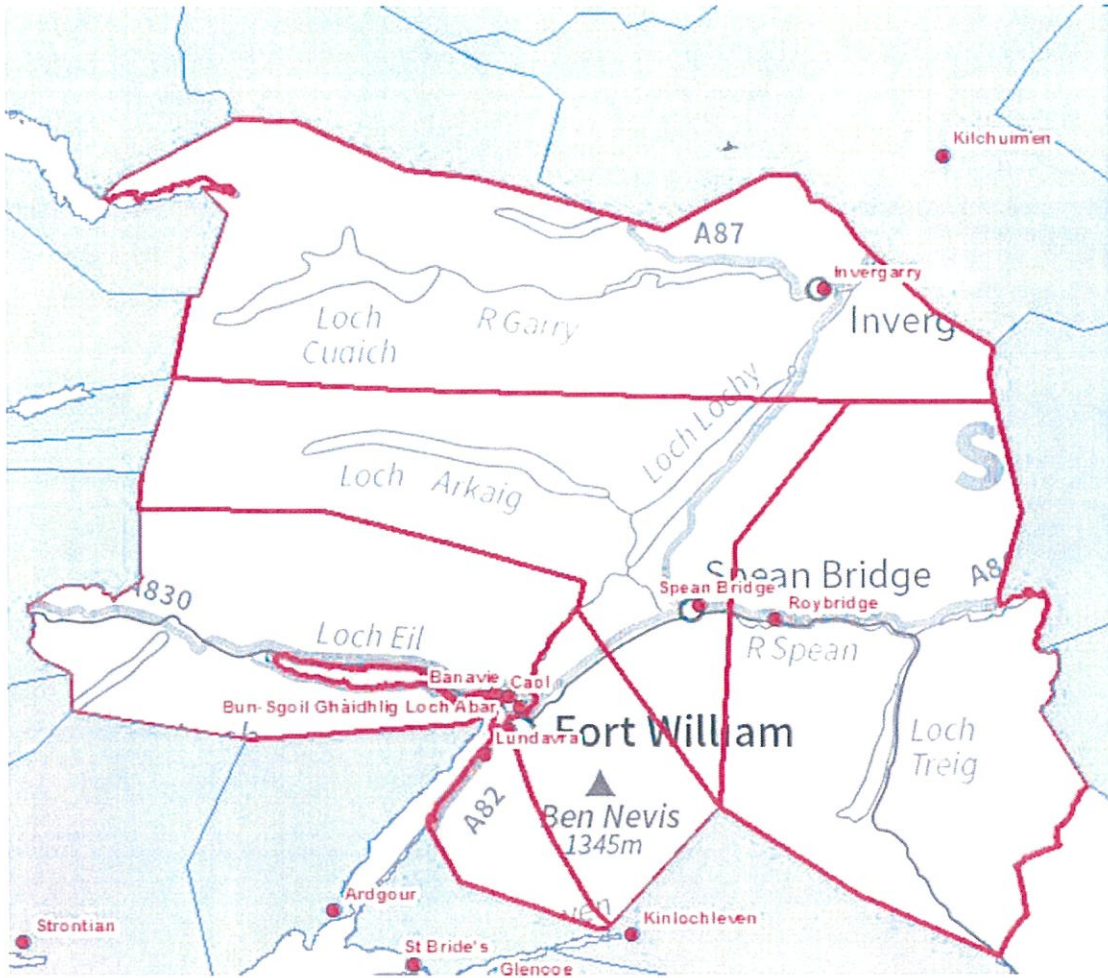
- 10.1 The proposal is not expected to have any impact on the wider local community.

### **Recommendation**

- 11.1 Highland Council recommends the adoption of a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, along the lines set out in this paper.
- 11.2 This consultation paper is issued in terms of the authority’s procedures to meet the relevant statutory requirements. Following the consultation period, a report and submissions received will be presented to the People Committee of the Highland Council.



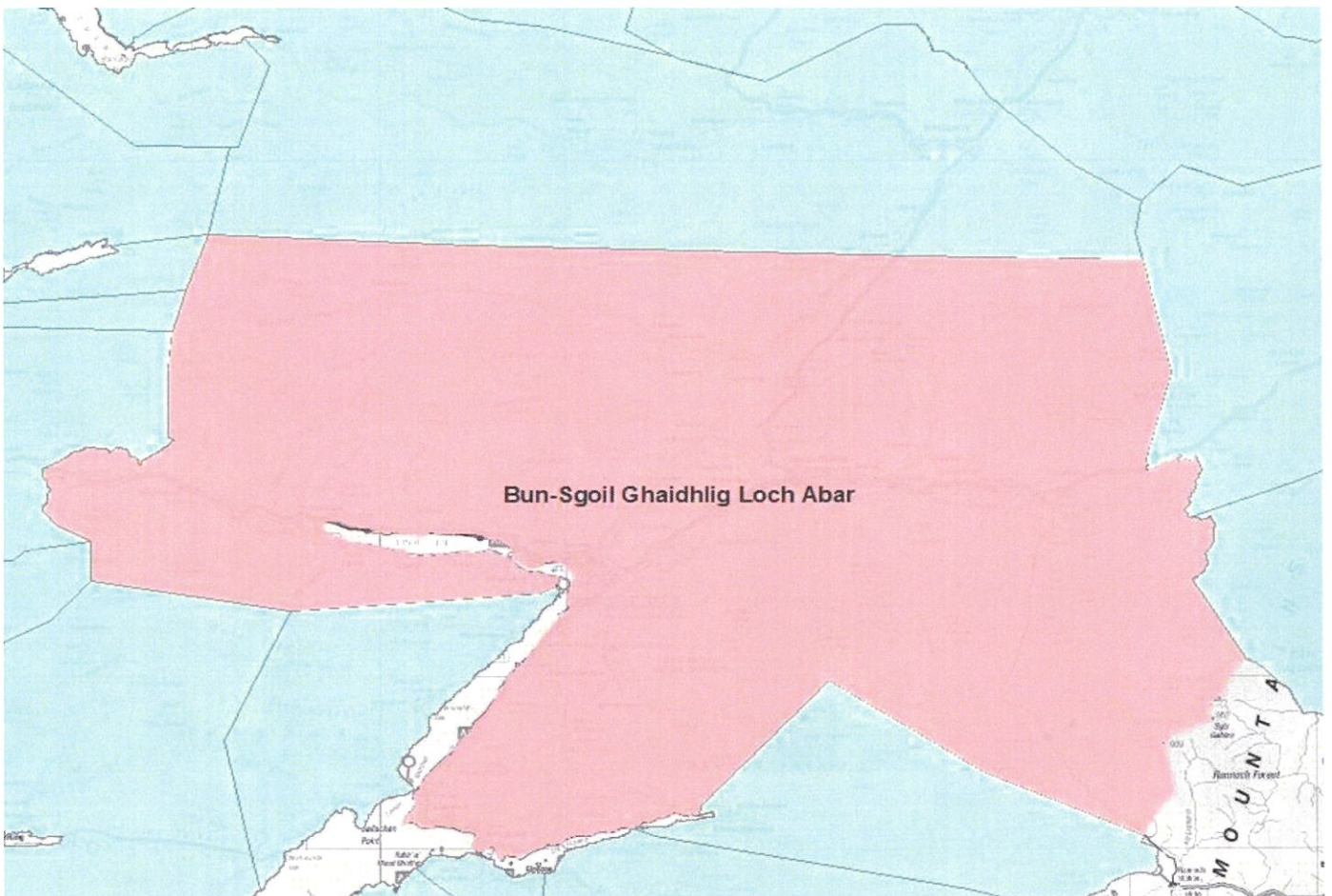
Appendix 1a



**Lochaber ASG**







**Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar**



**List of Respondents to Statutory Consultation Exercise – Creation of Gaelic Medium Catchment Area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar**

1. Cllr. Allan Henderson, Highland Council
2. Comhairle nam Parànt, Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar
3. Rebecca Machin o/b of Kinlochleven Associated School Group Head Teachers
4. Christopher Millar-Craig, Head Teacher, Ardnamurchan High School
5. Patricia Kennedy, o/b of Ardgour and Achaphubuil Community Council
6. Claire MacLeod, parent
7. Patricia Kennedy, local resident
8. Dr. Michael Foxley, local resident
9. Teresa Bolton, o/b of Ardnamurchan High School Parent Council
10. Summary of the views of pupils at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar
11. Iain MacFarlane, parent
12. Lyndsey Shaw, parent
13. Bòrd na Gàidhlig (response received after the end of the consultation period).



