

Agenda Item	17.
Report No	CLH 54/19

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Care, Learning and Housing

Date: 21 August 2019

Report Title: Review of the Statutory Consultation Exercise to establish a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Mallaig Primary School

Report By: Chief Executive

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following conclusion of the statutory consultation process, this report and accompanying information sets out a recommendation to establish a Gaelic Medium (GM) catchment area for Mallaig Primary School.
- 1.2 The proposal was advanced in line with statutory guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which recommends that local authorities create catchment areas for Gaelic Medium education (GME). Mallaig Primary School is the only primary school within the Mallaig Associated School Group to offer GME. It is proposed to formally create a GM catchment for Mallaig Primary School on the basis of the map shown at Appendix 3. GME has been offered in the Mallaig area for more than 20 years. Originally it was located at Lady Lovat Primary School in Morar, about 3 miles from Mallaig, but was later moved to Mallaig Primary as more space was available there. Local informal arrangements around enrolment and transport for GME have worked well and this proposal largely formalises those existing practices.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. Consider the Proposal set out within the Consultation Report (Appendix A) and associated appendices;
 - ii. Consider the representations received and the report from Education Scotland;
 - iii. Agree to recommend to the Council the creation of a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Mallaig Primary School on the basis shown on the map at Appendix 3.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource - The proposal largely formalises arrangements that have previously operated on an informal basis. No additional costs are expected to arise.
- 3.2 Legal - The statutory consultation has been taken forward as per the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – None
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – None
- 3.5 Risk – None
- 3.6 Gaelic - The Proposal will provide clarity to local parents, in respect of entitlement to GME.

4. Public Consultation

- 4.1 **Appendix A** is the proposal for decision. The original proposal issued for consultation, and relevant appendices for consideration by the Committee are all also circulated as appendices to this Paper. They provide details of all consultation comments received, the note of the public meeting, the report from Education Scotland, and the Council's response to comments arising from the consultation.
- 4.2 The proposal was widely circulated to parents, pupils and others. No written responses were received during the consultation period. One person attended the public meeting, the note of which is at **Appendix B**. The only suggestion made during the statutory consultation exercise was that the proposed Gaelic Medium catchment area should be expanded to include the catchment of Inverie Primary. The Council has carefully considered this suggestion, but on balance we conclude that the Inverie PS catchment should not be included within the new GM catchment. The Inverie PS catchment is not connected to the national road network and travel between there and Mallaig is by boat along the coast. The nature of the journey, and the departure time of the evening ferry, mean that daily travel for primary school pupils would be unreasonably long. This is addressed in more detail at paragraph 3.5 of the report at **Appendix A**.

5. Report from Education Scotland

- 5.1 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 noted that consultees were supportive of the proposal and that many recognised the proposal formalised existing arrangements. There was an understanding of why very remote areas were not within the proposed GME catchment area. A few consultees expressed concerns about the safety of young children travelling on buses. Others deemed it important that the council's final report clarified approaches to regular promotion of GME at Mallaig Primary School and Mallaig High School. They felt this would assist in realising the full educational benefits, should the proposals be adopted. This is addressed in the final report at **Appendix A**.
- 5.2 Education Scotland concluded the proposal is of educational benefit to children and parents in that it increases accessibility to GME.

6. Procedure

- 6.1 The legislation requires that any proposal for decision must be published at least 3 weeks in advance of the meeting at which any decision may be made, to allow time for further representations. The proposal was published on 25 July 2019. Any further

representations that are received will be tabled at the meeting for the attention of Members.

- 6.2 As this report relates to a statutory consultation, any decision taken by this Committee will be considered by the full Highland Council before being implemented.

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 25 July 2019

Authors: Ian Jackson, Education Officer

Background Papers: Review of Consultation Report and appendices; original Proposal Paper and appendices



HIGHLAND COUNCIL

CARE AND LEARNING SERVICE

REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREA FOR MALLAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL

This report has been prepared following a review of the proposal to establish a Gaelic Medium (GM) catchment area for Mallaig Primary School.

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 Mallaig Primary School on 20 February 2019.
- 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 Care, Learning and Housing Committee, at its meeting on 24 January 2019, agreed that a statutory consultation be undertaken on the proposal to establish a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Mallaig Primary School.
- 1.2 The Proposal Paper suggested that the new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of Mallaig Primary School, Lady Lovat Primary School, and Arisaig Primary School, Particular arrangements would apply for school transport to Mallaig from the latter two catchment areas.
- 1.3 The Proposal Paper also suggested formalising the current arrangements relating to Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME) in Mallaig High School, under which the catchment area for Mallaig High School would apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium education.
- 1.4 **Appendix 1** is the original consultative paper and provides full details of the above proposal. **Appendices 2** and **3** are the appendices to the original proposal.

2.0 Consultation process

- 2.1 The formal consultation period ran from Monday 4 February 2019 to Friday 22 March 2019. 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 Mallaig Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (ii) Parents of pupils attending Lady Lovat Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (iii) Parents of pupils attending Arisaig Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (iv) Parents of pupils attending Inverie Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (v) Parents of pupils attending Eigg Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (vi) Parents of pupils attending Muck Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (vii) Parents of pupils attending Rum Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (viii) The Parent Councils of each of the above schools;
- (ix) All staff of the schools listed above;
- (x) Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
- (xi) Trade union representatives;
- (xii) All Community Councils for the areas covered by the Proposal;
- (xiii) Bòrd na Gàidhlig;
- (xiv) Education Scotland;
- (xvii) Highland Youth Convenor

2.3 The proposal document was advertised on the Highland Council website.

2.4 A public meeting was held at Mallaig Primary School on 20 February 2019. 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 No written responses were received during the formal consultation period.

