

Agenda Item	11.
Report No	PEO 12/17

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: People Committee

Date: 23 August 2017

Report Title: Statutory Consultation – Gaelic Medium Catchment Proposals for the Portree ASG

Report By: Director of Care and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This Report seeks Members' agreement to conduct a statutory consultation proposing the establishment of Gaelic Medium catchment areas for the Portree Associated School Group (ASG).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to agree to proceed to statutory consultation, on the basis of the Proposal attached to this Report.

3. Background

- 3.1 There are 174 primary schools in Highland, of which 19 currently offer Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME).
- 3.2 The current arrangements under which pupils access GME are not particularly well defined, and have evolved over time. GM schools do not have defined catchment areas, and current policy is to provide transport “within reasonable travelling distance”. This is often interpreted as meaning up to 15 miles, but there are variations and distances travelled are often longer.

4. New Statutory Guidance

- 4.1 On 1 February 2017 Bòrd na Gàidhlig issued new Statutory Guidance on GME. The Guidance includes a recommendation that local authorities should establish catchment areas for schools that offer GME, and that these catchment areas would normally overlay a number of English Medium (EM) catchment areas. 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.
- 4.2 The establishment of GM catchment areas is subject to statutory consultation under the Schools (Consultation) Act Scotland 2010. These are resource intensive exercises, not only for Highland Council but for Education Scotland, who have to appoint an Inspector to assess each proposal. The Council will be progressing Statutory Consultations to establish GME catchments across those locations in Highland currently offering GME. It will be necessary to stagger the exercise given the volume of GME provision, and other Statutory Consultations to be progressed (new school builds, etc). Further proposals covering other ASGs will be brought to future Committees.

5. Portree ASG

- 5.1 Portree ASG is the first ASG to be focused on for defining GME catchments. A new Gàidhlig medium school is to be opened in Portree in early 2018. It would be appropriate to define the catchment area for that school as soon as possible. There are 5 other primary schools in the ASG offering GME, more than any other ASG in Highland.
- 5.2 The Council’s Proposal Paper (attached as **Appendix 1**) sets out suggested GM catchments for the ASG. If implemented, the proposals would provide entitlement to GME for pupils in all but one of the existing EM catchments in the ASG. The exception is the catchment of Raasay Primary, which has been excluded on the grounds of the length and difficulty of travel for children of primary school age.

6. Implications

- 6.1 **Resource** - The Proposal seeks to maximise access to GME whilst still recognising the savings target set by the Council for GM school transport. Savings will be achieved by the elimination of duplicate transport provision and by moving pupils onto existing high school transport wherever possible. In the case of the Portree ASG, no additional costs are envisaged as a result of the proposal.
- 6.2 **Legal** - The Proposal will be issued for statutory consultation as required by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, It also complies with the provisions for

school transport set out within the Education (Scotland) Act 1980; with the provisions relating to Gaelic Medium Education contained within the Education (Scotland) Act 2016; and with statutory guidance on the creation of GM catchment areas, issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

- 6.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) - There are no specific impacts on equality, poverty or rural issues, beyond those already considered as part of access to GME.
- 6.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** - The Proposal would potentially allow transport to GME over longer distances than at present, but wherever possible this would be provided by means of existing High School transport, thereby minimising any additional greenhouse gas emissions.
- 6.5 **Risk** – There are no identified risks arising specifically from this proposal.
- 6.6 **Gaelic** - The Proposal, if implemented, would clarify the transport entitlement for children accessing Gaelic Medium education within the Portree ASG, and would maximise the opportunities for children to access such provision, within reason.

Designation	Director of Care and Learning
Date	14 August 2017
Authors	Brian Porter, Head of Resources Ian Jackson, Education Officer

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

The proposal is to establish a catchment area for the new Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort-Rìgh, and to simultaneously establish formal catchments for the provision of Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME) for schools within the Portree Associated School Group (ASG).

