

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE

The proposal is for a new community school to be built in Dunvegan, Isle of Skye, replacing the current Dunvegan Primary School, Struan Primary School, Knockbreck Primary School and Edinbane Primary School.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

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

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

- To discontinue education provision at the existing Dunvegan, Struan, Knockbreck and Edinbane Primary Schools
- To establish a new amalgamated community Primary School for North West Skye, on a new site in the village of Dunvegan.
- To combine the existing school catchments of Dunvegan, Struan, Knockbreck and Edinbane Schools to serve the new amalgamated Primary School (a map of the existing catchments is attached as **Appendix A**.)
- The proposed changes, if approved, will take place within 3 years.

Background

1.1 This proposal has been brought forward as part of the pan-Highland Sustainable School Estate Review.

1.2 The proposal was informed by an extensive engagement process and option appraisal methodology undertaken in accordance with current Scottish Government guidelines. The option appraisal report, which was produced by Caledonian Economics Limited (Cal Ec.) the Highland Council's contracted partner for the SSER, is attached as **Appendix B**:

A key aspect of the Options Appraisal was a qualitative comparison of the options under consideration carried out in a workshop environment with the appropriate specialists from the Council and Cal Ec.

1.3 The qualitative assessment examined issues such as Learning and Achievement for all, Cooperative/Flexible Teaching and Support for Learning, Peer Group Challenge/Group Work/Cooperative Learning, Access to appropriate ICT infrastructure, Early Years education, Continuity and Progression, Management and Leadership, Professional Learning Communities, Gàidhlig (Gaelic) Provision, Recreation/Team Games/Active Schools, Musical Group and Performing Arts Activities, Social Interaction, Extra Curricular Activities/interests, Health and Wellbeing, Inclusion, Pastoral Care,

Community identity, the Community Use of Facilities, Interaction with the Community, Travel distance, time, risk and impact on community, Wrap around care, Planned Housing Developments, Opportunities for Co-location with other bodies, Support and specialist services, Health and Safety of staff or pupils, School identity, and healthy options for school travel.

- 1.4 A fully copy of the discussion and conclusions of the Qualitative Assessment Workshop can be found at pages 33-44 of Appendix B.
- 1.5 The proposals are advanced within the wider context of demographic change in the area. Population projections for the wider Skye & Lochalsh area suggest that we might see an overall population increase of around 3% over the next decade, but as the population is ageing this will be accompanied by a fall of around 8% in the number of primary age pupils. We expect to see a slight increase in the number of pupils in the short term as the increase in birth rates in the first decade of the current century works through the school system, but the medium to long term trends in pupil numbers will be downwards due to the age profile of the population. The level of change is expected to vary across the area but there is no evidence to suggest that the position in North West Skye will differ from the historic pattern over the last decade.

Current Details – Dunvegan Primary School

- 2.1 Dunvegan Primary School is a non-denominational school serving a wide area of north-west Skye. It provides education in both English (EM) and Gaelic (GM). The school has 4 classrooms, one of which is located within a demountable unit. Pre-school provision is located in another demountable unit on site. There is a small games hall and a dining room located in modular accommodation separate from the main school building. There is also a grass playing field. Office accommodation is a particular weakness, consisting of a cramped converted cupboard which is shared by the Head Teacher and the school clerical assistant. There is no proper reception area. Toilet fittings require upgrading. There is no school library. The playground is large but the shape is not ideal given modern requirements for supervision and safety. There is a car park although again its location is not ideal.
- 2.2 Currently the early years provision consists of a GM pre-school class with 6 children. The estimated roll in August 2014 is 6 pupils. In the past the school has operated an EM pre-school class. However, this is currently “mothballed” due to a lack of children.
- 2.3 The school has a current roll of 53. The expected roll for August 2014 is 43, comprising 30 EM and 13 GM pupils. Current combined roll projections for future years are as follows:

2015-16	- 40
2016-17	- 37
2017-18	- 33
2018-19	- 31
2019-20	- 27
2020-21	- 26
2021-22	- 28

2022-23	- 28
2023-24	- 27
2024-25	- 28
2025-26	- 28
2026-27	- 28
2027-28	- 29
2028-29	- 29

2.4 Details of past placing requests have not been provided due to the very low numbers involved and the need to avoid the identification of pupils.