3.2 Prior to the formal consultation period, feedback on the proposal was received from Mallaig Community Council. The Community Council expressed surprise that the Highland Council proposed spending money on a statutory consultation over something that already worked well in the area. It was pointed out that there was an established Gaelic Medium department operating out of Mallaig PS and that the majority of local parents were already aware that they have the choice to send their children there or to 1 of the 3 schools offering English

Medium education. There were problems around the provision of Maths in Mallaig High School and it would be far better if the Council were to apply their scarce resources to solving that issue rather than consulting on something that already works.

- 3.3 Officials responded to the above concerns by advising that the proposal was being advanced in response to Statutory Guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which requires local authorities to set up Gaelic Medium catchment areas for schools that offer GME.
- 3.4 The note of the public meeting is at **Appendix B**. One member of the public attended, to suggest that the catchment area of Inverie Primary School should be included within the proposed GM catchment for Mallaig Primary. There was a full discussion in response.
- 3.5 The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education specifies that a Gaelic medium catchment *“should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school...”* The discussion at Appendix B records that a pupil from Inverie wishing to travel daily to Mallaig would have to leave at 8.30am and would not return home until 6.30pm. On balance, the Council does not consider that this falls within the definition of “reasonable travel” suggested by the Statutory Guidance, and we do not propose to amend the Gaelic Medium catchment to include the Inverie PS catchment.
- 3.6 Any identified parental demand for local provision of GME from within the Inverie PS catchment (or any other catchment within the Mallaig Associated School Group) would be assessed in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

4.0 Summary of the issues raised by Education Scotland

- 4.1 In line with legislative requirements, Education Scotland was invited to submit comments on the Council’s proposals. An English language copy of the report from Education Scotland is at **Appendix C**. A Gaelic language copy of the report from Education Scotland is at **Appendix D**.
- 4.2 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 noted that consultees were supportive of the proposal and that many recognised the proposal formalised existing arrangements. There was an understanding of why very remote areas were not within the proposed GME catchment area. A few consultees expressed concerns about the safety of young children travelling on buses. Others deemed it important that the council’s final report clarified approaches to regular promotion of GME at Mallaig Primary School and Mallaig High School. They felt this would assist in realising the full educational benefits, should the proposals be adopted.

4.3 Education Scotland concluded the proposal is of educational benefit to children and parents in that it increases accessibility to GME.

4.4 The issues raised by Education Scotland are addressed in Section 5 below.

5.0 Responses to the Issues Raised by Education Scotland

Issue 1

A few consultees expressed concerns about the safety of young children travelling on buses.

Response 1

In order to make travelling on high school buses safer for primary age pupils, we can assign specific seats in the front of the bus to be reserved for primary pupils. Also the High School could nominate bus monitors, and we would encourage this. Monitors would be responsible for reporting any issues with the vehicle or route, use of seatbelts etc, as well as reporting on the behaviour of passengers.

Issue 2

Consultees deemed it important that the council's final report clarified approaches to regular promotion of GME at Mallaig Primary School and Mallaig High School.

Response 2

It is recognised that the school has a role in the promotion of Gaelic Medium Education in the local area. Plans for next year include:

- An information leaflet – Bileag fiosrachaidh - (paper format and online) to provide all relevant information about GME, Gaelic Learning in the Primary School and GM education in secondary schools, thereby encompassing the entire 3-18 age group. Information will be collated from what is already available (from Highland Council, Comann nam Pàrant, Bòrd na Gàidhlig etc) and any local information that relates to the Mallaig High catchment area (e.g, transport, open afternoons etc). This will also include FAQs and the benefits of bilingual education.
- We will share the link to the promotional video <https://www.facebook.com/fasfoghlaim/videos/2004538226249602/> with enrolment information for all local nurseries and Schools next session
- Direct promotion of GME during Mother and Toddler groups
- Local promotional video/blog to be made by the pupils to not just promote the language but the culture and heritage of the catchment area.
- Take advantage of opportunities to promote GME at community events/ ceilidhs/ online/ Westword etc

- Make this year's Gaelic open afternoon in the Gaelic Medium Primary an annual event.
- The Youth Music Initiative, administered by Fèisean nan Gàidheal, requires that tutors put a favourable spin on Gaelic, using at least a little in their tuition and including Gaelic-repertoire material in their teaching. The YMI has a considerable uptake in all of the local schools and is therefore well placed to help us promote Gaelic.
- The Lochaber Mòd is open to all pupils and this year in Mallaig PS there are a number of English Medium pupils taking part, with tuition provided by a visiting tutor
- While Fèisean nan Gàidheal's arts-in-education services are primarily focussed on GM pupils, there will be at least one visit per year which is suitable for all. This is easier to organise, now that the schools are clustered.

Issue 3

A small minority of consultees felt that it would be useful to have a map which shows GME catchment areas, and GME designated areas across the west Highlands. This would give clarity on areas in boundaries, and assist with providing an overview of how GME catchments were coming together across a wider area. We have also agreed with the council that they will correct the title of the map in Appendix 2 of their proposal paper.

Response 3

All school catchment areas in Highland are available to the public via an online map

<https://tinyurl.com/yadcvjue>

The title of the map of local primary school catchments, issued with the Proposal Paper, has been amended. The revised version is at **Appendix E**.

Issue 4

The council's statement on the educational benefits of this proposal should articulate more specific details pertinent to the benefits of this proposal.

Response 4

The creation of the GM catchment for Mallaig Primary will clarify the extent of entitlement to GME in the local area, and will also establish entitlement to school transport. Previously both were subject to informal "custom and practice" arrangements, and educational benefits will arise from providing this additional security to parents and children.

Education Scotland do recognise however that the Proposal is being advanced in response to statutory guidance.

6.0 Effects on the Community

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

7.0 Effects on School Transport

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

8.0 Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements

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

9.0 Alleged omissions or inaccuracies

9.1 There was one alleged inaccuracy, in respect of the Title of the Map issued as Appendix 2 of the Proposal Paper. This has been addressed as set out in “Response 3” of Section 6 above.