**From:** Allan Henderson - Member  
**Sent:** 30 January 2018 19:02  
**To:** CAL LochaberAdmin  
**Subject:** RE: PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREA FOR BUN-SGOIL GHÀIDHLIG LOCH ABAR

**Categories:** Fiona L

Hello Ian,

A practical solution may be to allow Invergarry to be in the catchment without assisted travel. This might still suit some parents working in town.

Regards Allan

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**From:** CAL LochaberAdmin  
**Sent:** 29 January 2018 09:44  
**To:** Allan Henderson - Member  
**Subject:** PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREA FOR BUN-SGOIL GHÀIDHLIG LOCH ABAR

Please see the attached for your information.

Kind Regards

*Fiona Livingstone  
Administrative Assistant 2  
Business Support, Corporate Resources  
Care & Learning Service, Camaghael Hostel, Fort William  
Tel : 01397 707597*



**Fiona Livingstone**

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**From:** BSGLA Comhairle nam Pàrant <cnamparant.bspla@aol.co.uk>  
**Sent:** 22 January 2018 11:52  
**To:** Ian Jackson  
**Subject:** Re: GM catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar

Hi Ian,

Apologies for the delay in replying but the BSGLA Parent Council only met last week since your email.

Most felt it made sense to bring the catchment area in line with the Lochaber Associated Schools Group.

The only concern raised was regarding families in the Invergarry, Glencoe & Duror areas accessing Gaelic medium education if they wished. Since there is no other GME provision they could access locally, parents felt it was important that this transport restriction wouldn't be viewed as an obstacle to accessing Gaelic Medium Education.

Dùrachdan,

Ingrid  
Cathraiche/  
Còmhairle nam Pàrant BSGLA

-----Original Message-----

**From:** INGRID HENDERSON  
**To:** BSGLA Comhairle nam Pàrant <cnamparant.bspla@aol.co.uk>  
**Sent:** Mon, 22 Jan 2018 11:43  
**Subject:** Fwd: GM catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Ian Jackson <ian.jackson@highland.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** GM catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar  
**Date:** 11 December 2017 at 14:29:52 GMT  
**To:** "

Hi Ingrid, we spoke recently about the above.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig have produced statutory guidance on Gaelic Medium education, and the Guidance includes a requirement that LAs set up Gaelic Medium (GM) catchment areas. It is suggested that these would normally overlay a number of school catchment areas. The Guidance also advises that a catchment area for GME should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME to travel to school, and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME for their children.

The setting up of a new catchment area is subject to statutory consultation procedures. One such exercise has begun in Skye, and the Council proposes to begin another to define a GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar. The Proposal for consultation will be taken to the People Committee early in 2018, either the 25 January or the 15 March Committee.

All parents would be sent a copy of the Proposal for comment when the formal consultation period begins.

I attach a map showing the proposed catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar. It is suggested that, for GME purposes, this will encompass the current catchments for all of the schools within the Lochaber Associated School Group, except for Invergarry Primary, which we judge as being too distant to meet the criteria of "reasonable travel" and "attractiveness". The school catchment for St. Bride's PS is also included in the GM catchment.

Catchments for English Medium education are not affected.

I would be grateful to know whether members of the Parent Council have any questions or comments on the above, before it is submitted to strategic committee. Alternatively I could attend a meeting of the Parent Council, if that would be helpful.

Ian Jackson  
Education Officer  
Care and Learning Service  
07500 120 271

Unless related to the business of The Highland Council, the views or opinions expressed within this e-mail are those of the sender and do not necessarily reflect those of The Highland Council, or associated bodies, nor does this e-mail form part of any contract unless so stated.

Mura h-eil na beachdan a tha air an cur an cèill sa phost-d seo a' buntainn ri gnothachas Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd, 's ann leis an neach fhèin a chuir air falbh e a tha iad, is chan eil iad an-còmhnaidh a' riochdachadh beachdan na Comhairle, no buidhnean buntainneach, agus chan eil am post-d seo na phàirt de chunradh sam bith mura h-eil sin air innse.

**Listening \* Open \* Valuing \* Improving \* Supporting \* Partnering \* Delivering**  
**Èisteachd \* Fosgailte \* Luach \* Leasachadh \* Taic \* Com-pàirteachas \* Libhrigeadh**



**Fiona Livingstone**

---

**From:** Rebecca Machin-Kinlochleven High School  
**Sent:** 10 February 2018 10:32  
**To:** Ian Jackson  
**Cc:** Heather Thomson-Kinlochleven Primary; Marylin MacDonald; Carol Divers - Ballachulish Primary; Susan Kemp; Ainsley Burns; Norma Young  
**Subject:** RE: Possible consultation on a catchment area for the Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar

Hello Ian,

Our ASG discussed your proposals at our meeting on Thursday. The key point for us was the importance of equality of opportunity and fairness. If we are going to offer GME to pupils in the St Brides catchment area then we should also offer it to the pupils of all other catchment areas within the Kinlochleven ASG. If we are going to offer free transport to pupils who live within the Kinlochleven ASG to be educated in the Lochaber High School ASG because they can offer GME and we can't, then the same opportunity should be available to those who want to do the reverse and benefit from a course/subject/experience we offer and isn't available in Fort William for instance.

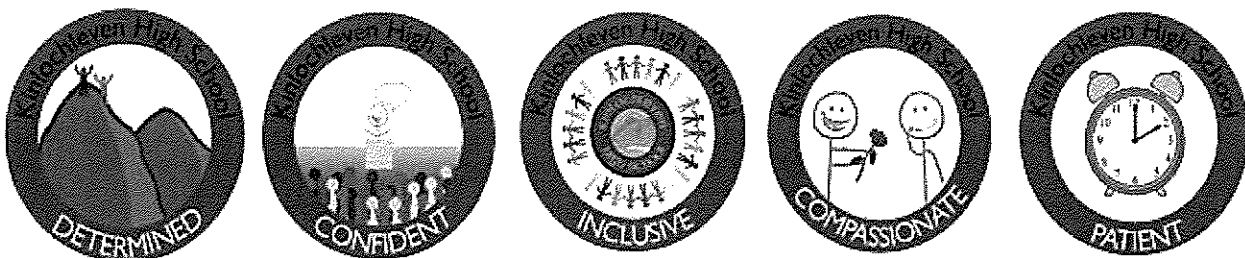
We do have a number of pupils now who do travel from Fort William to Kinlochleven every day, because they do feel that we offer something different, and their families have to pay.

Clearly, it would be prohibitively expensive to make this offer and at a time when the council does not have any cash to spare. The current status quo does not prevent any parent from opting for GME for their child. However, it does maintain the fairness in that if parents opt out of their ASG, for whatever reason, the financial costs remain with the parent and not the council.

What it also highlighted for us is the importance of our 1+2 languages model across the ASG and it's development. We, as the ASG heads, know that we could/can offer Gaelic and French as our 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> languages across all of our schools. However, to do so with consistency, year on year, we feel we need to have more control and input into the selection of primary staff so that we can ensure that we have the skill set which matches our need. Although this is a different but related issue, we are hopeful that we will get the necessary support to maintain and manage this model, which would have no added cost to the council, but would provide a gaelic learners option to all pupils within the Kinlochleven ASG.

