

Agenda Item	11.
Report No	EDU/22/24

The Highland Council

Committee: Education

Date: 12 September 2024

Report Title: Statutory Consultation: Final Report into Gaelic Medium Catchment Consultation – Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall and Nairn

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following conclusion of the statutory consultation process, this report and accompanying information sets out a recommendation to formally establish Gaelic Medium (GM) catchment areas for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy.
- 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). It is proposed to formally create GM catchments that overlay a number of the current English Medium catchments serving the 6 schools, as set out in **Appendix 2** and paragraph 5.6. English medium education is not affected by this proposal, at any of the schools.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. Consider the proposal set out within the Consultation Report (**Appendix 2**) and associated appendices;
 - ii. Consider the representations received (**Appendices 4i-4x**); and the report from Education Scotland (**Appendices 5** and **6**);
 - iii. Agree to recommend to the Council the creation of Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy, on the basis set out at paragraph 1.2 above.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource - The Proposal seeks to maximise access to Gaelic Medium Education (GME) whilst still considering and balancing financial implications, particularly with regard to school transport. No significant additional costs are envisaged at present as a result of the proposal.

- 3.2 Legal - The proposed closure has been taken forward under the provisions of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 3.3 Risk – None
- 3.4 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people) – None.
- 3.5 Gaelic - The Proposal will provide clarity to local parents, in respect of entitlement to GME.

4. Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies, or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary**
- 4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.
- 4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded, and the conclusions submitted to the relevant manager for approval and review.

4.3.3 Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening/Full Assessment
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and Young People – <i>No impact</i> Children affected by disability. <i>No impact</i> Older adults – <i>No impact</i>
Socio-economic	<i>No impact</i>
Human Rights	<i>No impact</i>
Children's Rights and Well-being	<i>No impact</i>
Island and Mainland Rural	<i>No impact</i>
Climate Change	<i>No impact</i>
Data Rights	<i>No impact</i>

5. Overview

- 5.1 **Appendix 2** is the proposal for decision. The original proposal issued for consultation, and relevant documents 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.

5.2 The proposal was widely circulated to parents, pupils, and others. There were 10 written responses received during the consultation period. Two responses were on behalf of organisations - Comann nam Pàrant, and Bòrd na Gàidhlig. These are addressed in the "Responses" section of **Appendix 2** (pages 4-17 of **Appendix 2**). A list of those who attended the public meetings can be found at the head of the note of each meeting, at **Appendices 3** and **3a**.

5.3 Issues raised during the consultation exercise can be grouped into four categories:

- Suggestions that, for GME purposes, Croy and Ardersier should be zoned to the GM catchments for Millbank PS and Nairn Academy, as opposed to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis and Inverness Royal Academy
- Suggested amendments for the GM catchment boundaries, in respect of Beauly, Tore and Munloch.
- Opposition to the money being spent on GME.
- Concerns about the level of GME on offer at Nairn Academy.

In their responses, both Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Comann nam Pàrant expressed support for the creation of GM catchment areas, though with recommendations for action, which are addressed in the "Responses" section of **Appendix 2** and at Section 10 of **Appendix 2**.

5.4 Similarly, Education Scotland, in their report, agree that catchment areas should be established, subject to appropriate action being taken on issues raised.

5.5 After reviewing the results of the consultation exercise, officials propose to amend the original proposal, to move Ardersier from the GM catchments of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, and Inverness Royal Academy, to those of Millbank Primary and Nairn Academy.

5.6 Having listened to parental views and expressed during this consultation, The Highland Council will also continue to provide transport to Inverness Royal Academy, should parents wish to send their children there for GME. As we are establishing a catchment area for Nairn Associated School Group, the hope would be that as we further develop the curriculum within GME at Nairn Academy, then children and young people will be able to remain within their catchment school for GME and that parental confidence in the curriculum being offered is increased and a sustainable model is in place.

6. Next Steps

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 16 August 2024. Any further representations that are received will be tabled at the Committee for consideration by 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: Assistant Chief Executive (People)

Date: 28 August 2024

Author: Ian Jackson, Education Officer (Resources)

Appendices: Appendix 1: Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix 2: Report reviewing the Consultation Exercise
Appendix 3: Note of Public Meeting in Nairn
Appendix 3a: Note of Public Meeting in Dingwall
Appendix 4: List of Responses to Consultation Exercise
Appendix 4i: Response from S Canham
Appendix 4ii: Response from K Weatherspoon
Appendix 4iii: Response from J Read
Appendix 4iv: Response from N Souter
Appendix 4v: Response from K Welch
Appendix 4vi: Response from C Baldwin
Appendix 4vii: Response from M Maguire
Appendix 4viii: Further Comments M Maguire
Appendix 4ix: Response from Comann nam Pàrant
Appendix 4x: Response from Bòrd na Gàidhlig
Appendix 4x: Response from Mr and Mrs Hilton
Appendix 5: Report from Education Scotland (in English)
Appendix 6: Report from Education Scotland (in Gaelic)
Appendix 7: Revised GM catchment map for Millbank Primary and
Nairn Academy
Appendix 8: Revised GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis
and Inverness Royal Academy
Appendix A: Original Proposal Paper issued for Consultation
Appendix B: Map of Proposed GM catchment for Millbank Primary and
Nairn Academy (as proposed in consultation)
Appendix C: Map of Proposed GM catchment for Dingwall Primary
and Dingwall Academy
Appendix D: Map of Proposed GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig
Inbhir Nis and Inverness Royal Academy (as proposed
in consultation)