9.2 The Council has considered the impact of this inaccuracy on the Proposal but has concluded it does not represent a material consideration relevant to the Authority’s decision as to implementation of the proposal.

10.0 Overall Review of Consultation Exercise

10.1 The proposal attracted very little interest and minimal response. No significant concerns were raised.

10.2 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 12 below.

11.0 Legal issues

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

11.2 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.

12.0 Conclusion

12.1 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.

- 12.2 The Education Scotland Inspector visited Mallaig Primary School, Lady Lovat Primary School, Arisaig Primary School, and Mallaig High School, to speak to parents, pupils and staff and gather a variety of views. Education Scotland also had the opportunity to review in detail the proposal document, all written responses, and the note of the public meeting.
- 12.3 On reviewing all of the submissions, the note of the meeting, and the Education Scotland report; officials conclude that the Proposal to create a GM catchment area for Mallaig Primary School offers educational benefits and should be implemented. The GM catchment area should be the same as that set out in the Proposal Paper. The reasons for this conclusion are set out above.

13.0 Recommendation

- 13.1 It is therefore recommended that Highland Council proceeds with the course of action set out at Paragraph 12.3 above.

Brian Porter
Head of Resources, Care and Learning Service
25 July 2019

CONSULTATION MEETING – GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREA FOR MALLAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL

HELD AT MALLAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL – 20 FEBRUARY 2019 – 6.30pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Panel

Cllr. Andrew Baxter - Chairperson
Ian Jackson, Education Officer, Resources;
Coinneach Morrison, Gaelic Education Officer

Also Attending

Martin Sullivan, Head Teacher, Mallaig High/Primary School, Arisaig PS, Lady Lovat PS, Inverie PS

1 member of the public attended - Rev. Stewart Goudie who is the local Church of Scotland minister.

Cllr. Baxter welcomed everyone and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposal to formally establish a Gaelic Medium (GM) Catchment for Mallaig Primary School, as set out in the recommendation to the proposal Paper. A copy of the Proposal Paper was provided to the person attending.

The proposal had been issued as a result of Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, produced by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Cllr. Baxter continued by introducing those on the panel, and asked Ian Jackson to explain the consultation process for the Proposal being discussed.

Mr Jackson advised that the statutory process requires the Council to hold a formal consultation over a period of six weeks, which must include at least 30 school days. After the end of the public consultation, there will be a further 3 week consultation with Education Scotland, who will examine the educational merits of the proposal.

After the Council has taken stock of all the responses, and the Report by Education Scotland, we will publish our Final Report at least 3 weeks before that is submitted to Council Committee. Further representations may be made during that 3 week period.

The Chairperson then asked Coinneach Morrison to set out the educational benefits of the proposal.

Mr Morrison commented that GM provision is still in its infancy. Our first school in Highland providing Gaelic Medium education (GME) opened in 1985, and since then things have grown so that we are now providing GME in 20 primary schools in addition to 13 secondary schools that have Gaelic Medium provision. We have 171 primary schools in total, so that gives a picture of the provision of GME across Highland. Some families select GME because of their cultural heritage, or family connections with the language, but increasingly parents are choosing GME for their children because of the benefits of bilingualism, which are well-documented.

The Chairperson then explained that Mr Jackson and Mr Morrison were available to answer questions.

Questions and Answers

Q1 – Rev. Goudie – I think the main question that I have, on behalf of all the parishes in the area, is on the possibility of extending the proposed GM catchment area to include the Inverie PS catchment. My reason for suggesting that, but not including the 4 Small Isles primary schools, is that Inverie has a ferry service that comes across early in the morning, leaving Inverie at 0800 and getting into Mallaig at 0830, and then leaving Mallaig at 1800 and getting back at 1830. It seems to me therefore that there is already a transport service available that could take a child who wanted to learn through the medium of Gaelic to and from school. I realise there would be issues to consider in respect of child protection on the ferry, if a child were being sent unaccompanied by their parents, but I think those could be managed. There are bus services provided for children to come from Arisaig and Morar, so it seems to me that the ferry provides a similar service. In terms of maximising the potential area of coverage for Gaelic Medium education, it would therefore be reasonable to extend the catchment to include the Inverie PS catchment, although some provision might need to be made to make that practical. I just wondered whether, when you decided to include Arisaig PS and Lady Lovat PS in the new catchment, whether you gave any consideration to including Inverie Primary? I know there are no children coming across from Inverie to Mallaig at the moment for Gaelic Medium education, but that could change as there are young children in Knoydart who are coming up to school age.

A1 (Ian Jackson) – It's an interesting point. I'll just say at the outset that tonight is meant as a two way process and that we will take away and consider any issues raised during the discussion. The ferry service to Knoydart is a good deal better than it used to be, and it is now more feasible to travel on a daily basis.

(Martin Sullivan) – Not really. That's why the Knoydart pupils stay in the hostel Mon-Fri.

(Ian Jackson) – That’s right of course. At the present time secondary school pupils from Knoydart stay in the school hostel in Mallaig due to the difficulty of travel. If it could be demonstrated that daily travel was possible for primary school children, then there would be no reason to continue to allow Knoydart pupils to stay in the school hostel. That wouldn’t mean you could close the hostel, as you would still need it for Small Isles pupils, but it would mean a drastic reduction in pupil numbers at the hostel. I would add though that any possibility of daily travel from Knoydart would be limited to the village of Inverie itself rather than Knoydart as a whole, as it can take a long time to travel just to Inverie from other parts of Knoydart.

Q2 – Rev. Goudie – I appreciate that the 6pm departure time in the evenings would make for a longer day than for those children travelling by bus. I am making this representation on my own initiative. Partly that’s from a personal interest in GME, but also because when I consulted some of the Knoydart families about this issue, they hadn’t picked up that this event was happening tonight. I therefore offered to attend the meeting tonight to put forward any concerns or questions they might have. I also suggested that anyone could send me a message setting out their issue. I haven’t had any messages, so that indicates there isn’t any concern out there in the community, but I still felt I wanted to come along and ask the question.