2.5 The population living within the catchment area has increased marginally by around 1% over the last decade. There are five potential housing sites in Dunvegan with a capacity of 57 houses but only one has planning permission, and there is no current activity on that site. The forecasts assume that 8 houses will be built each year, similar to the historic average over recent years when most of the development was on single plot or small sites.

The school roll is forecast to fall and this is due to low birth rates in recent years which are assumed to continue. However, estimates of the number of women of child bearing age living in the area suggest that this rate is unusually low, and that if the current age profile is maintained we might expect to see a rise in the number of births to 5 – 6 per year giving a school roll in the region of 40, but this will not be achievable if the population continues to “age” as it has in recent years.

2.6 The school has a permanent capacity of 50, and a capacity of 100 taking into account temporary accommodation. Currently the two EM classes are located within the main building and the single GM class within a demountable unit. Based on the permanent capacity available, the anticipated August 2014 EM roll is 30 pupils, which represents 60% use of capacity, whilst the anticipated GM roll of 13 pupils represents 26% use of the existing temporary capacity.

2.7 The Highland Council assesses all of its schools for Suitability and Condition, in line with the Scottish Government’s School Estate Management guidelines. Schools are assessed on a scale with the ratings “A” (good) “B” (satisfactory), “C” (poor) and “D” (bad). Dunvegan Primary School is currently rated as “B” for educational suitability and “C” for building condition.

2.8 The scores for each component part of the Suitability Assessment are as follows:

Learning and Teaching General:	B
Internal Social:	B
Internal Facilities	C
External Social	B
External Facilities	B

2.9 On average 26 pupils (49%) of the total school roll take paid school meals whilst a further 10 pupils (19%) are entitled to free school meals.

2.10 The most recent HMle report was published in December 2007. The school was assessed as “Very Good” on 2 aspects, “Good” on 8 aspects, “Adequate”

on 4 aspects and “Weak” on one aspect, which was Accommodation and Facilities.

2.11 The anticipated year group numbers for English Medium for August 2014, based on current enrolments, are as follows:

P1 – 0
P2 – 3
P3 – 7
P4 – 4
P5 – 7
P6 – 4
P7 – 5

The class structure is anticipated to be P2 to P4 – 14 pupils and P5 to P7 - 16 pupils.

2.12 The anticipated GM year group numbers for August 2014, based on current enrolments, are as follows:

P1 – 1
P2 – 2
P3 – 1
P4 – 2
P5 – 0
P6 – 5
P7 – 2

Pupils will be organised into a single P1-7 class.

2.13 The 2013-14 staffing entitlements, as per the Council’s Devolved School Management policy are as follows;

Associate (Cluster) Head Teacher, responsible for Dunvegan and Edinbane Schools

Unpromoted Teachers – 3.50 FTE

Class Contact Time Teachers – 0.40 FTE

Clerical Assistant – 18 hours per week

Playground Supervisor – 6.25 hours per week

The school’s pre-school class is staffed by a Nursery Assistant at 19.50 hours per week and a Nursery Auxiliary at 15 hours per week.

In addition 0.30 FTE of ASN teaching staff and 28.75 hours per week of ASN non-teaching staff are allocated to the school.

The Catering and Cleaning Service employs the following staff at the school;

Cook 3 - 23 hours per week

Cook 1 -16.75 hours per week

Cleaning Operative – 18.75 hours per week.

2.14 There are 6 school transport routes funded by the Council, which on average carry a total of 37 pupils, with a further 5 pupils travelling on a concessionary

basis. Therefore, approximately 70% of the total school roll access free school transport on a daily basis.