Integrated Impact Assessment

Sensitivity: Confidential or sensitive

Author name: Ian Jackson

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Responsible manager - Screening:

Responsible manager - FIA:

Service: People

Proposal name: Review of Statutory Consultation, Gaelic Medium catchment areas in Inverness, Nairn, Dingwall

Proposal description: We have completed a consultation on creating GM catchments for 6 schools in the Inner Moray Firth. We must now review the consultation and submit the results to the Education Committee for decision

Equalities, poverty and human rights Full IIA required? No

Children's rights and wellbeing Full IIA required? No

Data protection Full IIA required? No

Island and mainland rural communities Full IIA required? No

Climate change Full IIA required? No

Show less



HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND LEARNING SERVICE

REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREAS FOR BUN-SGOIL GHÀIDHLIG INBHIR NIS, DINGWALL PRIMARY SCHOOL, MILLBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL, INVERNESS ROYAL ACADEMY, DINGWALL ACADEMY AND NAIRN ACADEMY

This report has been prepared following a review of the proposal to establish Gaelic Medium (GM) catchment areas for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy.

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 meetings held on 5 and 19 September 2023.
- 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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Appendices

Appendix 3 - Minute of public meeting held at Millbank Primary School on 5 September 2023

Appendix 3a - Minute of public meeting held at Dingwall Primary School on 19 September 2023

Appendix 4 - List of Respondents to Statutory Consultation

Appendix 4i-4x – Copies of individual responses

Appendix 5 - Report from Education Scotland (English language version)

Appendix 6 - Report from Education Scotland (Gàidhlig language version)

Appendix 7 – Revised GM catchment map for Millbank Primary and Nairn Academy

Appendix 8 – Revised GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis and Inverness Royal Academy

Appendix A - The proposal document

Appendix B – Map of Proposed GM catchment for Millbank Primary and Nairn Academy (as proposed in consultation)

Appendix C – Map of Proposed GM catchment for Dingwall Primary School and Dingwall Academy

Appendix D - Map of Proposed GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis and Inverness Royal Academy (as proposed in consultation)

1.0 Background

- 1.2 Highland Council's Education Committee, at its meeting on 1 June 2023, agreed that a statutory consultation be undertaken on the proposal to establish Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy.
- 1.3 The Proposal paper suggested that the new Gàidhlig Medium (GM) catchment area for Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis (BSGI) should overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of 33 primary schools.
- 1.4 The new GM catchment for Dingwall Primary would overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of 19 primary schools.
- 1.5 The new GM catchment for Millbank Primary would overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of 4 primary schools.
- 1.6 The new GM catchment for Inverness Royal Academy would overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of Inverness Royal Academy, Charleston Academy, Culloden Academy, Inverness High School, and Millburn Academy and part of the catchment area of Fortrose Academy.
- 1.7 The new GM catchment area for Dingwall Academy would overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of Dingwall Academy and Alness Academy, and part of the catchment area of Fortrose Academy.
- 1.8 The Proposal Paper also suggested formalising the current arrangements relating to Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME) in Nairn Academy, under which the catchment area for Nairn Academy will apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium education.
- 1.9 Existing primary school catchments for the provision of English Medium education will be unaffected.
- 1.10 Particular arrangements would apply to transporting pupils to GME from outlying EM catchments, as set out in the Proposal Paper.
- 1.11 **Appendix A** is the original consultative paper and provides full details of the above proposal. **Appendices B - D** are also appendices to the original proposal.

2.0 Consultation process

- 2.1 The formal consultation period ran from Monday 21 August 2023 to Friday 27 October 2023. 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, there was wide consultation with parents, staff, and children of the affected schools, as well as with the wider community.
- 2.3 The proposal document was advertised on the Highland Council website.
- 2.4 Public meetings were held in Nairn on 5 September and in Dingwall on 19 September. A meeting was also called for Inverness on 12 September but, no-one attended. Notes of the meetings in Nairn and Dingwall are at **Appendix 3 and Appendix 3a.**
- 2.5 Following receipt of written representations received by Highland Council and consideration of oral representations made at the public meeting, officials reviewed the proposals.
- 2.6 The outcome of this review process is reflected in the response, conclusion and recommendations outlined below.

3.0 Responses received

- 3.1 A list of those who responded in writing during the public consultation is at **Appendix 4.** There were 10 written responses received during the consultation period. Copies of these responses can also be found at **Appendices 4i-4x.** Two responses were submitted on behalf of organisations (Comann nam Pàrant, and Bòrd na Gàidhlig), The other 8 responses were all from individual parents/local residents.

4.0 Issues raised during public consultation

- 4.1 The issues raised in writing during the consultation exercise are summarised below, together with the responses from the Council.