Kind regards,

*Rebecca Machin*  
 Head Teacher  
 Kinlochleven High School  
 01855 832042




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**From:** Ian Jackson  
**Sent:** 19 December 2017 14:09  
**To:** Jim Sutherland; Susan Kemp

**Cc:** Heather Thomson-Kinlochleven Primary; Marylin MacDonald; Carol Divers - Ballachulish Primary; Rebecca Machin-Kinlochleven High School; Norma Young

**Subject:** RE: Possible consultation on a catchment area for the Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar

Thanks for the comments Jim. I think the answer to your first question would be "yes". I think it follows that if we include the St. Bride's catchment in the BSGLA catchment, then the same pupil would be entitled to, and receive transport to, Lochaber High. However, the pupil would have to have attended BSGLA. We would need to avoid a situation where parents who had not accessed GME at the primary stage suddenly claimed a conversion to GME at S1, so that they could get round the placing request system.

I hadn't personally foreseen any implications for management of schools, in that any pupil who attended BSGLA would not have attended St. Bride's so would not have been attending a school in the Kinlochleven ASG at any time. I might be missing something though and would be happy to consider any further comments on this aspect.

Ian Jackson  
Education Officer  
Care and Learning Service  
07500 120 271

---

**From:** Jim Sutherland

**Sent:** 19 December 2017 12:45

**To:** Ian Jackson; Steven Hamilton; Kirsty Clark - Inverloch Primary; Nick Thomson - Lundavra Primary; Violet Smith - St Columba Primary; Kim Bentley-Invergarry Primary; Susan Kemp; Maxean Dunham

**Cc:** Lyndsay Bradley; Heather Thomson-Kinlochleven Primary; Marylin MacDonald; Carol Divers - Ballachulish Primary; Christopher Millar-Craig; Rebecca Machin-Kinlochleven High School; Norma Young

**Subject:** RE: Possible consultation on a catchment area for the Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar

Hi Ian

The proposed catchment area appears to reflect the current situation, however, formalising it in this way raises a couple of questions:

- If a pupil from the St Bride's catchment attends Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar, will he/she then be entitled to a place at, and transport to, Lochaber High?
- Are there implications for this catchment from the South Lochaber Management of Schools review?

Regards,

Jim

---

**From:** Ian Jackson

**Sent:** 19 December 2017 10:42

**To:** Steven Hamilton; Kirsty Clark - Inverloch Primary; Nick Thomson - Lundavra Primary; Violet Smith - St Columba Primary; Kim Bentley-Invergarry Primary; Susan Kemp; Maxean Dunham

**Cc:** Lyndsay Bradley; Heather Thomson-Kinlochleven Primary; Marylin MacDonald; Carol Divers - Ballachulish Primary; Jim Sutherland; Christopher Millar-Craig; Rebecca Machin-Kinlochleven High School; Norma Young

**Subject:** Possible consultation on a catchment area for the Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar

Hi all. Bòrd na Gàidhlig have produced statutory guidance on Gaelic Medium education, and the Guidance includes a requirement that LAs set up Gaelic Medium (GM) catchment areas. It is suggested that these would normally overlay a number of school catchment areas. The Guidance also advises that a catchment area for GME should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME to travel to school, and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME for their children.

The setting up of a new catchment area is subject to statutory consultation procedures. One such exercise has begun in Skye, and the Council proposes to begin another to define a GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar. The Proposal for consultation will be taken to the People Committee early in 2018, most likely to the 25

January Committee. If not it will go to the Committee on 15 March. This email is intended to provide you with advance notice of the Proposal.

I attach a map showing the proposed catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar. It is suggested that, for GME purposes, this will encompass the current catchments for all of the schools within the Lochaber Associated School Group, except for Invergarry Primary, which we judge as being too distant to meet the criteria of "reasonable travel" and "attractiveness".

The school catchment for St. Bride's PS is also included in the GM catchment, on grounds of distance and past practice.

Catchments for English Medium education are **not affected**. The Proposal Paper will therefore only be of significant interest to parents who wish to opt for GME. We will nevertheless send a copy of the Proposal Paper to your Parent Council for any comments they may wish to make.

If there are any pupils from the Invergarry catchment who wish to attend Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar, they would be permitted to travel on the existing transport to LHS, but no dedicated transport would be provided from the Invergarry catchment.

Other than St. Bride's PS, the schools within the Kinlochleven ASG will not be within a GM catchment. I understand that two children currently travel from Ballachulish to Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar. The Proposal Paper is likely to say that pupils from the Kinlochleven/Ballachulish/Glencoe/Duror catchments will not have a right to transport but will be given seats on existing transport to Lochaber High School. It will be the parents' responsibility to take the children to the nearest bus for LHS and no dedicated transport will be provided for any pupils from outwith the defined catchment.

Similarly, I believe one pupil currently attends Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar from within the Ardgour catchment. The Proposal Paper is likely to suggest similar arrangements for Ardgour as apply to Ballachulish etc. Ardgour will not be included within the catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar and no dedicated transport will be provided. However pupils may be granted a place on the existing bus to LHS, and it would be a parental responsibility to take their children to the nearest bus stop on that route.

Please contact me if you have any queries or observations.

Also compliments of the Season to all.

Ian Jackson  
Education Officer  
Care and Learning Service  
07500 120 271



**Fiona Livingstone**

---

**From:** Christopher Millar-Craig  
**Sent:** 09 March 2018 14:48  
**To:** Ian Jackson  
**Subject:** RE: Possible consultation on a catchment area for the Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar

Hello, Ian, and thanks for opportunity to discuss the catchment area for the Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar

As we discussed, my concerns are outlined below:

1. Any change to boundaries –or free transport to GME - should be discussed within the context of the wider Gaelic provision across all of Lochaber. I believe it is important that parents see all the GM opportunities and successes in our various schools. Factually, Ardnamurchan High School provides considerably wider GM opportunities that Lochaber High at present.
2. Transition: Any child attending BSL would be entitled to transition to LHS. Therefore any GME Ardgour child, who is in our catchment, will have the entitlement to go to LHS. This is of some concern to us, but at least, linking with point 1 above, it is important that the equal entitlement to come to Ardnamurchan High School is equally promoted with factual information re GME provision.
3. No offer of free transport is being made to parents in Ardgour who might wish their child to attend GME in Acharacle. This doesn't seem to be an equitable arrangement. This is especially marked in that the Head Teacher for Ardgour is also the cluster head for the GME provision in Acharacle .

Many thanks

Chris

C. Millar-Craig  
Ceannard/Head Teacher  
Ard Sgoil Aird nam Murchan/Ardamurchan High School  
Strontian  
PH36 4JA



**Education Consultations**

**From:** School consultation <donotreply@highland.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 14 March 2018 13:11  
**To:** Education Consultations  
**Subject:** Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar consultation comments

**Name of consultation:** Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar

**Your comments:** Ardgour Community Council considered the proposal at a recent meeting. The Council felt strongly that Ardgour Primary School should not be included in the catchment area for Bun sgoil Loch Abair as this option, and their following attendance at Bun Sgoil Loch Abair, could significantly influence their decision to continue their education in Fort William to the detriment of Ardnamurchan High School. The Community Council wishes to see our young people being given the opportunity to be educated in the area designated by the Ardnamurchan High School catchment and this proposal does not give Bun-Sgoil Ath-tharracaill equal status in any parental decision making. The Council also felt that if a catchment area is being established for Bun Sgoil Loch Abair, then Bun-Sgoil Ath-tharracaill should be granted the same privelege. Parents of pupils at Ardgour primary School present at the Community Council meeting were not aware of their option to request transport to Bun-Sgoil Ath-tharracaill.

**Upload documents or letters :**

**I am commenting as:** Community Councillor

**I am commenting on behalf of:** Community Council

**Name of Community Council:** Ardgour Community Council

**Name:**

<b>Title</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Last name</b>
Mrs	Patricia	Kennedy

**Address:**

postcode\_search

Choose address

Did you find the address on the list above?

**postcode\_search**

**Choose address**

**Did you find the address on the list above?**

Yes

**Email address: '**



**Education Consultations**

---

**From:** School consultation <donotreply@highland.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 15 March 2018 09:16  
**To:** Education Consultations  
**Subject:** Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar consultation comments

**Categories:** C&L LOCHABER ADMIN

**Name of consultation:** Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar

**Your comments:** 1) Both appendices are unclear, particularly Appendix B, the very area you are proposing. I have looked at both the printed handout and the downloadable version online.