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

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

- To establish a catchment area for the new Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort-Rìgh. The new catchment for GME will overlay the current catchments of Portree Primary School, Macdiarmid Primary School, and Carbost Primary School.
- To establish a catchment area for the provision of GME at Dunvegan Primary School. The new catchment for GME will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of Dunvegan Primary School, Edinbane Primary School, Knockbreck Primary School, and Struan Primary School.
- To establish a catchment area for the provision of GME at Kilmuir Primary School. The new catchment for GME will overlay the current EM catchments of Kilmuir Primary School and Uig Primary School.
- To establish a catchment area for the provision of GME at Broadford Primary School. The new catchment for GME will overlay the current EM catchments of Broadford Primary School and Elgol Primary School.
- To confirm that the catchment areas for Bun-sgoil Shlèite and Bun-sgoil Stafainn will apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium education.
- Existing catchments for the provision of English Medium education will be unaffected.
- The proposed changes, if approved, will be implemented for the beginning of school session 2018-19.
- None of the proposed catchments for GME encompass the catchment area of Raasay Primary School. The distances and travel times from Raasay to the nearest Gàidhlig Medium (GM) provision would be excessive for primary school age pupils. Any identified parental demand for GME from Raasay 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:

- Portree Primary School
- Dunvegan Primary School
- Kilmuir Primary School
- Broadford Primary School
- Bun-sgoil Stafainn
- Bun-sgoil Shlèite
- Portree Public Library

and published on the Highland Council website:

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
Fingal Centre
Portree
IV51 9ET
E-mail: CL.SkyeAdmin@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, Fingal Centre, Portree, IV51 9ET.
E-mail: CL.SkyeAdmin@highland.gov.uk

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 Portree Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (ii) Parents of pupils attending Macdiarmid Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (iii) Parents of pupils attending Carbost Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (iv) Parents of pupils attending Dunvegan Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (v) Parents of pupils attending Edinbane Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (vi) Parents of pupils attending Knockbreck Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (vii) Parents of pupils attending Struan Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (viii) Parents of pupils attending Kilmuir Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;

- (ix) Parents of pupils attending Raasay Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (x) Parents of pupils attending Broadford Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (xi) Parents of pupils attending Elgol Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (xii) Parents of pupils attending Bun-sgoil Stafainn; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (xiii) Parents of pupils attending Bun-sgoil Shlèite; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (xiv) The Parent Councils of the above schools.
- (xv) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
- (xvi) Staff of each of the schools listed above;
- (xvii) Trade union representatives;
- (xviii) All Community Councils for the Isle of Skye;
- (xix) Bòrd na Gàidhlig;
- (xx) Comann nam Pàrant
- (xxi) Education Scotland;
- (xxii) Highland Youth Convenor.

Advertisement in Local Media

A notice announcing the public meetings will be placed in the local press and on the Highland Council's Facebook page.

Consultation Period

The consultation for this Proposal will run from Monday 28 August 2017 and will end on Wednesday 25 October 2017. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

Public Meeting

Public meetings will be held, the details of which are set out below:

Portree Primary School, 7pm 13 September 2017
 Broadford Primary School, 7pm 14 September 2017
 Dunvegan Village Hall, 7pm 4 October 2017

Anyone wishing to attend the public meetings is invited to do so. Each 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.

Each 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)
Fingal Centre
Portree
Isle of Skye
IV51 9ET
Email: CL.SkyeAdmin@highland.gov.uk

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, Wednesday 25 October 2017 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 a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period, as well as the summary note of the public meeting that will be held and so far as is practicable a copy of any other relevant documentation. It is intended this will take place at either the end of October or in early November (dates to be confirmed by Education Scotland), or if not as soon as possible afterwards. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal, to be completed not later than 3 weeks after they receive the consultation

papers. 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 schools 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 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 December 2017, prior to submission to the Council's People Committee in early 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 Education Scotland will be advised.