Current Details – Edinbane Primary

- 3.1 Edinbane Primary school serves the village of Edinbane and surrounding area around Loch Greshornish. It is located 8.7 miles from the current Dunvegan Primary School and 9.3 miles from MacDiarmid Primary School. The school has two classrooms and a small dining area (which is however sufficient for the current roll). There is no gym or external PE facility, and pupils generally travel weekly to Dunvegan for PE. Disabled access is poor. The office is an adequate size but is shared by the Head Teacher and the school clerical assistant. Toilets are adequate. There is no proper reception area, no staffroom and no school library. The playground is a mixture of grass and tarmac. There is a playground shelter. The school is adjacent to a minor road and there is a complete lack of car parking or drop-off facilities.
- 3.2 The pre-school class is currently “mothballed” pending the outcome of the Sustainable School Estate Review for the Portree High School Associated School Group. If the proposal in this paper is agreed, the mothballing of the pre-school class will continue until the new school comes into operation.
- 3.3 The school has a current roll of 6. The expected roll for August 2014 is also 6. Current roll projections for future years are as follows:
- | | | |
|---------|---|----|
| 2015-16 | - | 7 |
| 2016-17 | - | 7 |
| 2017-18 | - | 6 |
| 2018-19 | - | 8 |
| 2019-20 | - | 9 |
| 2020-21 | - | 10 |
| 2021-22 | - | 11 |
| 2022-23 | - | 9 |
| 2023-24 | - | 11 |
| 2024-25 | - | 11 |
| 2025-26 | - | 11 |
| 2026-27 | - | 11 |
| 2027-28 | - | 12 |
| 2028-29 | - | 12 |
- 3.4 Details of past placing requests have not been provided due to the very low numbers involved and the need to avoid the identification of pupils.
- 3.5 The population living within the catchment area has grown by around 14% over the last decade. There are three potential housing sites in Edinbane with a capacity of 40 houses but planning permission for one site has lapsed and a planning application has been received for a change of use which will not result in traditional housing. The forecasts assume that 4 houses will be built each year, similar to the historic average over recent years when most of the development was on single plot or small sites.
- 3.6 The school has a permanent capacity of 50. The August 2014 roll of 6 pupils therefore represents 12% use of capacity.

3.7 Edinbane Primary is currently assessed as “C” for both Suitability and Condition. This indicates an assessment of the accommodation as “Poor”.

3.8 The scores for each component part of the Suitability Assessment are as follows:

Learning and Teaching General:	B
Internal Social:	C
Internal Facilities	C
External Social	B
External Facilities	D

3.9 On average 5 pupils (83%) of the total school roll take school meals. The number entitled to free school meals is not broken down to avoid the identification of pupils.

3.10 The most recent HMle report was published in November 2009. The Primary School was assessed as “Good” on all 5 aspects on which they were assessed. The work of the nursery was rated “Very Good” on 3 aspects and “Good” on 2 aspects.

3.11 The anticipated year group numbers for August 2014, based on current enrolments, are as follows:

P1 – 0
P2 – 1
P3 – 0
P4 – 0
P5 – 2
P6 – 0
P7 – 3

Pupils will be organised into a single P1-7 class.

3.12 The 2013-14 staffing entitlements, as per the Council’s Devolved School Management policy are as follows;

Associate (Cluster) Head Teacher, responsible for Dunvegan and Edinbane Schools
Unpromoted Teachers – 1.00 FTE
Class Contact Time Teachers – 0.10 FTE
Clerical Assistant – 16 hours per week

In addition, 10 hours per week of ASN non-teaching staff are allocated to the school.

The Catering and Cleaning Service employs the following staff at the school;

Cook 1 -11.00 hours per week
Cleaning Operative – 7.50 hours per week.

3.13 There is 1 school transport route funded by the Council, which on average carries 1 entitled and 1 concessionary pupil. Therefore, approximately 17% of the total school roll access free school transport on a daily basis.

Current Details – Knockbreck Primary School

4.1 Knockbreck Primary School serves the Waternish peninsula. It is situated towards the farther end of the peninsula and is beyond the main settlements. It is 11.6 miles by road from either of the two nearest schools (Dunvegan and Edinbane). It is a single classroom school with a dining hall and another room accommodating the pre-school class. There is no internal or external PE facility. PE is delivered in the village hall and requires a bus journey. Some internal doors are too narrow for disabled access. The staffroom is located upstairs in what was the schoolhouse and has no disabled access. The office is shared by the Head Teacher and school clerical assistant and there is no proper reception area. The playground is a good size with both tarmac and grass but the site is very exposed. Adequate car parking is available.