2) In the introduction (p2) it is stated there would be, "...no "right" of access to transport" for those children currently enrolled at BSGLA from the North Ballachulish and Ardgour areas. 'Moving the goalposts' on those children currently enrolled is, I believe, unfair. Those children already enrolled and attending should be guaranteed continued access to transport if they receive it already. The proposed arrangement is open to withdrawing it in future years. I agree a catchment area must be set (I was very surprised to hear that one hadn't been set up already) but for those unlucky enough to fall out-with the proposed boundaries need some assurances, in writing, for their future years at BSGLA.

**Upload documents or letters :**

**I am commenting as:** Parent

**I am commenting on behalf of:**

**Name:**

<b>Title</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Last name</b>
Mrs	Claire	MacLeod

**Address:**

<b>postcode_search</b>	<b>Choose address</b>	<b>Did you find the address on the list above?</b>
		Yes

**Email address:**

**Education Consultations**

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**From:** School consultation <donotreply@highland.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 15 March 2018 14:14  
**To:** Education Consultations  
**Subject:** Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar consultation comments

**Categories:** C&L LOCHABER ADMIN

**Name of consultation:** Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar

**Your comments:** I feel this should be challenged on a equality basis. If a catchment area is to be established for Bun sgoil Gaidhlig Loch Abair, then a catchment should be established for Bun Sgoil Ath Tharracail which mirrors the primaries in the Ardnamurchan High School catchment area. The option to request 'free transport' to a gaidhlig medium school is currently poorly advertised and little known. To advertise and formalise a free mode of transport to a Fort William school and not fulfill the same provision for an Acharacle school will bias parents to send their children to Fort William and continue there for secondary education. My assumption is that placing requests made on Lochaber High School would not be required from pupils living in the catchment area for Ardgour Primary School and attending Bun sgoil Loch Abair .

This is entirely inappropriate and undermines the provision of rural education in the community in which a child lives.

I find this proposal wholly inappropriate and extremely disappointing. The provision of an excellent facility in Ardnamurchan High School was wished for and worked for by the people of the Ardnamurchan peninsula. The school is supported by the Highland Council and provides an excellent gaelic provision within the context of a West Coast community where gaelic is alive and in daily use. I see no reason to undermine the value of any of the work that has gone before and will continue to go on.

**Upload documents or letters :**

**I am commenting as:** Local resident

**I am commenting on behalf of:** resident

**Name:**

Title	First name	Last name
Mrs	Patricia	Kennedy

**Address:**

**postcode\_search**

**Choose address**

**Did you find the address on the list above?**

Yes

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Education Consultations

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**From:** Michael Foxley  
**Sent:** 16 March 2018 09:42  
**To:** Education Consultations  
**Cc:** Michael Foxley  
**Subject:** Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar

**Categories:** C&L LOCHABER ADMIN

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Consultation on the catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar.

I do so as a parent of two sons who attended the Gaelic Medium Unit(GMU) in St Mary's School, Fort William. I was active, with many local Activists and Council colleagues, in establishing the Fort William GMU in 1994 and then Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar in 2015 as part of the re-organisation of Fort William's primary schools. I support the general proposals in the consultation paper.

However, I challenge the assertion that the general limit for travel to the Gaelic School (GME) should be 6-15 miles. Many past pupils attending GME have travelled much greater distances.

My own children travelled 22 miles by road from Achaphubuil to attend the Fort William GMU. We also used the Camusnagaul ferry to do so. It is good that this will be free but pupils from South Locheilside should have the right to access from this transport link to Caol.

Other pupils have attended from Ardgour by crossing the Corran ferry. Again, they should have the right to transport from Nether Lochaber to Caol.

I would ask that the HC be more flexible in allowing future pupils from Invergarry, Glencoe and South Ballachulish to attend Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar if requested.

The reasons given against this is that the distances are too long for the pupils and the cost would be excessive. Many parents of pupils attending Gaelic Medium Education in Lochaber have done so by transporting their children 40-50 miles so that they could attend croileagan, Gaelic Nurseries and after school activities all at their own expense and by considerable personal effort.

The Highland Council's own Gaelic Committee, under the chairmanship of Cllr Hamish Fraser, provided the evidence that Gaelic Medium Units and Schools, once fully established after five years, were cheaper per pupil than English medium education. This was mainly because the support network for GME was much smaller.

I would ask that this cost saving of attending the Gaelic School is used to offset the right to access transport from Corran and Camusnagaul and also to give serious consideration to any future requests for pupils from Invergarry, Glencoe and Ballachulish to attend GME.

This will then allow more of our young people to access the benefits of bilingual education.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,  
Dr Michael Foxley,

Sent from my iPad



Appendix 2i

## Ardnamurchan High School Parent Council

**Chairperson:**

Mrs Teresa Bolton

**Drimnatorran  
Strontian  
Acharacle  
Argyll  
PH36 4JA  
Telephone: 01397  
700105**

**Secretary:**

Mrs P Kennedy,

Dear Mr Jackson,

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL CONSULTATION  
PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREA FOR BUNSGOIL GHÀIDHLIG  
LOCH ABAIR**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above proposal, which was discussed at our Parent Council meeting on 26 February 2018.

The Parent Council unanimously oppose any Gaelic Medium catchment area which will adversely impact on Ardnamurchan High School (AHS) for the following reasons :

1. Since we opened we have sought to provide all children on the peninsula (and in the wider Lochaber area) with a broad, stimulating curriculum and school experience. Gaelic provision, and Gaelic Medium education, has been at the heart of this and indeed only last year, we were the winners of the prestigious Scottish Education Awards in the Gaelic Education category. Our success in this is a result of the partnerships developed over many years with our primary schools on the peninsula and wider partners and cannot be viewed in isolation. Staff, parents, pupils and the wider community have worked so hard over many years to build on the good work done in our feeder primary schools and it would be incredibly unjust if this was taken away. The Ardgour community is very much part of the peninsula and it is proper it should fall in AHS catchment area.
2. Any change of boundaries or free transport arrangements which will result in Ardgour children being entitled to go to Caol and thereafter Lochaber High will have a serious and detrimental effect on AHS. When the school funding formula is based on the yearly pupil roll, AHS can ill afford pupils from our peninsula attending schools outwith the area and be funded to do this.
3. Any change would be inequitable as to the best of my knowledge, children in Lochaline or Ardgour are not currently offered free transport to attend the Gaelic Medium unit at Acharacle Primary School.
4. Whilst we acknowledge that every parent should have the right to choose where their child is educated, should that choice be an alternative to the designated school for where they live they should have to pay and the designated school should not suffer as a result of this. In this case an already fragile area would be.

Yours sincerely,

Teresa Bolton, Chair AHS Parent Council





**Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar – Catchment Area Consultation – March 2018**

Feedback from classes regarding the Catchment Area of our school:

**C1**

- Everyone agreed that lots of children should come to our school to learn Gaelic.
- They liked the whole of the pink area in the map.
- Otherwise agree with the area.

**C2/3**

- Some of the children were not sure why a catchment area was needed
- Should include Ballachulish and Glencoe
- Otherwise agree with the area

**C4/5**

- Happy enough with the map
- Will Gairloch be within the boundary?
- Invergarry should be part of the map
- We should be encouraging people from all parts of Lochaber to attend our school.
- Will Roybridge be part of our boundary?
- Everyone else had no comment or agreed with the map.

**C6/7**

- It's good to have a catchment area to stop the school getting too big
- People should not have to travel a big distance to go to a Gaelic school
- It's bad for people out with the catchment area if they attend the High School and can't get to our school.
- The catchment area should be open.
- Everyone else had no comment or agreed with the map.



## Education Consultations

---

**From:** School consultation <donotreply@highland.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 16 March 2018 12:24  
**To:** Education Consultations  
**Subject:** Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar consultation comments  
  
**Categories:** C&L LOCHABER ADMIN

**Name of consultation:** Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar

**Your comments:** Firstly, I question the merits of creating a catchment area in the first place. We don't have the dense population of an urban environment so I don't see the need. GME provision should be open to all and there should be no barriers or difficulties of placing requests to overcome.