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.
 - Bòrd na Gàidhlig has issued statutory guidance recommending that local authorities create catchment areas for GME.
- 2.2 The current proposal follows on from informal consultation with local Elected Members; Head Teachers of the primary schools within the ASG; Parent Councils; and local Community Councils

Current and Planned Provision of Gàidhlig Medium Education within the Portree ASG

- 3.1 At secondary school level, Portree High School offers GME.
- 3.2 There are 14 primary schools within the ASG, one of which, Uig Primary, is currently mothballed. Of the remaining 13 schools, six offer GME; Broadford Primary, Dunvegan Primary, Kilmuir Primary, Portree Primary, Bun-sgoil Stafainn and Bun-sgoil Shlèite.
- 3.3 A new Gàidhlig medium primary school is under construction in Portree. Following the opening of the new school, the existing Portree Primary will offer only English Medium education.

Proposed School Catchments for GME

- 4.1 The currently defined catchments for Portree High School, Bun-sgoil Stafainn and Bun-sgoil Shlèite, will continue to operate for both English and Gàidhlig Medium education. There will be no changes to the current arrangements at any of the 3 schools.
- 4.2 Since the mothballing of Uig Primary, Kilmuir Primary has been the receiving school for pupils from the Uig catchment, whether for English or Gàidhlig Medium education. It is reasonable to include the Uig catchment within the Kilmuir PS catchment, for pupils wishing to access GME.

- 4.3 The table below shows the distances and travel times from the six primary schools in Skye that do not offer GME, to the new Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort-Rìgh, and to the GME provision at Broadford, Dunvegan and Kilmuir Primaries. For each school, the green highlighted text shows the shortest route between the school and the nearest GM provision.

	Broadford	Dunvegan	Kilmuir	Portree
Carbost	24.8mi/37 min	19.8 mi/30 min	36.2 mi/56min	17.5 mi/28 min
Elgol	15.4mi/37 min	53.2mi/85 min	69.2 mi/97 min	40.9 mi/69 min
Edinbane	39.7 mi/38 min	8.8 mi/14 min	25.3 mi/38 min	13.6 mi/21 min
Knockbreck	48.6mi/75 min	11.6 mi/25 min	36.7 mi/58 min	24.9 mi/40 min
MacDiarmid	31 mi/47 min	17.7 mi/25 min	16.6mi/28 min	4.9 mi/10 min
Struan	30.7 mi/42 min	8.8 mi/13 min	29.5 mi/48 min	10.8 mi/21 min

- 4.4 It is clear from the table that Broadford PS is in the best location to offer GME to anyone from within the Elgol PS catchment. In addition, the only road access from Elgol passes through Broadford.
- 4.5 Likewise, there is no question but that Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort-Rìgh is in the best location to offer GME to anyone from within the MacDiarmid PS catchment.
- 4.6 Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort-Rìgh will also be the nearest GM provision to Carbost. Although Dunvegan PS is only marginally further away, historically children from Carbost who wished to attend GME did so at Portree Primary School.
- 4.7 Dunvegan PS provides the nearest access to GME for pupils within the EM catchments for Edinbane, Knockbreck and Struan, and the Council proposes therefore to include each of these catchments within the GM catchment for Dunvegan.
- 4.8 Maps of the current school catchments for Skye can be found at **Appendix 2**. No changes are proposed for these catchments in respect of English Medium education.
- 4.9 The proposed new catchments for GME are shown at **Appendix 3**.

Educational Benefits

- 5.1 In educational terms, Highland Council does not have a preference between the primary schools in Skye that offer GME.
- 5.2 The proposal may nevertheless have some educational benefits in creating clear catchment areas for GME provision within the ASG. This will allow for more accurate roll projections and improved future planning.
- 5.3 The Council will however take account of any views expressed during consultation, contrary to the recommendation in this Paper.

Effects on School Transport

- 6.1 The proposals will formalise the existing informal travel arrangements within the ASG, in terms of pupils who travel to GME.

Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements

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

Effect on the Local Communities

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

Recommendation

- 9.1 Highland Council recommends that the adoption of Gàidhlig Medium catchment areas, in line with those set out in the first page of this paper. In the cases of Broadford Primary, Dunvegan Primary, Kilmuir Primary and Bunscoil Ghàidhlig Phort-Rìgh, the new GM catchment will overlay one or more English Medium catchments.
- 9.2 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 Highland Council's People Committee.