A2 (Martin Sullivan) – If the evening ferry left at 4pm, then this would be something we could at least start looking at. It would have a major impact on the hostel, although it would still be necessary to have rooms available for the Inverie kids in the event of cancelled sailings due to bad weather. The other point to consider is that the current operator will not take unaccompanied primary school children. I know that from when we have the Inverie pupils over for swimming lessons in Mallaig. A member of staff has to accompany the children.

(Ian Jackson) – Another issue that occurred to me, and it’s maybe not an insurmountable one, is that once you have a P1 pupil arriving at the pier, they still have to get to Mallaig Primary, so there could be a supervision issue there. To return to Martin’s point about the 6pm departure time, that would result in a very long day for a pupil in the early stages of primary school. We tend to look for GM pupils to start in P1. You can’t really start GME in P5 or anything like that, unless you have come from another Gaelic Medium Unit.

(Coinneach Morrison) – Thank you for raising your point. I think it’s very important for us to receive challenges about the boundaries we propose for GM catchments. Just looking at the suggestion from a purely educational point of view, I was a Head Teacher myself, and it is tiring being a young person in P1/P2. It’s often even more tiring in GM, because the children don’t have Gaelic in the home and are having to struggle with a new language. Adults learning a new language can feel wiped after an hour or two, so I feel a day that started at 8.00am and finished at 6.30pm would be a challenge for young children. We recently had a situation where children were

travelling from Glenurquhart Primary to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, because the GM class at Glenurquhart Primary was mothballed for a period. Whilst the older pupils were generally happy with that arrangement, we found that pupils stopped coming through to GME because parents couldn't bear the thought of their P1 child making that long journey through to Inverness.

Q3 – (Rev. Goudie) – In the last place where we lived, before we came here last summer, there was a Gaelic Medium Unit. It was located at Tongue Primary School. The class became non-viable as a consequence of changes in staffing, and provision was withdrawn. At the same time the roll at Altnaharra dropped down to a very small number, I think it was only one primary school child, and it was felt better for that child to travel to Bettyhill for their primary school education, and that's a long bus journey. So I know that in these remote parts children are having to make long journeys to get the education that they want. So in other areas we are pushing the boundaries as far as they will go, so that was why I was keen to have that consideration given to this situation.

A4 (Ian Jackson) – We will take that away and if you are talking to people in Knoydart, by all means encourage them to make written representations before the deadline of 22 March.

Rev Goudie – I have made them aware. I reminded them yesterday of the deadline and that has gone round to every family in the primary school.

A5 (Martin Sullivan) – When I next talk to the Parent Council, I will mention that, whilst it's not Gaelic Medium, my Depute is over there every week, and she has Gaelic, so she could provide an hour a week or something.

Rev Goudie – I think that would be a good option. If we can't deliver Gaelic Medium education then it would be good to offer some familiarisation with the language.

A6 (Coinneach Morrison) - From 2020/21 schools in Scotland will have a legal obligation to offer a 1+2 language model. That will formally introduce an additional language into P1, which will run right through to the end of S3, with another additional language being introduced at P5, so in addition to the language of the curriculum there will be 2 additional languages, unless it's within Gaelic Medium, because Gaelic is already new to the majority of pupils. A number of schools are already running with these arrangements, and steps are being taken to formalise them.

There being no other comments, the **Chairperson** repeated the closing date for responses – 22 March 2019. Responses could be submitted via the Online Form or by letter or email. Advice on where to submit responses was on the website. A record of this meeting would be made available at least 3 weeks before the meeting

of the Care, Learning and Housing Committee where it is intended that the Council will consider the Final Report, as well as all the submissions.

MEETING CLOSED

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The Highland Council to:

- **establish a Gaelic Medium Education catchment area for Mallaig Primary School. The new catchment area will overlay the current English medium catchment areas of Mallaig Primary School, Lady Lovat Primary School and Arisaig Primary School, and**
- **formalise the current arrangements relating to Gaelic Medium Education in Mallaig High School, under which the catchment area for Mallaig High School will apply to both Gaelic and English Medium Education.**

May 2019

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of The Highland Council's proposal to establish a Gaelic Medium Education (GME) catchment areas for Mallaig Primary School and Mallaig High School. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools; any other users; children and young people 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:

- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- visits to Mallaig Primary School, Lady Lovat Primary School, Arisaig Primary School and Mallaig High School, which invited discussions with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

2.1 The Highland Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The consultation process ran from 4 February 2019 and will end on 22 March 2019. During that time, the council held a public meeting at Mallaig Primary School. The meeting was attended by one member of the public. 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. 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. No written responses were received. Bòrd na Gàidhlig did not respond.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The Highland Council's proposal is responding to legislation, which includes establishing catchment areas for GME provisions. Consultees were supportive of the proposal. Many recognised that the proposal formalised existing arrangements. There was an understanding of why very remote areas were not within the proposed GME catchment area. A few consultees expressed concerns about the safety of young children travelling on buses. Others deemed it important that the council's final report clarified approaches to regular promotion of GME at Mallaig Primary School and Mallaig High School. They felt this would assist in realising the full educational benefits, should the proposals be adopted.

3.2 A small minority of consultees felt that it would be useful to have a map which shows GME catchment areas, and GME designated areas across the west Highlands. This would give clarity on areas in boundaries, and assist with providing an overview of how GME catchments were coming together across a wider area. We have also agreed with the council that they will correct the title of the map in Appendix 2 of their proposal paper.

3.3 The council's statement on the educational benefits of this proposal should articulate more specific details pertinent to the benefits of this proposal.

4. Summary

Overall, the council's proposal is of educational benefit to children and parents in that it increases accessibility to GME. The council has a few concerns to address in taking the proposal forward, as detailed in section three of this report. They should give more detail on the educational benefits of this proposal, which are specific to GME in their proposed catchment area.