If, however, the catchment area does proceed, I feel it should include Invergarry since it's part of the Lochaber ASG already. Also, since there is no GME provision in the South Lochaber area Ballachulish, Glencoe & Duror should be included in the designation.

**Upload documents or letters :**

**I am commenting as:** Parent

**I am commenting on behalf of:** Myself

**Name:**

Title	First name	Last name
Mr	Iain	MacFarlane

**Address:**

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
		Yes

**Email address:** :



**Education Consultations**

**From:** School consultation <donotreply@highland.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 16 March 2018 15:59  
**To:** Education Consultations  
**Subject:** Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar consultation comments

**Name of consultation:** Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar

**Your comments:** My concern, if a catchment area is put in place for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar is that outlying villages, namely Ballachulish, Glencoe, Duror, Kinlochleven and Invergarry will be required to make a placing request which may not be accepted. At present we have 2 children travelling from Ballachulish, next year this is set to double with more children joining Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar after the summer. This number could increase year on year and if a catchment area is put in place this would be much less likely. There are no other GME options for the children in these villages. I would like to propose the idea of a catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar be abandoned altogether or at the very least the catchment boundary be extended to include the villages mentioned above. Gaelic Medium Education must remain accessible to all.

**Upload documents or letters :**

**I am commenting as:** Parent

**I am commenting on behalf of:** Children living outside the proposed catchment area

**Name:**

Title	First name	Last name
Mrs	Lyndsey	Shaw

**Address:**

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
	ALL	Yes

**Email address:**



**Education Consultations**

Appendix 2m

**From:** School consultation <donotreply@highland.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 27 March 2018 13:14  
**To:** Education Consultations  
**Subject:** Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar consultation comments  
**Attachments:** Schools Consultation by Highland CouncilLochAbar.docx

**Name of consultation:** Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar

**Your comments:** I would like to give my sincere apologies for this response being late and hope that our views are still pertinent.  
Mona Wilson,  
Director of Gaelic Education,  
Bord na Gaidhlig

**Upload documents or letters :** Schools Consultation by Highland CouncilLochAbar.docx

**I am commenting as:**

**I am commenting on behalf of:** Bòrd na Gàidhlig

**Name:**

Title	First name	Last name
Ms	Mona	Wilson

**Address:**

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
IV38NW	4 Leachkin Road Inverness IV3 8NW	Yes

**Email address:** [mona@gaidhlig.scot](mailto:mona@gaidhlig.scot)

## **Schools Consultation by Highland Council**

Bòrd na Gàidhlig welcome the decision by Highland Council to establish a new catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. The new Gàidhlig Medium (GM) catchment will overlay Banavie Primary School, Caol Primary School, Inverlochry Primary School, Lundavra Primary School, Roy Bridge Primary School, Spean Bridge Primary School, and St. Bride's Primary School.

Highland council have also reflected carefully on catchment areas for GME provision and considered reasonable travel arrangements for pupils wishing to receive GME and included pupils from the St. Bride's PS catchment (part of the Kinlochleven Associated School Group) who have the right to attend Lochaber High School to access GME, provided they have previously attended Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. This may also have the potential to attract more parents to choose GME provision for their children.

It is also encouraging that Highland Council are mindful that this will provide a degree of transparency for parents in respect of entitlement to GME.

Excessive distances and travel times to Fort William from specific locations have also been considered, with a recognition that this may be a barrier to parents choosing to send children to GME. Whilst this may or may not be the case, it is important to ensure that if there is sufficient parental demand this will, as stated within the proposal, be assessed appropriately in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

Overall, we would support Highland Council in continuing to promote the benefits of GME to parents and continue the growth of GME within the wider Loch Abar area.

**Mona Wilson**

Stiùiriche Foghlam na Gàidhlig | Director of Gaelic Education

Bòrd na Gàidhlig / Taigh a' Ghlinne Mhòir / Rathad na Leacainn / Inbhir Nis / IV3 8NW



## Public Consultation Meeting – Catchment Area for the Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar

Tuesday 27th February 2018, Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar

### Panel;

Cllr. Andrew Baxter, (Chair)

Norma Young, Area Care & Learning Manager (West)

Ian Jackson, Education Officer (Resources)

### In Attendance

Name	Title
John Joseph MacNeil	Ceannard, Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar
Joan Esson	Education Scotland

Two members of the public were also in attendance.

**The Chairperson** introduced himself and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposal to formally establish a Gaelic Medium Catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, as set out in the recommendation to the proposal Paper.

The proposal had been issued as a result of new statutory guidance on Gaelic Medium Education published in 2017.

**The Chairperson** then introduced those on the platform (Norma Young, Area Care and Learning Manager, and Ian Jackson, Education Officer) and asked whether anyone needed another copy of the paper.

The Chairperson then invited the Education Officer, Ian Jackson, to describe the consultation process.

**IJ** - The Consultation process is quite a lengthy process. The stage we are in now is the 6 week public consultation, which must include 30 school days, and which will end on 16 March 2018. This is the last date for responses, at this stage.

The next stage is a 3 week consultation with Education Scotland that will begin in April after the schools return from the Easter break. Following that Education Scotland will produce a Report on the educational merits of the proposal. We will then review the responses to the public consultation and the Education Scotland report, consider and respond to any points that are raised and then publish our final review report. This is published at least 3 weeks before taken back to the People Committee, to allow for any further representations from the public. Although the Paper must be published at least 3 weeks the Committee date, we will aim to publish a couple of weeks before that, to allow for full consideration of any representations received. We are hoping to take the paper to Committee in August 2018.

I would draw everyone's attention to the maps included with the consultation documents, in particular that which illustrates the proposed catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

**The Chairperson** asked whether there were better versions of the maps online, as the printed versions were not particularly clear.

**IJ** – The EM catchment maps were available online with a zoom facility that allowed viewers to see the catchment boundaries in great detail. There was more of a difficulty with the map of the proposed GM catchment for the Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, as it covered such a large area.

**The Chairperson** then invited the Area Care and Learning Manager, Norma Young, to speak about the educational benefits set out in the Proposal Paper.

**NY** – Originally the Council was looking to consolidate and clarify the transport arrangements relating to Gaelic Medium Education (GME) right across Highland, but this was superseded by the desire of the Scottish Government to create catchment areas for GME, which has been expressed in the statutory guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

As can be seen from the map, the Invergarry PS catchment has not been included with the catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. This is because the catchment area should reflect reasonable travelling times. However, if a family from the Invergarry area came forward to request GME at the primary school stage, we would have a conversation with them about how that might be achieved. We are not excluding children from that catchment. We have just set the standard parameters.

## Appendix 3

In terms of South Lochaber, we feel that the St. Bride's Primary School catchment is within reasonable travelling distance of the Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, and it has been included within the proposed catchment on that basis. Again, if a pupil from Ballachulish or Glencoe wanted to come to the school, we would have a conversation with the parents about how that might be achieved. In terms of Duror, we are aware that Argyll and Bute Council offer GME at Appin Primary, just down the road.

The educational benefits of the new catchments are set out at S.7 of the Proposal Paper. In addition, the general educational benefits of bilingualism are already well-documented, as are the benefits of coming to a standalone Gaelic school.

**The Chairperson** then explained that Mrs Young and Mr Jackson were available to answer questions.

No questions were asked.