4.2 The school a pre-school class, currently with 3 children. Two pre-school children expected for the 2014-15 session.

4.3 The school has a current roll of 4. The expected roll for August 2014 is 5
Current roll projections for future years are as follows:

2015/16 - 5
2016/17 - 6
2017/18 - 8
2018/19 - 10
2019/20 - 11
2020/21 - 13
2021/22 - 13
2022/23 - 13
2023/24 - 14
2024/25 - 13
2025/26 - 13
2026/27 - 13
2027/28 - 13
2028/29 - 13

4.4 There have been no placing requests either in or out of Knockbreck Primary School during the sessions 2010-11 – to 2014-15.

4.5 The population living within the catchment area has fallen by around 15% over the last decade. There are no large building sites in the area and the forecasts assume that 2 new houses will be built each year, similar to the historic average over recent years when most of the development was on single plot or small sites.

4.6 The school has a permanent capacity of 25. The August 2014 roll of 5 pupils therefore represents 20% use of capacity.

4.7 Knockbreck Primary is currently assessed as “B” for Condition and “C” for Suitability.

4.8 The scores for each component part of the Suitability Assessment are as follows:

Learning and Teaching General:	C
Internal Social:	C
Internal Facilities	D
External Social	B
External Facilities	B

4.9 On average 5 pupils (100%) of the total school roll take school meals. The number entitled to free school meals is not broken down to avoid the identification of pupils.

4.10 The most recent HMIE report was published in May 2010. The Primary School was assessed as "Very Good" on all 5 aspects. The nursery was also rated as "Very Good" on all 5 aspects.

4.11 The anticipated year group numbers for August 2014, based on current enrolments, are as follows:

P1 – 2
P2 – 0
P3 – 0
P4 – 0
P5 – 1
P6 – 1
P7 – 1

Pupils will be organised into a single P1-7 class.

4.12 The 2013-14 staffing entitlements, as per the Council's Devolved School Management policy are as follows;

Associate (Cluster) Head Teacher, responsible for Knockbreck and MacDiarmid Schools

Unpromoted Teachers – 1.00 FTE

Class Contact Time Teachers – 0.10 FTE

Clerical Assistant – 16 hours per week

The pre-school class is staffed by a Nursery Assistant at 19.50 hours per week.

The Catering and Cleaning Service employs the following staff at the school.

Cook 2 – 20.00 hours per week

Cleaning Operative – 7.50 hours per week.

4.13 There is 1 school transport route funded by the Council, which on average carries 3 entitled pupils. Therefore, 60% of the total school roll access free school transport on a daily basis.

School Details – Struan Primary School

- 5.1 Struan Primary school serves the area around Bracadale roughly from Ose to Drynoch and along the B885. It is located 8.8 miles from the current Dunvegan Primary School and 11 miles from Carbost Primary School. It is a 2-classroom school with a GP/dining room and a demountable building formerly used as a pre-school class but now used for Physical Education (PE). The school has a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) but there are no changing facilities for PE. Accessibility for the disabled is very poor - there is a ramp at the back but internal doors are narrow and there is an internal step at one end of the main classroom. Disabled access is not presently possible to the demountable building. Office accommodation is poor with the Head Teacher and school clerical assistant sharing a very small office, which is unsuitably located for reception purposes. Toilets are in good condition and there is provision for the disabled. There is a spacious playground and adequate car parking given the size of the school.
- 5.2 The pre-school class is currently “mothballed” pending the outcome of the Sustainable School Estate Review for the Portree High School Associated School Group.
- 5.3 The school has a current roll of 6. The expected roll for August 2014 is 4. Current roll projections for future years are as follows:
- 2015/16 - 5
 - 2016/17 - 6
 - 2017/18 - 7
 - 2018/19 - 9
 - 2019/20 - 11
 - 2020/21 - 11
 - 2021/22 - 12
 - 2022/23 - 12
 - 2023/24 - 12
 - 2024/25 - 12
 - 2025/26 - 12
 - 2026/27 - 12
 - 2027/28 - 12
 - 2028/29 - 13
- 5.4 Details of past placing requests have not been provided due to the very low numbers involved and the need to avoid the identification of pupils.
- 5.5 The population living within the catchment area has fallen by around 16% over the last decade. There are no large building sites in the area and the forecasts assume that 1 new house will be built each year, similar to the historic average over recent years when most of the development was on single plot or small sites.
- 5.6 The school has a permanent capacity of 50. The August 2014 roll of 4 pupils therefore represents 8% use of capacity.
- 5.7 Struan Primary School is currently rated as “B” for Suitability and “C” for Condition.