**HM Inspectors
May 2019**

Achd nan Sgoiltean (Co-chomhairleachadh) (Alba) 2010

Aithisg le Foghlam Alba a' dèiligeadh ri taobhan foghlaim den mholadh aig Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd:

- Sgìre-sgoile Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig a shuidheachadh airson Bun-sgoil Mhalaig. Bidh an sgìre-sgoile ùr a' gabhail a-steach nan sgìrean-sgoile Beurla a tha ann aig an àm a tha an làthair airson Bun-sgoil Mhalaig, Bun-sgoil Lady Lovat agus Bun-sgoil Àrasaig; agus
- A' foirmealachadh nan ullachaidhean a tha ann aig an àm a tha an làthair a thaobh Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann an Àrd-sgoil Mhalaig, far am bi an sgìre-sgoile airson Àrd-sgoil Mhalaig a' gabhail a-steach Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig agus na Beurla.

An Cèitean 2019

1. Ro-ràdh

1.1 Tha an aithisg seo bho Foghlam Alba air a bhith air a h-ullachadh le Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh airson Foghlam (Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh) a rèir teirmean [Achd nan Sgoiltean \(Co-chomhairleachadh\) \(Alba\) 2010](#) (“Achd 2010”). Is e adhbhar na h-aithisg beachdachadh neo-eisimeileach agus neo-phàirteach a thoirt air moladh Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd sgìrean-sgoile Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig (FMG) a shuidheachadh airson Bun-sgoil Mhalaig agus Àrd-sgoil Mhalaig. Tha Earrann 2 den aithisg a’ cur an cèill mion-fhiosrachadh mun phròiseas co-chomhairleachaidh. Tha Earrann 3 den aithisg a’ cur an cèill beachdachadh Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh air taobhan foghlaim a’ mholaidh, a’ gabhail a-steach beachdan cudromach a chuireadh an cèill le luchd-co-chomhairleachaidh. Tha Earrann 4 a’ toirt geàrr-chunntas air sealladh Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh san fharsaingeachd. Air dhaibh an aithisg seo fhaighinn, tha an Achd a’ cur riatanas air a’ chomhairle beachdachadh air agus an uair sin aithisg co-homhairleachaidh dheireannach ullachadh. Bu chòir do dh’aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannach na comhairle a bhith a’ gabhail a-steach na h-aithisg seo agus feumaidh mìneachadh a bhith innte mar, ann a bhith a’ crìochnachadh na h-aithisg, a thathar air a’ chiad aithisg a lèirmheasadh a’ gabhail a-steach geàrr-chunntas de phuingean a chaidh a thogail tron phròiseas co-chomhairleachaidh agus freagairt na comhairle dhaibh. Feumaidh a’ chomhairle an aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannach fhoillseachadh trì seachdainean mus tig iad chun a’ cho-dhùnaidh dheireannaich. Far a bheil comhairle a’ moladh sgoil a dhùnadh, feumaidh iad na dleastanasan reachdail a leantainn a tha air an cur an cèill ann an Achd 2010, a’ gabhail a-steach a bhith a’ toirt fios do na Ministearan taobh a-staigh sia làithean obrach an dèidh a thighinn chun a’ cho-dhùnaidh dheireannaich agus a’ mìneachadh do cho-chomhairlichean an cothrom a tha aca airson riochdachaidhean a dhèanamh gu na Ministearan.

1.2 Bheachdaich Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh air:

- na builean a dh’fhaodadh a bhith an lùib a’ mholaidh do chlann agus daoine òga nan sgoiltean; luchd-cleachdaidh sam bith eile; clann agus daoine òga a dh’fhaodadh a bhith nan sgoilearan taobh a-staigh dà bhliadhna bho cheann-là foillseachaidh a’ phàipeir molaidh; agus clann agus daoine òga eile ann an sgìre na Comhairle;
- builean sam bith eile a dh’fhaodadh a bhith an cois a’ mholaidh;
- mar a tha a’ chomhairle am beachd droch bhuilean sam bith a dh’fhaodadh èirigh bhon mholadh a lùghdachadh no a sheachnadh; agus
- na buannachdan foghlaim a tha a’ chomhairle dhen beachd a thigeadh mar thoradh air a bhith a’ cur a’ mholaidh an sàs, agus adhbharan na comhairle airson a bhith a’ tighinn gu na beachdan sin.

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

- beachdachadh air na sgrìobhaidhean iomchaidh air fad a thug a’ chomhairle seachad an co-bhoinn ris a’ mholadh, gu sònraichte an aithris mu buannachdan foghlaim agus sgrìobhainnean co-chomhairleachaidh co-cheangailte, tagraidhean air an sgrìobhadh agus air an labhairt bho phàrantan agus feadhainn eile; agus

- cuairtean gu Bun-sgoil Mhalaig, Bun-sgoil Lady Lovat, Bun-sgoil Àrasaig agus Àrd-sgoil Mhalaig a dh'ìarr conaltradh a chumail le luchd-co-chomhairleachaidh iomchaidh.

2. Am Pròiseas Co-chomhairleachaidh

2.1 Ghabh Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' cho-chomhairleachadh air a mholadh (mholaidhean) os làimh a thaobh [Achd nan Sgoiltean \(Co-chomhairleachadh\) \(Alba\) 2010](#).

2.2 Ghabh am pròiseas co-chomhairleachaidh àite bho 4 Gearran 2019 agus thig e gu ceann air 22 Màrt 2019. Rè an ama sin, chùm a' chomhairle coinneamh phoblach ann am Bun-sgoil Mhalaig. Bha aon neach bhon phoball an làthair. Chaidh fiosrachadh a chur dha na pàipearan ionadail agus air seirbheisean air-loidhne na comhairle. Chaidh innse do cho-chomhairlichean reachdail, a' gabhail a-steach phàrantan/luchd-cùraim, clann, luchd-obrach agus Bòrd na Gàidhlig mun cho-chomhairleachadh. Dh'fhoillsich a' chomhairle pàipearan mun cho-chomhairleachadh air a làrach-lìn. Sgaoil iad pàipearan cuideachd gu làn raon de luchd-ùidh agus feadhainn le sùim sa chùis. Chuir a' chomhairle ullachaidhean freagarrach nan àite gus cothrom a thoirt do fheadhainn le ùidh freagairt don mholadh, ann an riochd eileagtronaigeach no ann an sgrìobhadh. Cha deach freagairtean sgrìobhte idir fhaighinn. Cha tàinig freagairt bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig.