**The Chairperson** thanked everyone for coming and reminded those present of the final date for submissions/representations, which should be sent to;

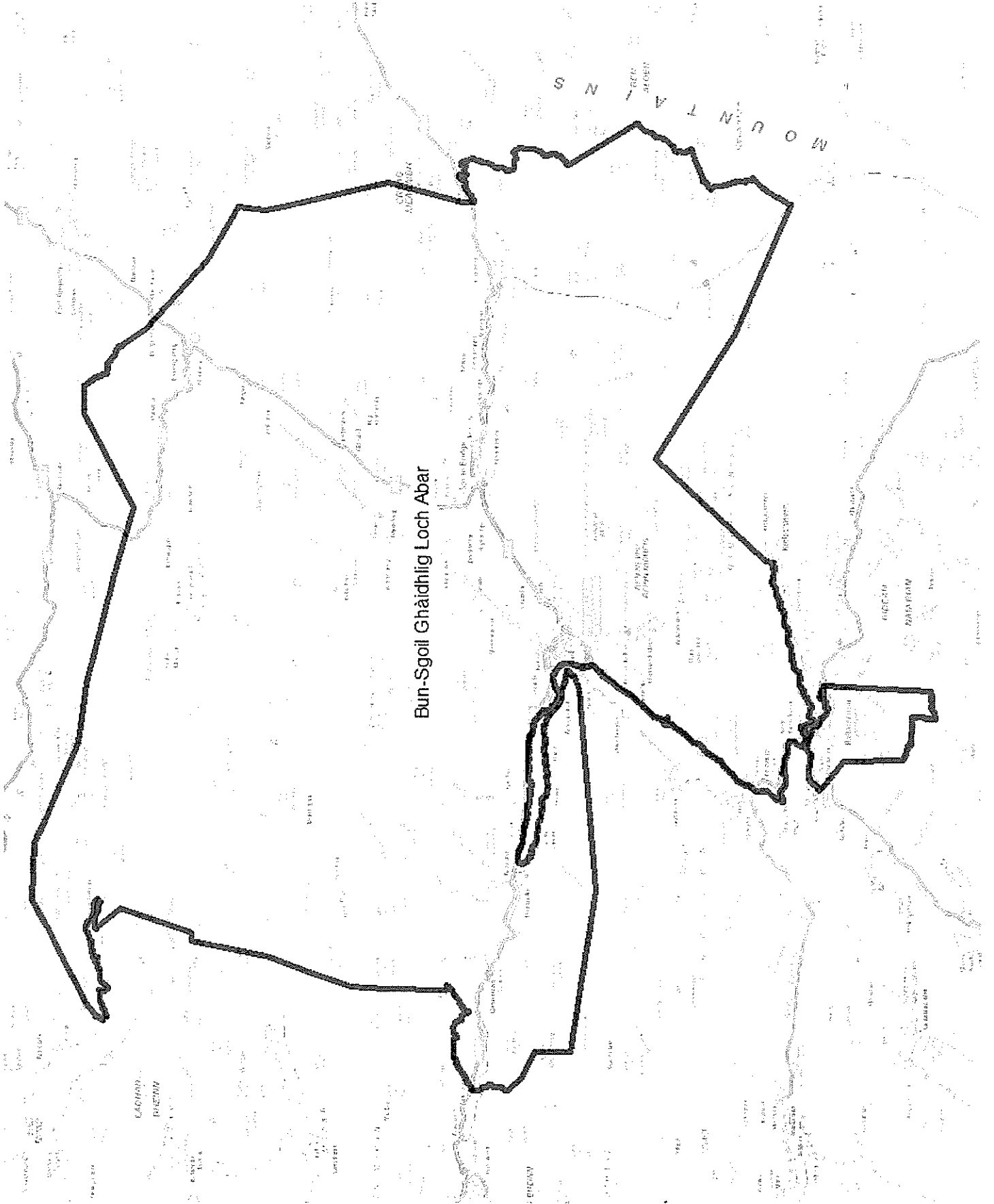
Mr Ian Jackson  
Care & Learning Service  
Camaghael Hostel  
Fort William  
PH33 7NE

or by email to the address circulated in the letter, or via the online form, to arrive no later than Friday 16 March 2018

The record of the meeting will be made available at least 3 weeks before the People Committee meeting in August 2018, when it is intended that the report of the meeting, plus any submissions/representations and the view of Education Scotland on the proposal will be considered.



Appendix  
4





**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The Highland Council to define a catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar and to formalise the current arrangements relating to Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in related secondary schools.**

**The new GME catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar will overlay the current catchments of Banavie Primary School, Caol Primary School, Inverlochry Primary School, Lundavra Primary School, Roy Bridge Primary School, Spean Bridge Primary School and St Bride's Primary School.**

**The catchment area for Lochaber High School will apply to both GME and English Medium Education, and under which pupils from the St Bride's Primary School catchment (part of the Kinlochleven associated school group) will have the right to attend Lochaber High School to access GME, provided they have previously attended Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.**

## **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* and the amendments contained in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of The Highland Council's proposal to define catchment areas for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar and to formalise the current arrangements for GME in related secondary schools. 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 a copy of 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 legislative 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.

### **1.2 HM Inspectors considered:**

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and

- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

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

- attendance at the public meeting held on 27 February 2018 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;
- meetings to consult stakeholders in each of the associated school groups referenced in the proposal and where related written communication had been received. These meetings were held at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, Kinlochleven High School and Ardnamurchan High School; and
- individual discussions as HM Inspectors considered appropriate.

## 2. Consultation Process

2.1 The Highland Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

2.2 The consultation process ran from 29 January 2018 to 16 March 2018. During that time, the council held a public meeting at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. The meeting was attended by two people. Announcements were placed in the local press and on the council's online services. Statutory consultees, including parents/carers, children, staff and Bòrd na Gàidhlig were informed of the consultation. Other Gaelic organisations were also advised. The council published documentation for the consultation on its website. They also distributed papers to a full range of stakeholders and interested parties. The council put in place suitable arrangements to enable interested parties to respond to the proposal, whether that be electronically or in writing. Ten written responses were received. These included a response from Bòrd na Gàidhlig in which they supported the proposal to establish catchment areas for GME. Overall, the other responses raised a few reasonable concerns. On the council's request, the headteacher at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar undertook a consultation with children. Overall, children supported the council's proposal to establish catchment areas for GME, with a few concerns expressed.

## 3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 The Highland Council's proposal is responding to legislation which requires catchment areas to be established for GME provisions. The council is taking forward a duty to support and promote GME. While most stakeholders generally support the overarching proposal, there is potential to increase some stakeholders' confidence in



aspects of the proposal. In finalising its report, the council should clarify how they will take forward some reasonable concerns. These concerns are outlined below.

3.2 The stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors spoke very positively of their commitment to Gaelic Education. They identified that the Gaelic language is an important feature of the wider Lochaber area. As such, a few stakeholders felt that the consultation should have simultaneously covered the whole of the Lochaber area. This, they felt, would have resulted in a more holistic overview of GME across Lochaber. A number of stakeholders were not convinced of the need to establish catchment areas for GME. Other stakeholders did not feel it necessary to define catchment areas so that access to GME remained open to all. In the final report, the council's statement on educational benefits needs to articulate the detail of how meeting this legislative requirement will benefit GME across the Lochaber area.

3.3 Stakeholders raised some concerns which related to strategic planning for the sustainability of GME. This included clarity and, in some cases, raising an awareness of the council's criteria for providing transport to GME provisions. A few stakeholders felt that the criteria set as a reasonable travelling distance to be educated in GME was too restrictive. Others asked for more detail of how the council would meet the commitments they make in the proposal paper to, under the terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, meet demands for setting up new GME provisions. This was especially so given the recognised national issues in recruiting teachers of GME. The final version of the report should clarify these matters.

3.4 Some stakeholders identified potential issues of equity and equality should the proposal go ahead. This is as only some of the primary schools in Kinlochleven High School's and Lochaber High School's associated groups are being named as part of the catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. The council feels that they have identified schools for which travel is reasonable and attractive to parents, as required of them in the statutory Guidance. There was a strong view that all of Kinlochleven High School's associated school group should be included in the GME catchment area and not just, as stated, St Bride's Primary School. However, a few were concerned that this may have an adverse impact on the future roll of Kinlochleven High School. In the case of Ballachulish Primary School, stakeholders report that a few parents are interested in accessing GME for their children. This interest, they feel, would best be met through attendance at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar rather than the possible setting up of a GME provision as part of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016. The council needs to be clear that projections of parental interest in GME are underpinning their final decision on defining the catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. They should also ensure that they are putting in place arrangements which can satisfy future demand for GME.