5.8 The scores for each component part of the Suitability Assessment are as follows:

Learning and Teaching General:	B
Internal Social:	B
Internal Facilities	B
External Social	B
External Facilities	C

5.9 On average 4 pupils (67%) of the total school roll take school meals. The number entitled to free school meals is not broken down to avoid the identification of pupils.

5.10 The most recent HMle report was published in August 2011. The school was assessed as ““Good” on 2 aspects, “Satisfactory” on 2 aspects and “Weak” on 1 aspect.

5.11 The anticipated year group numbers for August 2014, based on current enrolments, are as follows:

P1 – 1
P2 – 1
P3 – 0
P4 – 0
P5 – 1
P6 – 0
P7 – 1

Pupils will be organised into a single P1-7 class.

5.12 The 2013-14 staffing entitlements, as per the Council’s Devolved School Management policy are as follows;

Associate (Cluster) Head Teacher, responsible for Struan and Carbost Schools
Unpromoted Teachers – 1.00 FTE
Class Contact Time Teachers – 0.10 FTE
Clerical Assistant – 16.00 hours per week

In addition, 5.50 hours per week of ASN non-teaching staff are allocated to the school.

The Catering and Cleaning Service employs the following staff at the school;

Cook 1 – 8.75 hours per week
Cleaning Operative – 9.50 hours per week

5.13 There is 1 school transport route funded by the Council, which on average carries 2 entitled pupils. Therefore, 33% of the total school roll access free school transport on a daily basis.

Proposed New School

- 6.1 The option appraisal report produced by Cal Ec., in conjunction with Council officials, recommended that a new amalgamated school is built in Dunvegan, to replace the existing Dunvegan, Edinbane, Struan and Knockbreck Primary Schools. There are currently two options for the site of a new school. The first option would involve building the new school within the grounds of the current school. The second option would involve building the new school at Lonmore, adjacent to the proposed community sports facility.
- 6.2 The option appraisal report can be found at **Appendix B**.
- 6.4 The new school, if agreed, would be a community school reflecting the principles outlined in the Scottish Government's School Estate Strategy. The detail of the facilities to be included would be the subject of further discussion with parents and community representatives, but in broad terms the new school would be designed with similar features to other recent new build primary schools in Highland, and as outlined below.
- 6.5 The highest projected total roll of the new school, over the next 15 years, is 66. The new school would be built with four classrooms, allowing for a total capacity of 100 pupils, and a combination of two EM and two GM classes, or alternatively 3 classes for one element and one class for the other. Pre-school accommodation would be provided for both EM and GM pupils, and the pre-school accommodation would be suitable for use by breakfast clubs and after-school clubs, should any be created.
- 6.6 The design concept for the new school would provide a modern purpose-built facility for pupils, staff and the wider community. It would be a unique design solution, influenced by good practice elsewhere and the views of the local communities in NW Skye.
- 6.7 It would be important to include a degree of flexibility and adaptability within the design in order to provide options to alter spaces in the future in response to the changing needs of the school to respond to Curriculum for Excellence and other developments. This approach is likely to optimise the use of available space.
- 6.8 The needs of every child would be placed at the centre of developing the design in recognition of the transitions from pre-school to primary and ultimately to secondary education. The design would be planned to enable the flexibility required to meet the evolving needs of a Curriculum for Excellence and other developments, including:

The Pre School educational area having a separate entrance/reception and sufficient space to accommodate a variety of activities to support early years learning, including a direct link to a secure and dedicated external play area, together with close internal links with the infant department in order to encourage regular collaborative learning through active play and to enhance the transition between pre-school and Primary 1.

- Learning and teaching spaces for primary age pupils which have access to internal shared activity areas and which have access to external teaching spaces which will be accessible through external classroom doors, providing flexibility and opportunities to maximise the use of space inside and outside the building.