Issue 1

I would like to dispute why our address is not included in the Millbank catchment area for Gaelic education when the Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Inbhir Nis school which is going to be our catchment area is much further away than Millbank PS. Our address sits on the catchment line for Cawdor and Croy catchment area. I can understand for normal catchment areas the Croy/Cawdor line needs to be somewhere but for Gaelic Education why pupils would be sent to Inverness rather than Nairn, when Nairn is much closer. It does not seem sensible that you are just grouping current Nairn catchment areas together to get the Gaelic catchment area when looking at time to get to school Millbank is a much closer school than travelling all the way to Inverness.

Response 1

The proposed GM catchments are based on the existing EM catchments, and the address concerned lies with the Croy PS catchment area, albeit

close to the boundary. Although GM catchment areas overlap a number of EM catchments. it is logical to group the EM catchments for GM purposes and to keep the EM catchments as whole entities. The Council does not favour varying the detailed boundaries of each catchment, to introduce differences between EM and GM education boundaries.

Issue 2

We live in Ardersier so closer to Nairn than Inverness travel time and our family and life is mainly in Ardersier and Nairn so sending our child to Inverness wouldn't be an option for us, this would mean we wouldn't choose Gaelic Medium for our 3 children which would be very sad considering the push for Gaelic speakers.

It wouldn't be beneficial to our children to go a city they have very little tie or connection to.

It would be longer time travelling for them also and age 5 years old this just doesn't seem a good use of their time or energy.

Would placement requests still be considered?

Our son starts p1 next year, then my daughter will start 2026 and our son will start 2029. We had made the decision we wanted all our children to go to GM in Millbank. We live in Ardersier but our life is in Ardersier/Nairn including family for childcare etc and I will likely work in Nairn in the future. So we had visited Millbank and I have enrolled on a Gaelic course in preparation.

The catchment areas had come as a surprise to us. We live in Inverness catchment if the catchment areas go ahead.

This is a huge concern as we won't send our children to school in Inverness as it just wouldn't make sense for us as a family. We would be very sad if our children weren't granted a placement request for Millbank so it has thrown our plans up the air a bit especially as it's only a few months until we apply for p1 and 11 months until our oldest starts p1.

Looking at the distances involved in the catchment area for Millbank and BSGI, it would be more appropriate for areas such as Ardersier and Croy to be included in the Millbank catchment area. This would also be beneficial to expand the number of GME pupils within Millbank and Nairn Academy at a time when both BSGI and IRA are running much nearer capacity than Millbank and Nairn Academy.

Ardersier -> Millbank = 6.7 miles

Ardersier -> BSGI = 12 miles

Ardersier -> Nairn Academy = 6.1 miles

Ardersier -> Inverness Royal Academy = 12.3 miles

Croy -> Millbank = 7.1 miles
 Croy -> BSGI = 10.6 miles
 Croy -> Nairn Academy = 7.3 miles
 Croy -> Inverness Royal Academy = 10.9 miles

Response 2

The issue of the appropriate GM catchment for Ardersier is considered in more detail at Section 10 below.

Issue 3

We live in Nairn, within the catchment for Millbank Primary School. My daughters have both attended Gaelic Toddlers in the town, spent their preschool years at Croileagan Inbhir Narainn, have been through GME at Millbank Primary School and are both considered fluent Gaelic speakers. There is a prominently displayed banner in the town stating that bilingual education in GME is available from ages 3-18 within Nairn - but Nairn Academy is not delivering GME under your own definition.
<https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Statutory-Guidance-for-Gaelic-Education.pdf>

On page 25 of this 48-page document it states:

2.15 The GME curriculum from S1 to S3 and into the Senior Phase (S4-S6) remains one based on the principle of immersion in Gaelic. It is considered essential that education authorities and schools identify the curricular areas and subjects, in addition to Gaelic, that are possible to deliver through the medium of Gaelic, based on the availability of staff and young people's choices.

2.16 Schools should aim to deliver a sufficient proportion of the secondary curriculum through the medium of Gaelic to enable young people to continue to develop their fluency in Gaelic. Schools and education authorities should plan for this, taking their lead from the subjects for which qualifications are available from the SQA (see paragraphs 2.18-19). Some secondary schools with GME will offer other subject provision and this will depend on local circumstances and teacher availability. Schools and education authorities should collaborate to develop secondary level GME curriculum opportunities, sharing of expertise, courses and a range of delivery methods, including the use of distance learning and technology.

Referring specifically back to the Consultation Document, Appendix A, Paragraph 6.1 it states that:

'The provision of GME at Nairn Academy is a relatively recent development....'

Out of my daughter's 32 periods per week, only 3 classes are in Gaelic - these are Gaelic language for fluent speakers. Nothing else (i.e., none of

the social or practical classes are being taught through the medium of Gaelic).

Frustratingly also, the 3 Gaelic lessons that she does receive are at the expense of another modern language.

I fought hard during her last term at Millbank Primary School for the option for her to receive transport to the IRA to continue true GME, where the current S1s get 4 Gaelic lesson for fluent speakers per week, plus Modern Studies, Geography, History, RMPS and PSE all in Gaelic - plus they receive French classes.