3. Taobhan foghlaim a' mholaidh

3.1 Tha moladh Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' toirt freagairt do reachdas, a tha a' gabhail a-steach a bhith a' suidheachadh sgìrean-sgoile airson solar FMG. Bha an luchd-co-chomhairleachaidh taiceil dhan mholadh. Bha mòran ag aithneachadh gun robh am moladh a' cur nan ullachaidhean a bha ann a-cheana air stèidh fhoirmeil. Bha tuigse ann carson nach robh àiteachan a bha air leth iomallach taobh a-staigh na sgìre-sgoile a bhathar a' moladh airson FMG. Bha beagan luchd-co-chomhairleachaidh iomagaineach mu shàbhailteachd chloinne òga a bhiodh a' siubhal air busaichean. Bha feadhainn eile ga mheas cudromach gun toireadh aithisg dheireannach na comhairle soilleireachadh air modhan-obrach a thaobh adhartachadh riaghailteach air FMG ann am Bun-sgoil Mhalaig agus Àrd-sgoil Mhalaig. Bha iad a' faireachdainn gun toireadh seo taic ann a bhith a' toirt nan làn bhuannachdan foghlaim gu buil, nan deigheadh gabhail ris na molaidhean.

3.2 Bha àireamh bheag de luchd-co-chomhairleachaidh a' faireachdainn gum biodh e feumail mapa a bhith ann a bhiodh a' sealltainn sgìrean-sgoile FMG, agus sgìrean ainmichte FMG thar taobh siar na Gàidhealtachd. Bheireadh seo soilleireachadh mu sgìrean aig crìochan, agus taic le bhith a' tabhann foir-shealladh air mar a bha sgìrean-sgoile FMG a' tighinn ri chèile thar raon nas fharsainghe. Tha sinn cuideachd air aontachadh ris a' chomhairle gun ceartaich iad an tìotal air a' mhapa ann am Pàipear-taic 2 den phàipear-molaidh aca.

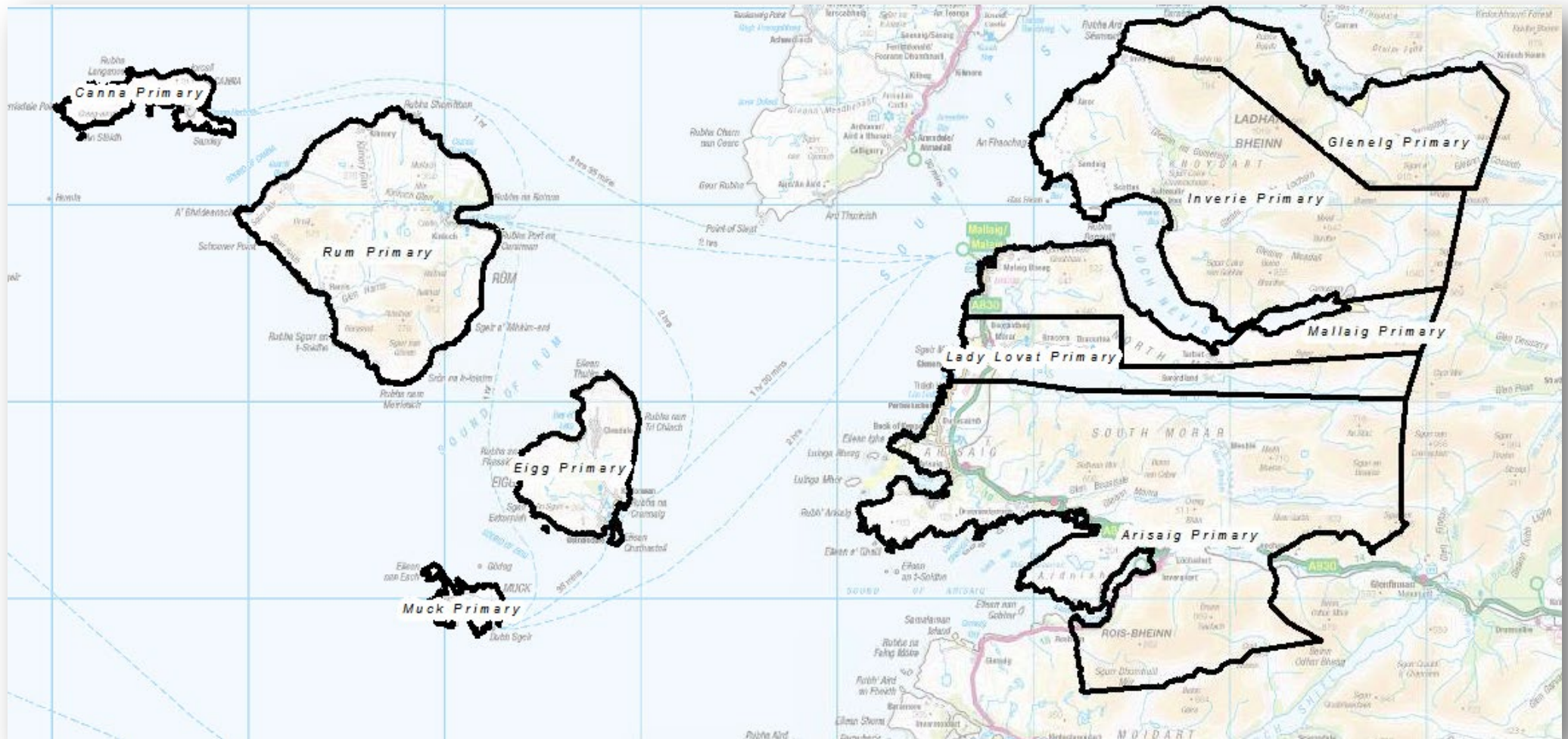
3.3 Bu chòir do dh'aithris na comhairle mu bhuannachdan foghlaim a' mholaidh seo a bhith nas pongail mu fhiosrachadh nas mionaidiche co-cheangailte ri buannachdan a' mholaidh seo.