3.5 There was strong opposition to any proposal that may result in potential pupils for Ardgour Primary School being educated in GME outwith the catchment area for Ardnamurchan High School associated school group. In its final report, the council should restate that their proposal does not include the English medium catchment area of Ardgour Primary School in the catchment area of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

#### **4. Summary**

The Highland Council is taking forward a duty to support and promote GME by establishing a catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. They are also formalising current arrangements in related secondary schools. In finalising its report, the council needs to continue to engage with stakeholders to clarify aspects of the proposal and to address concerns. They should explain further how their principles for 'reasonable distance' promote entitlement to GME. Particularly, in respect of schools in current catchment areas that are not included in the proposed GME catchment. Stakeholders feel that these schools are nearby and that children could be missing out. The council's statement should promote more confidence in how they will meet new future demands for GME that are outwith the proposed catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
April 2018**

**Aithisg le Foghlam Alba a' dèiligeadh ri taobhan foghlaim a' mholaidh le Comhairle Roinn na Gàidhealtachd sgìre-sgoile a dhaingneachadh airson Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar agus ullachaidhean a tha ann aig an àm a tha an làthair a chur air stèidh fhoirmeil airson Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig (FMG) ann an àrd-sgoiltean co-cheangailte.**

**Bidh an sgìre-sgoile FMG ùr airson Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar a rèir nan sgìrean-sgoile a tha ann aig an àm a tha an làthair airson Bun-sgoil Bhanbhaidh, Bun-sgoil a' Chaoil, Bun-sgoil Inbhir Lòchaidh, Bun-sgoil Lunn Dà Bhrà, Bun-sgoil na Drochaid Ruaidh, Bun-sgoil Drochaid an Aonachain agus Bun-sgoil Naomh Brìghde.**

**Bidh an sgìre-sgoile airson Àrd-sgoil Loch Abar co-ionann airson FMG agus Foghlam Tro Mheadhan na Beurla, agus fon seo bidh sgoilearan bho Bhun-sgoil Naomh Brìghde (pàirt den bhuidheann sgoile co-cheangailte airson Ceann Loch Liobhann) ceadaichte Àrd-sgoil Loch Abar a fhrithealadh gu cothrom fhaighinn air FMG, ma bha iad a' frithealadh Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar ron seo.**

## **1. Ro-ràdh**

1.1 Tha an aithisg seo bho Foghlam Alba air a h-ullachadh le Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh airson Foghlam (Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh) a rèir cumhachan *Achd nan Sgoiltean (Co-chomhairleachadh) (Alba) 2010* agus a rèir nan atharrachaidhean ann an *Achd na Cloinne agus Dhaoine Òga (Alba) 2014*. Is e adhbhar na h-aithisg breithneachadh neo-eisimeileach is neo-phàirteach a dhèanamh air moladh Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd sgìre-sgoile a dhaingneachadh airson Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar agus ullachaidhean a tha ann aig an àm a tha an làthair a chur air stèidh fhoirmeil airson Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig (FMG) ann an àrd-sgoiltean co-cheangailte. Tha Earrann 2 den aithisg a' cur an cèill cunntas goirid mun phròiseas co-chomhairleachaidh. Tha Earrann 3 a' cur an cèill beachdan Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh mu thaobhan foghlaim a' mholaidh, a' gabhail a-steach bheachdan cudromach a chaidh a thoirt leis an luchd-comhairleachaidh. Tha Earrann 4 a' toirt geàrr-chunntas air beachd farsaing Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh air a' mholadh. An uair a gheibhear an aithisg seo, tha an Achd a' cur riatanas air a' chomhairle beachdachadh oirre agus an uair sin an aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannach aige fhèin ullachadh. Bu chòir dhan aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannaich aig a' chomhairle a bhith a' gabhail a-steach lethbhreac den aithisg seo agus feumaidh mìneachadh a bhith innte, ann a bhith a' tighinn gu co-dhùnadh mun mholadh, mun lèirmheas a tha e air a dhèanamh air a' mholadh a chaidh a dhèanamh o thùs, a' gabhail a-steach geàrr-chunntas de na puingeann a chaidh a thogail tron phròiseas co-chomhairleachaidh agus freagairt na comhairle dhaibh.

Feumaidh a' chomhairle aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannach fhoillseachadh trì seachdainean mus tig e gu co-dhùnadh deireannach. Far a bheil comhairle a' moladh sgoil a dhùnadh, feumaidh e na dìleasanachan reachdail air fad a tha ann an Achd 2010 a choileanadh, a' gabhail a-steach a bhith a' toirt fios do Mhinistearan taobh a-staigh sia làithean-obrach on thig e chun a' cho-dhùnaidh dheireannaich agus a' mìneachadh do luchd-co-chomhairleachaidh an cothrom a tha aca riochdachaidhean a dhèanamh gu na Ministearan.

1.2 Bheachdaich Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh air:

- a' bhuidh a dh'fhaodadh a bhith aig a' mholadh air clann agus daoine òga bho na sgoiltean; luchd-cleachdaidh sam bith eile; clann a dh'fhaodadh a bhith nan sgoilearan taobh a-staigh dà bhliadhna bho cheann-là foillseachaidh na h-aithisg molaidh; agus clann agus daoine òga eile ann an roinn na comhairle;
- buaidh sam bith eile a dh'fhaodadh a bhith aig a' mholadh;
- mar a tha a' chomhairle am beachd droch bhuidh sam bith a dh'fhaodadh èirigh bhon mholadh, a lùghdachadh no a sheachnadh; agus
- na buannachdan foghlaim a tha a' chomhairle am beachd a thigeadh bho bhith a' cur a' mholaidh seo an cèill, agus adhbharan na comhairle airson a bhith a' tighinn chun nam beachdan sin.

1.3 Ann a bhith ag ullachadh na h-aithisg seo, ghabh Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh os làimh na gnìomhan a leanas:

- a bhith an làthair aig a' choinneamh phoblaich a chaidh a cumail air 27 Gearran 2018 mu mholaidhean na Comhairle;
- beachdachadh air na pàipearan iomchaidh air fad a chaidh a thoirt leis a' chomhairle a thaobh a' mholaidh, gu sònraichte an aithris air buannachdan foghlaim agus na sgrìobhainnean co-chomhairleachaidh buntainneach, fianais sgrìobhte agus labhairteach bho phàrantan agus bho dhaoine eile;
- coinneamhan gus comhairle a chur ri luchd-ùidh anns gach fear de na buidhnean sgoile co-cheangailte a bha air an ainmeachadh sa mholadh agus far an deach conaltradh sgrìobhte fhaighinn mun deidhinn. Chaidh na coinneamhan sin an cumail aig Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, Àrd-sgoil Cheann Loch Liobhainn agus Àrd-sgoil Àird nam Murchan; agus
- còmhraidhean fa leth mar a bha Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh a' meas iomchaidh.

**2. Am Pròiseas Co-chomhairleachaidh**

2.1 Rinn Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd co-chomhairleachadh air a mholadh (mholaidhean) a rèir cumhachan *Achd nan Sgoiltean (Co-chomhairleachadh) (Alba) 2010* agus a rèir nan atharrachaidhean ann an *Achd na Cloinne agus Dhaoine Òga (Alba) 2014*.

2.2 Lean am pròiseas co-chomhairleachaidh bho 29 Faoilleach 2018 gu 16 Màrt 2018. Rè an ama sin, chum a' chomhairle coinneamh phoblach ann am Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. Fhritheil dithis a' choinneamh. Chaidh fios a-mach sna pàipearan ionadail agus air seirbheisean air-loidhne na comhairle. Chaidh fios a thoirt do bhuidhnean reachdail, a' gabhail a-steach pàrantan/luchd-cùraim, clann,

luchd-obrach agus Bòrd na Gàidhlig mun cho-chomhairleachadh. Chaidh fios a thoirt do bhuidhnean Gàidhlig eile cuideachd. Dh'fhoillsich a' chomhairle pàipearan mun cho-chomhairleachadh air an làrach-lìn. Chuaireadh iad pàipearan cuideachd gu làn raon de luchd-ùidh is bhuidhnean eile le ùidh sa chùis. Chuir a' chomhairle ullachaidhean iomchaidh nan àite gus cothrom a thoirt don fheadhainn aig an robh ùidh sa chùis freagairt a thoirt don mholadh, an dà chuid gu eileagtronaigeach no air pàipear. Fhuaras deich freagairtean sgrìobhte. Bha iad seo a' gabhail a-steach freagairt bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig anns an robh iad a' toirt taic dhan mholadh sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh airson FMG. San fharsaingeachd thog freagairtean eile grunnan uallachaidhean reusanta. Mar thoradh air iarrtas on chomhairle, rinn ceannard Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar co-chomhairleachadh leis a' chloinn. San fharsaingeachd, thug a' chlann taic do mholadh na comhairle sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh airson FMG, le glè bheag de chùraman air an togail.