A WI-Fi enabled environment which means that mobile ICT devices could be used flexibly throughout the school. Also, each classroom will have a Smart Board.

- Gym hall and adjacent dining area which can be used flexibly as one large space or a combination of smaller spaces to meet the needs of the school and the wider community by, for example, providing the space to deliver activities to support physical education, school dining, out-of-school care and community activities generally.
- A variety of other spaces to support activities within the school, including general purpose space and spaces specifically designed for pupils with Additional Support Needs.
- Design which will maximise the use of natural daylight and natural ventilation, together with heating, ventilation and electrical systems which provide modern requirements in an energy efficient and sustainable manner.
- Security design features incorporated inside and outside the building to support and facilitate the safe management of all users of the building, with external public areas of the site being separated from the private secure pupil play areas
- The provision of a flood-lit Multi-Use Games Area which will provide a school and community facility in all seasons.
- The provision of a room for community use out with school hours.
- The landscaping around the school will be designed in conjunction with the school users to ensure that there is an interesting “play and learning” environment.

Safe access to the school with the appropriate arrangements for those arriving/departing on foot, by bicycle, by bus or by car.

- 6.9 The above overview provides an outline of the design opportunities that exist taking into account recent experience with similar primary school projects elsewhere within Highland. These opportunities will be developed in conjunction with the school communities to ensure that the new school design takes account of the aspirations of future users of the facility.

Educational Benefits

- 7.1 Highland Council is of the view that the school environment should be of a quality that sustains and improves education provision, pupil performance and outcomes for the young people of Highland.
- 7.2 With the above aim in mind, Highland Council has adopted the above indicators in reviewing its' school estate:

- Pupils should be educated in facilities which are rated at least category B for each of Condition and Suitability.
- Pupils should be members of an age-appropriate peer group.
- Pupils should have the opportunity to engage in the widest possible range of activities beyond the core curriculum, including music, sports, drama and art.
- Pupils with Additional Support Needs should be educated in the most appropriate local setting.
- Pupils should not ordinarily be required to travel for longer than 30 minutes from the nearest classified road pick-up point to school (primary) although it is recognised that this may not always be possible in a rural Council area such as Highland.
- School facilities should be of a size appropriate to the delineated area that they serve, paying due regard to demographic trends.
- School delineated areas should reflect geography, travel routes and population distribution.
- Safe school transport should be provided and safe traffic management in and around school sites should be implemented.
- Teachers should be members of a professional learning community comprising at least 3 members located in the same facility.
- The implications of school location to local communities should be considered.
- Schools, wherever possible, should be located where there is a recognised village or other built up community.

7.3 In 2009 the Scottish Government also set out its vision for the Future School Estate in Scotland, in 'Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future'. Local Authorities are required to take account of these aspirations in planning changes to their school estate, namely:

- All children and young people will be educated in, and community users will use, schools that are 'fit for purpose' in terms of condition, suitability and sufficiency;
- Schools are well-designed, accessible, inclusive learning environments that inspire and drive new thinking and change and which support the delivery of high quality educational experiences through Curriculum for Excellence;
- Schools are integral parts of the communities they serve, with pupils making use of community facilities and communities accessing school facilities;
- Schools accommodate and provide a range of services, activities and facilities that make a difference to people's health and well-being, to sustaining economic growth and to the strength and vibrancy of communities;
- A sustainable school estate whose design, construction and operation is environmentally and energy efficient; contributes directly to delivering the year-on-year reductions in greenhouse gas emissions introduced by The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, which is resilient to the impact of climate change and which leads by example in matters of environmental performance;
- A school estate that is efficiently run and that maximises value for money;
- A school estate which is flexible and responsive - both to changes in demand for school places and to learners' and teachers' requirements and wishes, and where the beneficial impact of change is maximised by

thorough consultation and engagement with users and stakeholders.

7.4 The new school would provide a significant number of educational benefits, judged against both the Highland and National criteria set out above.