In your consideration regarding GME catchment areas, you must understand that currently insufficient quantity of Gaelic is being delivered to even call it GME.

Therefore families from Nairn wishing their children to continue with full Gaelic immersion must be given the option to continue it at IRA, with the provision of transport - GME, as defined in the above Statutory Guidance Document, is not available at any more local establishment. Pupils from Millbank commencing GME S1 at the IRA in session 2021-2022, and prior to this date, receive funded transport for the approximately 18 mile journey.

Subsequent S1 intakes (with the exception of the younger siblings of the above families) do not receive this option, and they are left to either sort their own transport arrangements, or to settle for non-GME (as described above) at Nairn Academy.

As parents of two children within the Nairn Millbank Primary School GM unit and one child within the Inverness Royal Academy GM unit, our comments are as follows:

Educational Benefits Statement – Introduction:

This paper states in the introduction section that the consultation seeks ‘...To formalise the current arrangements relating to Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME) in Nairn Academy, under which the catchment area for Nairn Academy will apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium education...’.

This statement implies that there is an existing agreed arrangement and that currently Nairn Academy offers a GME Education. However, both of these statements are far from accurate. Nairn Academy has never operated as a formal GME setting and as shown below is not operating currently as one, nor will it have the pupil demand in the future to operate as one.

Moreover, the removal of the longstanding transport for secondary GME pupils from Nairn to the IRA back in 2022, was never subject to any formal consultation and or public discussion, instead it was removed without warning and justification to the secondary intake for academic year 2022.

Therefore the assertion that this consultation is to ratify a previously agreed position is wholly inaccurate.

The consultation implies that Nairn Academy is operating a GME currently. This assertion is fundamentally incorrect, as recognised and confirmed by the Council panel at the public meeting on 5th September 2023, Nairn Academy only has 2no. students with S1 and 3no. Students in S2 wishing to participate in GM.

Additionally, these students are only being taught a very limited timetable which precludes teaching any subjects within the medium of GM and the students within S1 who have elected to take the GM language course are doing so at the expense of a foreign language, which we understand might not comply with educational requirements.

Whereas it is understood that GME students within Dingwall Academy are taught History, Geography and Modern Studies all within the medium of GM and GME students at the IRA are taught History, Geography, Modern Studies, RMPS and PSE within the medium of GM. Therefore, until Nairn Academy can offer an equivalent and compliant GME experience it is unrealistic to expect parents with Nairn to accept a substandard GME when compared to neighbouring schools.

Whilst it is admirable that the Council wishes to develop a GME unit at secondary level within Nairn, and one which we would fully support. The current consultation demonstrates that when the Nairn Academy proposed catchment is compared to both the IRA and Dingwall Academy proposed catchments, a Nairn Academy one is insufficient to provide sufficient students to warrant a GME unit.

This is based on Nairn Academy GME proposed catchment being served by just 4no. primary schools, whilst the proposed IRA catchment is served by 33no. primary schools and the proposed Dingwall Catchment is served by 19no primary schools.

Furthermore, Millbank Primary School in Nairn has been operating a GME unit for several years and currently operates two GME classes across the whole school – GM 1-3 & GM 4-7 with a roll of 28 pupils. Over the years of operating the GME unit in Millbank, the GME school role has been fairly static and is unlikely to increasing significantly due to the size of the primary school catchment and the current role of the GM nursery within the town. As such, it can be forecasted that the number of pupils undertaking GME at Nairn Academy will not increase significant and instead will be a relatively low number of pupils and one which would be unsustainable to support a GME within Nairn Academy.

Whereas Dingwall Academy is fed from a GME unit with a roll of 75 pupils and IRA is fed from a GME unit of 214 pupils. Both of which are significantly higher than the Nairn Academy Catchment and therefore have the ability to

sustain the existing GME units associated with the secondary GME within these locations.

Given the above has demonstrated that Nairn Academy is currently not offering a GME education and has insufficient demand in the future to deliver one. It is realistic to assume parents of the current pupils enrolled within the Millbank primary GME unit to want a 'like for like' education as being offered in neighbouring catchments and one that satisfies the legislative requirements for GME.

Therefore, it is argued that the most suitable option would be to reinstate the transport of Nairn Academy GME pupils to the IRA for secondary GME as the most appropriate and would not be adversely prohibited due to distance between Millbank PS and the IRA; as this distance is approximately an 18mile journey, which is similar to a number of travel distances proposed for the other catchments (namely, Cromarty Primary to Dingwall Academy at 19.2miles, Beaully Primary to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis at 17.6 miles, Teanassie Primary to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis at 17.2 miles, Foyers Primary to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis at 18.2 miles, Stratherrick Primary to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis at 18.1 miles, Cromarty Primary to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis at 25.9 miles and Resolis Primary to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis at 20.9 miles).

Doing so, would offer the parents of the Nairn primary GME unit the option of either seeking a full, proper and comparative secondary GME at the IRA if they so wish, or retaining their children within Nairn to attend Nairn Academy where they can accept a lesser GM education.