### 3. Taobhan Foghlaim a' Mholaidh

3.1 Tha moladh Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd mar fhreagairt air reachdas a tha airson sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh airson solar FMG. Tha a' chomhairle a' toirt air adhart dleastanas a bhith a' toirt taic do agus ag adhartachadh solar FMG. Ged a tha a' mhòr-chuid de luchd-ùidh san fharsaingeachd a' toirt taic don mholadh tar-ruigheach, tha an comas ann misneachd cuid den luchd-ùidh a mheudachadh a thaobh cuid de thaobhan den mholadh. Ann a bhith a' crìochnachadh na h-aithisg, bu chòir dhan chomhairle a dhèanamh soilleir ciamar a bheir iad air adhart cuid de dh'uallachaidhean reusanta. Tha na h-uallachaidhean sin air an liostadh gu h-ìosal.

3.2 Bhruidhinn an luchd-ùidh a choinnich ri Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh gu deimhinneach mun dealas a thaobh Foghlaim Gàidhlig. Chomharraich iad gu bheil a' Ghàidhlig mar nì sònraichte ann an sgìre Loch Abar san fharsaingeachd. Mar sin, bha beagan den luchd-ùidh a' faireachdainn gum bu chòir dhan cho-chomhairleachadh aig an aon àm a bhith air sgìre Loch Abar air fad a ghabhail a-steach. Bhiodh seo, bha iad a' faireachdainn air sealladh nas fharsaingeachd adhbharachadh de FMG thar Loch Abar. Bha grunnan den luchd-ùidh nach robh dhen bheachd gun robh feum ann a bhith a' stèidheachadh sgìrean-sgoile airson FMG. Bha cuid eile den luchd-ùidh nach robh a' faireachdainn gun robh e riatanach a bhith a' stèidheachadh sgìrean-sgoile gus am biodh cothrom air FMG a' fantainn fosgailte do na h-uile. San aithisg dheireannaich, feumaidh aithris na comhairle mu bhuannachdan foghlaim mìneachadh gu soilleir a' bhuannachd a bhios ann do FMG air feadh sgìre Loch Abar a bhith a' coinneachadh ris an riatanas reachdail seo.

3.3 Thog luchd-ùidh uallachaidhean co-cheangailte ri planadh ro-innleachdail a thaobh seasmhachd FMG. Bha seo a' gabhail a-steach soilleireachd agus, ann an cuid de chùisean, a' togail mothachadh air slatan-tomhais na comhairle a thaobh a bhith a' toirt còmhaidhail don t-solar FMG. Bha beagan den luchd-ùidh dhen bheachd gun robh an t-slat-tomhais a bha air a stèidheachadh mar astar siubhail reusanta airson a bhith a' faighinn FMG ro chuibhreachail. Bha cuid eile ag iarraidh tuilleadh fiosrachaidh mun dòigh anns am biodh a' chomhairle a' coinneachadh ris na gealltanasan a tha iad a' toirt seachad sa phàipear molaidh, fo chumhachan Achd an Fhoghlaim (Alba), gus coinneachadh ris na h-iarrtasan solar ùr FMG a stèidheachadh. Bha seo gu sònraichte fìor mar thoradh air na cùisean aithnichte gu

nàiseanta a thaobh a bhith a' fastadh thidsearan FMG. Bu chòir dhan dreach dheireannach den aithisg na cùisean sin a shoilleireachadh.

3.4 Chomharraich cuid den luchd-ùidh cùisean a dh'fhaodadh a bhith co-cheangailte ri cothromas agus co-ionannachd nam b' e is gun deigheadh am moladh air adhart. Tha seo mar thoradh gur e dìreach cuid de na bun-sgoiltean a tha co-cheangailte ri Àrd-sgoil Cheann Loch Liobhainn agus Àrd-sgoil Loch Abar a tha air an ainmeachadh mar phàirt de sgìre-sgoile Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. Tha a' chomhairle a' faireachdainn gu bheil iad air sgoiltean a chomharrachadh dham bheil an t-astar siubhail reusanta agus tarraingeach do phàrantan, mar a tha air iarraidh orra san Stiùireadh reachdail. Bha beachd làidir ann gum bu chòir don bhuidheann sgoile air fad a bha co-cheangailte ri Àrd-sgoil Cheann Loch Liobhainn a bhith air a ghabhail a-steach anns an sgìre-sgoile, agus nach b' e a-mhàin dìreach Bun-sgoil Naomh Brìghde. Ach, bha uallach air cuid gum faodadh droch bhuaidh a bhith aig seo air àireamhan Àrd-sgoil Cheann Loch Liobhainn san àm ri teachd. Ann an cùis Bhun-sgoil Bhaile a' Chaolais, tha luchd-ùidh ag aithris gu bheil ùidh aig beagan phàrantan cothrom fhaighinn air FMG airson an cuid chloinne. Tha iad a' faireachdainn gun deigheadh coinneachadh ris an ùidh seo na b' fheàrr tro bhith a' frithealadh Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar seach a bhith a' stèidheachadh solar FMG mar phàirt de Achd an Fhoghlaim (Alba) 2016. Feumaidh a' chomhairle a bhith soilleir gu bheil measaidhean mu ùidh phàrantan ann am FMG mar stèidh den cho-dhùnadh dheireannach aca ann a bhith a' daingneachadh na sgìre-sgoile airson Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. Bu chòir dhaibh cuideachd dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil iad a' cur ullachaidhean ann an àite a shàsaicheas iarrtas san àm ri teachd airson FMG.

3.5 Bha dùbhlàn làidir an aghaidh moladh sam bith a dh'fhaodadh a bhith a' ciallachadh gum biodh sgoilearan a dh'fhaodadh a bhith a' frithealadh Bun-sgoil Àird Ghobhair a bhith air an oideachadh ann an FMG taobh a-muigh sgìre-sgoile co-cheangailte ri Àrd-sgoil Àird nam Murchan. San aithisg dheireannaich aca, bu chòir dhan chomhairle ainmeachadh nach eil am moladh aca a' gabhail a-steach sgìre-sgoile meadhan na Beurla airson Bun-sgoil Àird Ghobhair ann an sgìre-sgoile Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

#### 4. Geàrr-iomradh

Tha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' toirt air adhart dleastanas a bhith a' toirt taic do agus ag adhartachadh FMG le bhith a' stèidheachadh sgìre-sgoile airson Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. Tha iad cuideachd a' cur nan ullachaidhean a tha ann aig an àm a tha an làthair a thaobh àrd-sgoiltean co-cheangailte ann an riochd foirmeil. Ann a bhith a' crìochnachadh na h-aithisg aige, bu chòir dhan chomhairle leantainn air adhart a bhith an sàs le luchd-ùidh gus taobhan den mholadh a shoilleireachadh agus gus dèiligeadh ri uallachaidhean. Bu chòir dhaibh tuilleadh mìneachaidh a dhèanamh air an dòigh sa bheil na prionnsabalan aca mu 'astar reusanta' ag adhartachadh còir air FMG. Gu sònraichte, a thaobh sgoiltean a tha sna sgìrean-sgoile aig an àm a tha an làthair nach bi sna sgìrean-sgoile FMG a tha air am moladh. Tha luchd-ùidh a' faireachdainn gu bheil na sgoiltean sin faisg air làimh agus gum bi clann a' call a-mach. Bu chòir do dh'aithris na comhairle a bhith a' brosnachadh tuilleadh misneachd mun dòigh anns am bi iad a' coinneachadh ri

iarrtasan san àm ri teachd airson FMG a tha taobh a-muigh na sgìre-sgoile a tha air a mholadh airson Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar.

**Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh  
Foghlam Alba  
An Giblean 2018**