4. Geàrr-chunntas

San fharsaingeachd, tha moladh na comhairle na bhuannachd foghlaim do chlann agus phàrantan leis gu bheil e a' meudachadh cothrom air FMG. Tha beagan uallachaidhean ann ris am feum a' chomhairle dèiligeadh ann an toirt a' mholaidh air adhart, mar a tha air a mhineachadh ann an earrann a trì den aithisg seo. Bu chòir dhaibh fiosrachadh nas mionaidiche a thoirt mu bhuannachdan foghlaim a' mholaidh seo, a tha sònraichte do FMG san sgìre-sgoile a tha iad a' moladh.

**Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrigh
An Cèitean 2019**

Appendix 2 Mallaig ASG Catchment Areas



THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

The proposal is to establish a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Mallaig Primary 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 Gàidhlig Medium (GM) catchment area for Mallaig Primary School. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of Mallaig Primary School, Lady Lovat Primary School, and Arisaig Primary School.
- To formalise the current arrangements relating to Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME) in Mallaig High School, under which the catchment area for Mallaig High School will apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium education.

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 GM catchment for Mallaig Primary School will include 3 of the 8 primary school catchments within the Mallaig ASG. The remaining 5 primary schools comprise 4 island schools (Canna, Eigg, Muck and Rum) and Inverie Primary School. Canna Primary is currently mothballed as there are no primary age pupils on the island. Inverie Primary School is located on the Knoydart Peninsula which is not connected to the national road network and which in transport terms is effectively an island. The distances and travel times to Mallaig from these 5 schools would make it impractical to include them within the GM catchment.

Any identified parental demand for local provision of GME from within the 4 island schools and Inverie 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:

- Mallaig Primary School
- Lady Lovat Primary School
- Arisaig Primary School
- Inverie Primary School
- Eigg Primary School
- Muck Primary School
- Rum Primary School
- Mallaig 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
Camaghael Hostel
Fort William
PH33 7NE
E-mail: 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

E-mail: Education.Consultations@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 Mallaig Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (ii) Parents of pupils attending Arisaig Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (iii) Parents of pupils attending Lady Lovat Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (iv) Parents of pupils attending Inverie Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;

- (v) Parents of pupils attending Eigg Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (vi) Parents of pupils attending Muck Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils
- (vii) Parents of pupils attending Rum Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils
- (viii) The Parent Councils of each of the above schools;
- (ix) All staff of the schools listed above.
- (x) Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
- (xi) Trade union representatives;
- (xii) All Community Councils for the areas covered by the Proposal;
- (xiii) Bòrd na Gàidhlig;
- (xiv) Education Scotland;
- (xvii) Highland Youth Convenor

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 4 February 2019 and will end on 22 March 2019. 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:

Mallaig Primary School, 20 February 2019 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.

Responses to the Proposals

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

Ian Jackson
Education Officer (Resources)
Camaghael Hostel
Fort William
PH33 7NE
Email: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

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

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, 22 March 2019 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 23 April 2019, 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 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 14 May 2019. 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 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 Care, Learning and Housing 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 August 2019, prior to submission to the Council's Care, Learning and Housing Committee on 17 October 2019. 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 Care, Learning and Housing 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.
- 1.2 In common with all public bodies in Scotland, the Highland Council also has a duty to provide Best Value. This includes making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost; and, in making those arrangements and securing that balance, to have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities requirements and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Reason for the Proposal

- 2.1 This proposal is being advanced for the following reasons:
- Highland Council has not previously specified catchment area for many of its schools offering 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 local elected councillors of Highland Council and with the Head Teachers of Mallaig Primary School, Lady Lovat Primary School; and Arisaig Primary School. The Parent Councils all of the local primary schools, and all of the local Community Councils, were also notified. The only comment received was from Mallaig Community Council, who expressed the view that current informal arrangements work well and that the creation of a GM catchment represented a waste of scarce resources.

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

- 4.1 At secondary school level, Mallaig High School offers GME.
- 4.2 There are 8 primary schools within the ASG. Mallaig Primary is the only one to offer GME at the primary stage.

Mallaig Primary School

- 5.1 Mallaig Primary is situated within the village of the same name, with a catchment area covering mainly the village itself. There are presently 48 pupils in P1-7, 26 in EM and 22 in GM. There are also 13 children in the Nursery – 8 in EM and 5 in GM. A further 1 child is due to join the nursery during the course of session 2018-19. The school has spacious accommodation. There are seven classrooms, a multi-purpose hall with adjacent canteen, music room/computer suite and learning support base. The English and Gaelic Medium nursery classes are integral within the school building.

Proposed School Catchments for GME

- 6.1 Only two of the seven other primary schools within the Mallaig ASG are within reasonable travelling distance of Mallaig. Approximate travel distances and times to Mallaig Primary from these two schools are set out below:

Lady Lovat Primary – Mallaig Primary – 2.4 miles, 5 minutes travel time.

Arisaig Primary – Mallaig Primary – 7 miles, 11 minutes travel time.

- 6.2 Arisaig Primary does have an extensive catchment area, extending east to Arienskill and south to Roshven.
- 6.3 The community of Knoydart, served by Inverie Primary School, is not connected to the national road network. Secondary school pupils from Knoydart are transported by ferry to Mallaig on a Monday morning and Friday afternoon. During the school term the pupils stay in a school residence in Mallaig from Monday evening to Friday morning.