In principle Bòrd na Gàidhlig supports the establishment of a clear catchment area for the GME provision in the Nairn ASG, both Secondary and Primary provision, as proposed by the Highland Council.

We note a range of concerns raised by parents concerning GME provision within the Nairn ASG and strongly recommend that urgent steps are taken to improve the position including the following:

A plan be put in place to secure additional resource to deliver an expanded GME curriculum (this relates to both delivery of support from teachers outwith the ASG and recruitment of additional teachers). We recommend that the plan for curriculum development be constructed with support from the Education Scotland, Scottish Government Gaelic and Scots Division (Specific Grant Scheme and potentially the Gaelic Capital Fund). The Education Team at Bòrd na Gàidhlig can also provide additional professional advice and support.

The GME Curriculum Offer at Nairn Academy should be expanded each session.

The annual School Improvement Plan and Annual Standards and Quality Report should clearly indicate for parents the improvements in the Curriculum Offer being delivered each session.

It is crucial that the GME provision within the Nairn ASG is envisioned as a 3-18 service providing parents with Early Years, Primary and Secondary education of a high quality. Parents have raised concerns regarding the 3-18 vision. We recommend strongly that the Early Years aspect of the 3-18 provision is reviewed, and an action plan created to ensure that interest in GME within the community is fully exploited so that across the 3-18 GME provision parental confidence in GME Early Years, Primary and Secondary is increased.

Amongst the aims of the establishment of catchments exercise are the reinforcement of parental confidence in GME, the establishment of clarity around service provision and the creation of the conditions where local GME services will attract more and more families to establish a “critical mass”. There are clear indications from the consultation exercise that considerable work requires to be done to build confidence. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is of the view that development planning should be put in place so that in the Standards and Quality Report for session 2023-24 there is clear evidence of progress, which will then be sustained each session thereafter.

Response 3

Having listened to parental views and as a result of this consultation, The Highland Council will continue to provide transport to Inverness Royal Academy, should parents wish to send their children there for GME. As we are establishing a catchment area for Nairn ASG, the hope would be that as we further develop the curriculum within GME at Nairn Academy, then children and young people will be able to remain within their catchment school for GME and that parental confidence in the curriculum being offered is increase and a sustainable model is in place.

In addition, The Highland Council will continue to further develop the GME provision at Nairn Academy and across the wider ASG in Nairn, with a view to this being a more sustained 3-18 curriculum within the catchment boundary for the Nairn ASG.

Issue 4

As a parent of two children in the catchment area, and friends with a number of local parents who have voiced the same concerns, but say they don't have the time to go to meetings or write letters to council, I feel I need to protest the time and money being spent on a dying language which can be learned in later life if that is an interest. I was born in Nairn, and chose to return here to raise my children, I would hope they will do the same, There is currently no option to learn Spanish in Nairn Academy, despite it being widely spoken worldwide, we need our children to learn across a broad

spectrum in order to find options in the workplace, and I object to Gaelic being pushed as an agenda when there has been no demand for it. Please reconsider spending the time and money on, say, fixing our run-down buildings, assisting this staffing problems, or supporting our children who, at the end of the day, have to take the skills and subjects learned in the classroom into the wider world.

Response 4

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed by the Scottish Parliament with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland, commanding equal respect to the English language. Public authorities must demonstrate how that principle will be achieved and maintained in practice.

The Highland Council has a clear focus on increasing Gaelic usage and the number of Gaelic speakers. The Council continues to be committed to providing and enhancing Gaelic Medium Education, recognising this as one of the key drivers in sustaining and developing Gaelic.

Issue 5

We live in the Heights of Achterneed which is a small single track road. At present, pupils attending Dingwall Academy are transported from our area on a large 30+ seater coach. It used to be a 16+ seater mini bus and given the small number of kids I'm unclear why a large coach is used on such a narrow windy steep road. A mini bus is used to transport primary children to Strathpeffer Primary.

The proposal to transport primary age GME children via the Dingwall Academy coach makes us feel concerned. I've listed our concerns and questions below.

- 1) Will GME primary kids be dropped at Dingwall Primary prior to the coach going onto Dingwall Academy?
- 2) Dingwall Primary is very congested at drop off and pick up times. Where will the coach drop the kids off and how will it turn safely?
- 3) How will the safety of the primary age children be monitored whilst they are on the coach? On a large coach on our narrow windy steep road, the driver will be concentrating on the road not what is happening on the coach. Expecting very young kids of 5/6 years old to sit amongst teenagers doesn't sit comfortably with us unless properly monitored. The large coach is currently more than half empty.
- 4) Would it be possible for a minibus to be used instead? We appreciate that depends on the numbers of children but at present we understand that a 16-21 seater would be sufficient for GME primary kids and academy

pupils. This seems like a good compromise but is Highland Council able to dictate what vehicle the bus company uses?

Response 5

There are currently 23 pupils listed for travel on this route, including 3 for Dingwall Primary. Pupils transfer to another bus at Dingwall Academy for onward to the Primary [most are on shared transport with the Academy pupils and get off those buses and onto one].