- The new school would be of modern design, environmentally efficient, and allowing pupils the opportunity to enjoy a comfortable, naturally lit and well ventilated environment designed to meet the needs of modern learners and teachers; meeting the requirements for “A” assessments for both Suitability and Condition.
- Poor quality school accommodation facilities can be dispiriting for pupils, staff and parents, can limit the effectiveness of teaching (for example when time has to be spent travelling to offsite facilities, or when a disproportionate amount of staff time is spent on building issues) and can pose issues for the safety and security of children. The new school would offer good quality accommodation that provides a safe, healthy and visually stimulating environment, flexible teaching spaces, better facilities for visiting specialists and parents/the community, and a healthier, less stressful environment.
- Pupils would be able to work in groups with others of a similar age and ability, challenging each other and learning together. These opportunities are severely limited in the 3 smaller schools at present. While this can happen to an extent by moving pupils between schools during the school day from time to time, co-location is clearly an advantage.
- Visiting teachers would be able to spend less time travelling between schools and therefore more time with pupils. The number of pupils in the school would justify spending more time there.
- There would be a greater range of opportunities available for pupils to participate in a wide range of team sports and active recreational activities. Some of these benefits arise from larger pupil numbers (e.g. to form teams of similar age and size), partly because a larger staff and parent body increases the likelihood of interested adults leading a range of activities, and partly through improved facilities in a new school.
- As with sports, there is a greater likelihood of pupils benefitting from a wider range of solo and group musical and artistic opportunities.
- The new school would provide an environment where there would be sufficient teaching staff in a school to allow them to work together in curriculum development initiatives, affording each other professional support, sharing best practice and developing skills. While this can happen to an extent across schools, co-location is clearly an advantage.
- The new school could also improve pupils’ chances of reaching their full potential by allowing teaching staff more easily to employ a range of flexible teaching approaches including cooperative teaching to meeting the needs of all pupils especially those who are experiencing particular difficulties or who require additional support.
- The level to which pupils are able to become skilled in social interaction will depend to an extent on the opportunities afforded to them. The forging of close friendships and the development of self-esteem would be enhanced by each pupil being enabled to be part of an age appropriate peer group of a sufficient size to allow a range of interactions and relationships to form and reform.

- The new school would be a community hub, incorporating additional facilities for community use (see paragraph 6.8 above) and with potential for the site to be combined with additional community sports facilities.
- The new school would allow for more efficient use of available capacity.

7.5 An additional factor to consider is that, at present, the Head Teachers in some of the smaller schools have to spend time arranging staffing so as to ensure that staff are not placed in a “lone worker” situation, to the detriment of pupils and staff alike.

7.6 In summary, a number of positive benefits derive either from the numbers of pupils and staff reaching or coming close to the ‘ideal’ of three classes identified in other studies, or from the opportunity to design a building ideally suited for the delivery of a modern education.

Effects on School Transport

8.1 Currently the following school transport routes operate to the 4 schools.

Dunvegan PS for Halistra to Fairy Bridge
 Dunvegan PS Fairy Bridge & Edinbane
 Dunvegan PS Borreraig, Uignish R/end
 Dunvegan PS Eabost, Vatten, Roskhill, Orbost
 Dunvegan PS Milovaig, Fasach, Skinidin
 Dunvegan PS from Claigan
 Edinbane PS Kildonan, Fanks
 Knockbreck PS, Portree PS, Portree HS
 Ose via Eabost to Struan PS

Maps of the current and future routes are at **Appendices C and C (1)**.

8.2 It is recognised that the larger merged school implies an increase in the number of pupils entitled to school transport compared to the number who can currently walk/cycle to school, should they choose to do so, and the occasional inconvenience for parents who wish to take their child to/from school during the school day, should they require to do so.

8.3 It is further recognised that pupils within the catchment areas of Knockbreck, Edinbane and Struan schools would have longer journeys to school in the event of the 4 current schools being merged. Distances and approximate journey times between the schools themselves (using the current site of Dunvegan Primary) are as follows:

- Edinbane PS - Dunvegan PS – 8.7 miles, 16 minutes
- Knockbreck PS- Dunvegan PS – 11.6 miles, 28 minutes
- Struan PS- Dunvegan PS – 8.8 miles, 16 minutes.

8.4 Depending on location of their homes, some individual pupils may have travel times that are either shorter or longer than the above timings. This is particularly true for pupils within the current Knockbreck and Struan catchments.

Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements

- 9.1 Under their current management arrangements, the 4 schools operate as part of three cluster arrangements in which the Head Teachers each have responsibility for two schools but have no teaching commitment. Edinbane is clustered with Dunvegan, Knockbreck with MacDiarmid and Struan with Carbost. Based on the current management arrangements were this proposal to go ahead, the new school at Dunvegan, along with MacDiarmid and Carbost, would each be of a size in which Head Teachers, not part of a cluster arrangement would have a teaching commitment. For a variety of reasons many Head Teachers prefer the non-class committed cluster arrangement.
- 9.2 No decisions have yet been taken on the management arrangements for schools under the proposed arrangements, and it is possible that new clustering arrangements could be put in place whereby the new school, along with MacDiarmid and Carbost, would have Head Teachers with no teaching commitment.
- 9.3 There are currently 6 class teaching posts across the 4 schools (excluding the Head Teachers). A merged school would be expected to have a maximum of 4 class teaching posts.
- 9.4 The new school would be entitled to 18 hours per week of clerical support. The school would qualify for a playground supervisor. The new school will also be supported by Facilities Management Assistants. The level of support will be determined by an audit of school and community needs. If required, a Caretaker/Steward might also be employed to service evening and weekend lets.
- 9.5 Both the EM and GM nurseries would be staffed with either one or two Early Years Practitioners, depending on numbers.
- 9.6 The staffing levels for Pupil Support Assistants and Support for Learning Teachers would be allocated according to an evaluation of pupil need, as happens at present.
- 9.7 It is anticipated that the kitchen at the new school would be staffed by a Cook 3 (a cook-in-charge with supervisory responsibilities) at 30 hours per week and a Cook 1 (a catering assistant) at 24 hours per week.

Effect on the Local Community

- 10.1 School letting records for the 4 current schools, for sessions 2012-13 and 2013-14 are set out at **Appendix D**.
- 10.2 The proposed merger would result in a certain loss of facility for the communities of Struan, Knockbreck and Edinbane, in that the school buildings would no longer be available for lets. This would appear to be most significant in the case of Struan and least so at Knockbreck. At Edinbane, an alternative location is available within the local village hall.
- 10.3 A merger of the 4 schools also raises the possibility of a loss of focus and identity in the communities concerned, and possibly less interaction between the school and the individual communities.

- 10.4 Should the merger proceed, the future uses of the four existing school buildings would be determined in accordance with the Council's current asset management policy. Under this policy, the building would be offered first to other Services within the Council. Following that, the Council would be willing to consider bids from each community regarding the future use of the buildings.
- 10.5 Conversely, the creation of a new school would provide an opportunity for new and integrated community facilities for the village of Dunvegan, which could be of benefit to the wider community in North West Skye. The concept of a new school in Dunvegan is envisaged as being co-located with community sports facilities and if this were to come to fruition, would give pupils access to a far higher standard of sport facilities than present.
- 10.6 Similarly, the creation of a new school would allow opportunities to be explored to co-locate other community services. One possibility would be wraparound childcare, if a suitable level of demand were identified. There may also be opportunities to locate staff of the local Family Team (for example social work or health professionals) within the new school.

Financial Consequences

- 11.1 The Table at **Appendix E** sets out the Highland Council's assessment of the Financial Implications of the proposed merger.
- 11.2 The Table at **Appendix F** shows the detail of the current and future transport routes for the new schools, with associated costs. These costs are however, also included within **Appendix E**.

Examination of Alternatives

- 12.1 During the course of the Options Appraisal and the informal consultation, a number of potential alternatives to the proposed mergers were identified or suggested. A full consideration of these can be found at page 28 of **Appendix B**.

Recommendation

- 13.1 Taking the above into account Highland Council recommends that the current Dunvegan, Edinbane, Knockbreck and Struan Primary Schools are merged into a new build school located in Dunvegan.
- 13.2 The Council must formally consult on changes to provision. This consultation paper is issued in terms of the authority's agreed procedures to meet the relevant statutory requirements. Following the consultation period, a report and submissions received will be presented to the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee of the Highland Council.