- 6.4 Similarly, secondary school age pupils from the 4 island schools are transported by charter boat to Mallaig. During the school term the pupils stay in the school residence in Mallaig, travelling home every second weekend.
- 6.5 Since even secondary age pupils from these 5 schools are unable to travel daily to Mallaig, it would not be practical to include their catchments within the GME catchment for Mallaig Primary School.
- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 The Council believes that Gàidhlig Medium Education should be accessible as many Highland pupils as possible, provided it is practical and reasonable to provide access.
- 6.8 The Council therefore proposes that the GM catchment for Mallaig Primary will overlay the English Medium catchments of Mallaig, Lady Lovat, and Arisaig Primaries.
- 6.9 The map at **Appendix B** shows the current school catchments for the Mallaig ASG (outlined in red), whilst the proposed GM catchment is shown on the map at **Appendix C**.
- 6.10 No changes are proposed for these catchments in respect of English Medium education.
- 6.11 For the purposes of GME, the Mallaig High School catchment will be the same as the school's existing catchment.

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 Currently 5 children use school transport to access GME at Mallaig Primary School. In the mornings all 5 travel by Service bus. Two pupils travel under parental contracts in the afternoon to the Arisaig area and 3 pupils travel with a local contractor to the Morar area. The separate arrangements for the afternoon transport are due to differing finish times between the primary and secondary schools.
- 8.2 The Proposal is not expected to have any effects on current transport arrangements. Future enrolments in GME from outwith the statutory walking distance will be assessed in the same way as at present, with appropriate arrangements being made.

Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements

- 9.1 The proposed GM catchment reflects existing practice that has developed on an informal basis. The Council does not expect any significant impact on local school rolls. Nor do we expect any impact on staff within the schools of the Mallaig ASG.

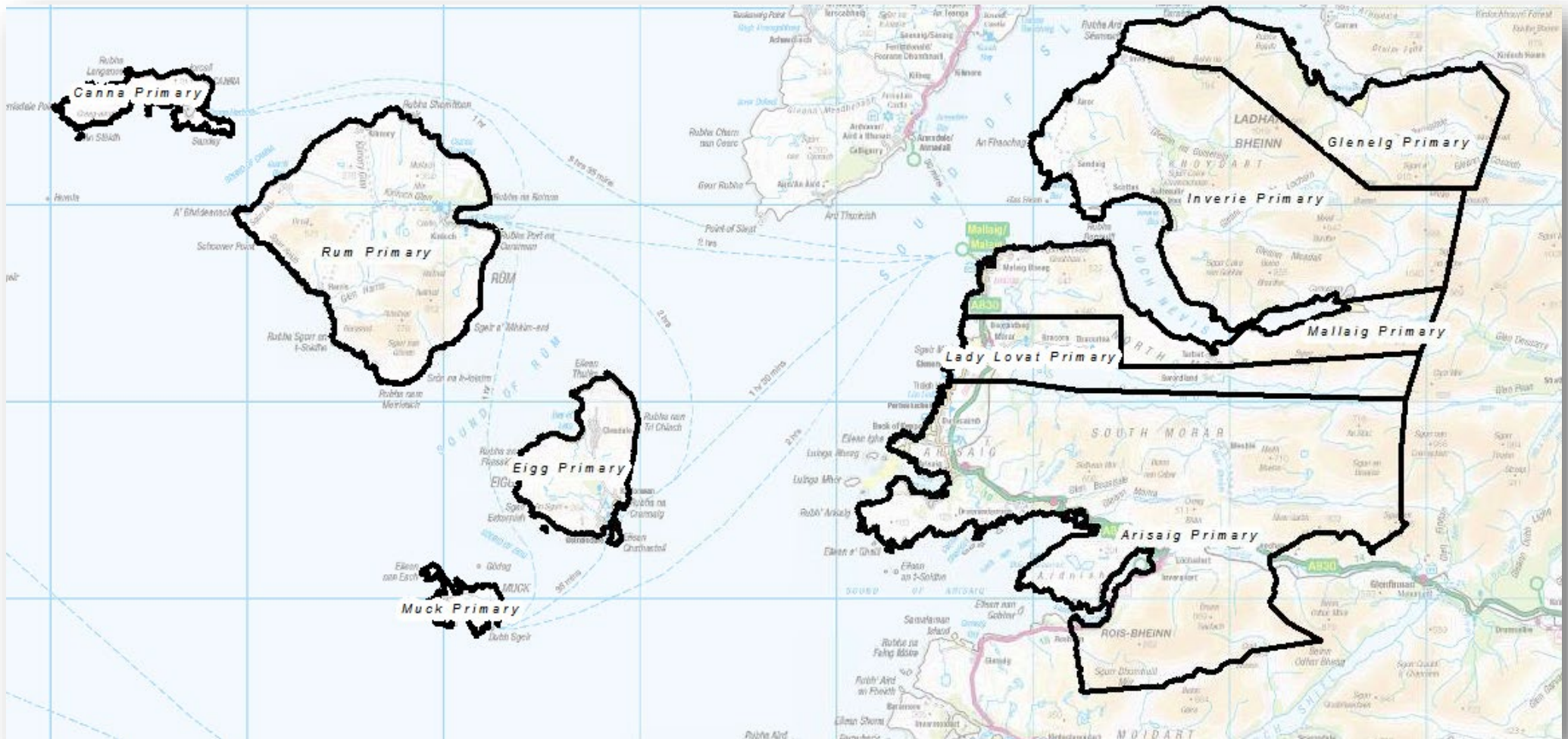
Effect on the Local Communities

- 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 Mallaig Primary School, 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 Care, Learning and Housing Committee of the Highland Council.

Appendix 2 Mallaig Primary Catchment Areas



Appendix 3 Proposed Mallaig Gaelic Medium Catchment