Children are dropped off on Old Evanton Road and are then seen across the road by the Crossing Patroller.

The rural nature of the Highlands means that there are large areas where it is only practical, for both financial and logistical reasons, to run one vehicle for the children in an area. From an environmental perspective, not running additional vehicles also keeps the levels of emissions down. This means there will be occasions when that children attending Dingwall Academy and Dingwall Primary are required to travel on one bus. With the lack of services available in rural areas, together with problems in driver availability, this practice is common across the Highland Council area.

It is possible that this vehicle then goes on to do other work carrying larger passenger numbers but as we have 23 pupils listed at present, this is the minimum size of vehicle the bus company would need to put on the route.

Issue 6

I would support the town of Beaully to be added to the Dingwall catchment rather than Inverness.

Inverness has a significant level of growth to the East and there will be sustained pressure on accommodating the demand within Inverness for the foreseeable future. Adding Beaully to the Dingwall catchment removes some of that pressure from Inverness and Dingwall is a more straightforward journey from Beaully than the road through Clachnaharry to Inverness. Since the trains go through both towns there are public transport options available for older pupils of the academy and Dingwall Academy is better connected to the train station than the IRA which is nowhere near Inverness rail station. I think the historic division between Inverness and Ross shire was between Beaully and Muir of Ord but this historic boundary in administrative terms does not reflect the reality of the towns of Dingwall and Beaully and the connections between them in the present day. Kids in Beaully are poorly served by both English medium and Gaelic medium educational facilities in that the primary school has recently had its replacement shelved from the capital program and the lack of secondary education in the town which leaves an awful gap between Drumnadrochit and Inverness where pupils have long travel to secondary school despite living in established settlements like Beaully. Dingwall is closer to Beaully

and having Beauly within the Dingwall catchment would reduce the pressure on Inverness Royal academy and also on the traffic between Beauly and Inverness.

I would like to add that I would consider the Nairn catchment to be too small and it ought to be extended West to include Ardersier, Croy, Tornagrain and the area around the airport. The level of housing growth allocated east of Inverness is going to place huge pressure on Inverness Royal Academy and I don't think the IRA will have the capacity to take on the demand that will result from that size of area. It would be short sighted not to use this opportunity to rationalise the catchments so that they take on a more equal share of the demand. The catchments as currently proposed run the risk of having to build a further school when it becomes evident that the IRA cannot meet the demand within its catchment. And given that process is glacial in pace, it would be regrettable that students and parents would have to work within a pressurized sub standard environment waiting on that solution which was so obviously avoidable at this very stage. Also how is it justifiable for students to travel from Ardersier all the way to General ease road in Inverness which is not exactly in a central location? They are obviously closer to Nairn and should be accommodated there.

On another vein - I am not clear on whether developer contributions will be sought towards capacity constraints in Gaelic medium schools as the councils existing developer contributions supplementary guidance makes it clear that Gaelic schools could secure funding towards them in this way but we simply haven't up until now. The growth in demand for Gaelic medium education in the region surely makes this position untenable and new developments including small development of 1-4 houses should be making payments towards Gaelic medium capacity constraints accordingly.

Response 6

The Council has given careful consideration to the suggestion that Beauly should be part of the Dingwall GM catchment, but believes that the the boundary between the Dingwall and Charleston ASGs represents a suitable boundary between the Dingwall and BSGI/IRA GM catchments. In coming to this view we have taken into account that only one representation has been received on this issue.

It will be open to any parent living in Beauly and seeking GM education for their children, to submit a placing request to access GME in Dingwall.

The issue of Ardersier is considered at Section 10 below.

Currently developer contributions for school building projects are typically linked to an assessment of the impact of the development within a defined school catchment. Historically, GM schools have not had defined catchments, as opting for GME is a matter of parental choice.

It has therefore been difficult to demonstrate the impact of a development on numbers attending Gaelic Medium education, to the degree that would justify a contribution.

Highland Council has been working through an exercise to create Gaelic Medium catchments in Highland, for those schools that offer GME. In that context, we will, in the future, be considering the issue of how developer contributions might be applied in relation to GME.

Issue 7

Whilst we are in general agreement with the proposed catchment for Bunscoil Gàidhlig Inbhir Nis and Inverness Royal Academy, there are, as noted in the consultation document, a number of children who currently attend BSGI from outwith the proposed catchment. We welcome the re-assurance that these children, along with their siblings in the future, will continue to be supported with transport. We are aware that there may be an issue with capacity in the future at BSGI as GME continues to grow and parents should also be given re-assurance that any future placing requests for siblings of pupils currently attending the schools will be successful.

We also note from the consultation document that a number of pupils attend BSGI from the “Nairnside / Croy” area and we are aware that there has been discussion as part of the Nairn consultation on including Croy and Ardersier in the Nairn catchment rather than for BSGI. Whilst we appreciate that this may have potential to improve numbers in Nairn, we believe that BSGI as a stand-alone Gaelic school is a more attractive option for parents and that making this change could have a negative impact on uptake of GME from these areas.

It is difficult to fully comment on the proposal to include Avoch and North Kessock in the BSGI catchment with Tore and Munloch in the Dingwall catchment without more evidence on which would be the more attractive option for parents. That said, as there are currently pupils attending BSGI from Munloch, it would seem to indicate that families would be more inclined to travel to Inverness for GME. It is also worth noting that Inverness has the more attractive option for parents with a dedicated Gaelic school compared to provision in Dingwall which is provided in a mainly English medium environment. Educationally the total immersive experience provided in a Gaelic school has benefits and we feel this should be taken into account and consideration given to including Tore and Munloch in the BSGI catchment as well as Avoch and North Kessock. GME provision at Inverness Royal Academy also offers a wider GME experience for pupils.

We are in general agreement with the proposed catchment for Dingwall Primary School and Dingwall Academy, apart from the inclusion of Tore and Munloch (see previous comment). However, given some of the distances involved and travelling times, particularly from the Fortrose ASG we hope

that there will be opportunities in the future to have other GME provision within the area.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig recommends that the Local Authority continue to engage with communities in Fortrose ASG with a view to setting up GME provision at a future point.

There is also potential to further develop the current provision in Dingwall. Highland Council have in the past considered establishing a dedicated Gaelic school in Dingwall and we would support this as the next logical step for GME in this area. We are also aware that there are currently some issues with pre-school provision, and we hope this situation will be speedily rectified before it has too much of a detrimental effect on enrolment for GME.

CnP agree with the catchment for Millbank Primary School and Nairn Academy. Although it is a small catchment area there is potential for growth in GME from pre-school through to secondary. We note the current restrictions in numbers in Croileagan, which is a partner service nursery run by an English medium organisation, and this situation should be reviewed by the council with a view to establishing council run Gaelic medium early learning and childcare provision. This would allow numbers to increase and lead to an increase in enrolment for primary provision. We also note parental concerns around secondary provision at Nairn Academy. We welcomed the fairly recent introduction of Gaelic provision at the Academy which allows Gaelic medium pupils to continue with Gaelic in their local school, remain with their peer group from primary and participate in after-school activities. Given the level of concern from parents we hope that the council will continue to support Nairn Academy to expand provision for GME. There are also examples of good practice from a number of schools who although they have limited subject teaching in Gaelic maximise the opportunities that pupils have to develop their Gaelic language skills through participation in projects and activities such as the national debate. We would also encourage Highland Council to consider opportunities for more collaboration with other schools such as Inverness Royal Academy, and involvement in community activities such as are provided through Comunn na Gàidhlig.

We note the proposal, for all catchments, that the default position will be for the council to utilise current secondary school transport for all provision. We are concerned that this may not always be appropriate for very young children and would remind the council that any proposal should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME for their children. Transport should not be a barrier to accessing GME. Promotion and Information The council hopes that setting the catchment areas will provide clarification for parents on their entitlement to GME and this is welcome. We hope that the council will ensure that all parents in the associated schools are made aware prior to enrolment for primary education that they do have an opportunity, supported by the council, to access GME. We would also expect the council to continue to promote the opportunity for parents to

submit a request for GMPE in line with the Education Act (Scotland) 2016.

Response 7

Placing requests are governed by national legislation. The assumption is that placing requests are granted, but there are certain circumstances where we refuse them. In fact, where those circumstances apply we are obliged to refuse them. Most commonly, requests must be refused where they would result in an unreasonable cost to the taxpayer. There are other specified circumstances where we would refuse a request, but all requests would be judged against the same criteria, no matter where they were from or which schools were involved.

The issue of the appropriate GM catchments for Ardersier and Croy is considered in more detail at Section 10 below.

The comment from Comann nam Pàrant suggesting a change to the GM catchment encompassing Tore and Munlochy, was the only such response. Whilst we acknowledge some merit in the argument, on balance we propose to maintain the proposal that Tore and Munlochy are included within the Dingwall GM catchment.

The Council's Proposal Paper made it clear that any identified parental demand for future local provision of GME from within any of the primary schools identified above, would be assessed in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education (2017).

The Council will be reviewing educational provision in Dingwall, as part of the newly adopted Highland Investment Plan, which aims to transform the asset base of Highland Council, such as schools and other premises to centres of community service delivery. A number of schools delivering Gaelic Medium Education currently will be in scope for investment through the plan, and dialogue will take place with relevant stakeholders on this in relation to specific projects, such as Dingwall.

In respect of Croileagan Inbhir Narainn, it is the Council's policy to deliver childcare and early education in collaboration with partners, and to support communities and partners in providing childcare solutions.

The Scottish Government has issued Operating Guidance on The National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare Providers. That Guidance specifies that their approach is 'provider neutral' and is underpinned by a National Standard that all settings – regardless of whether they are in the public, private or third sector, including childminders – have to meet in order to be able to deliver funded ELC.

For families this means that they will be able to access high quality funded ELC with the provider of their choice – in the public, private, or third sector,

including childminders – if that provider meets the criteria set out in the National Standard, wishes to deliver the funded entitlement, has a space available, is able to offer the funded hours in-line with their local authority's ELC delivery plan (subject to the capacity of the setting), and has or is willing to enter into a contract with their local authority to deliver the funded hours.

The principles around the organisation of school transport in Highland are set out in Response 5 above.

Issue 8

In principle Bòrd na Gàidhlig supports the establishment of a clear catchment area for the GME provision in the Dingwall, Alness and Fortrose ASG, both Secondary and Primary provision, as proposed by the Highland Council.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig notes that there remain some challenges around travelling times and ensuring that GME as an option continues to be attractive for parents.

The travelling times and distances for Strathconon and Cromarty remain outwith the general interpretation that reasonable travelling distance is less than 15 miles. Bòrd na Gàidhlig recommends that the Local Authority work with local communities to explore the potential for setting up GME provision within the local area in these areas.

It will be important to continue planning GME provision within this ASG with a vision for a 3-18 set of GME services.

In principle Bòrd na Gàidhlig supports the establishment of a clear catchment area for the GME provision in the Inverness ASGs, both Secondary and Primary provision, as proposed by the Highland Council.

Similar to Strathconon and Cromarty, Bòrd na Gàidhlig notes that distances for some schools are outwith the 15-mile radius though travelling times are not as challenging. However, again there may be scope for developing further GME provision within local areas to ensure that a more local GME service is provided.

In conclusion Bòrd na Gàidhlig recognises the complexity of provision in the listed ASGs and commends the work officers have done to find solutions to a wide range of challenges. Bòrd na Gàidhlig recommends that whatever the outcome of decision-making regarding catchments, a publicity initiative is developed so that parents can easily understand where their GME service is located and how they might access transport support.

Response 8

See Response 7 above for the Council's current policy on identified demand for GME in primary schools.

On current projections the school roll at Strathconon will fall to one in August 2025, so GME at that school would not be viable in the foreseeable future.

The Council already widely publicises the availability of GME through its information to parents about school enrolment as well as more generally on its website. Individual schools also promote the availability of GME.

- 4.2 The note of the public meeting in Nairn is at Appendix 3. The meeting was dominated by the issues around GME at Nairn Academy (see Issue 3 above) and by discussions about the best GM catchments for Ardersier and Croy (Issue 2 above). At the Dingwall meeting (see note at Appendix 3a) there was discussion about the best GM catchment for Beaully (Issue 6 above) and about GM Early Years provision in Dingwall.

5.0 Summary of the issues raised by Education Scotland

- 5.1 In line with legislative requirements, Education Scotland was invited to submit comments on the Council's proposals. An English language copy of the report from Education Scotland is at **Appendix 5**. A Gaelic language copy is at **Appendix 6**.
- 5.2 In their report, Education Scotland HM Inspectors agreed that there are benefits to most of what the council is proposing. However, the council still need to take important actions to improve further the potential educational benefits resulting from their proposal.
- 5.3 For the catchment area covered by the Dingwall area, stakeholders raised concerns that sgoil-àraich (early learning and childcare) is not currently available. In Inverness and Nairn catchment areas, stakeholders highlighted that capacity for enrolments are being reached at sgoil-àraich. The council should clarify in their final report how parents can access sgoil-àraich.
- 5.4 Stakeholders in Nairn raised concerns that not enough of the curriculum was available through immersion in Gàidhlig at the secondary stages. For a few young people within the proposed catchment for Nairn, educational benefits would reduce by not being able to attend Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis – Inverness Royal Academy. Specifically, young people access a more bespoke curriculum offer through Gàidhlig by attending secondary education in Inverness. At the same time, stakeholders recognised the importance of Gàidhlig Medium Education being available in local areas. HM Inspectors agree that children and young people should access a 3-18 curriculum, in which immersion education is available in line with the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017. While Acadamaidh Inbhir Narainn - Nairn Academy build their curriculum offer, some parents are content to continue using the local secondary school. For those who are not, they should have an option of

sending their child to Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis - Inverness Royal Academy, with dedicated, free transport provided. The council needs to plan further with staff in Nairn to develop a strategy to resource a curriculum that provides continuity and progression for the young people in Gàidhlig Medium Education. This should ensure that staffing allocations are sufficient to plan the curriculum for individuals and small groups of young people who are learning through Gàidhlig at the primary stages. Nairn Academy's new school building needs to support creating an immersive environment. Staff should be supported in their ambition to teach Gaelic (Learners) to young people.

- 5.4 Some stakeholders suggested that children and young people attend Gàidhlig Medium Education in Nairn rather than as assigned to Inverness. They felt that this was more attractive for parents and would increase enrolments in Nairn. A few stakeholders suggested that children and young people residing in Beaulieu should be included in the catchment area for Dingwall rather than Inverness. The current catchment area for English Medium at Fortrose Academy is being allocated between the provisions for Gàidhlig Medium at Dingwall and Inverness. Almost all stakeholders agreed with how these named districts would be allocated, as long as effective and equitable transport and travel arrangements were being provided consistently.
- 5.5 Inspectors recommended that the council should provide further clarity and support on travel and transport. Particularly, Ardersier and Croy to Nairn; Alness, Beaulieu, Cromarty, Culbokie, Munlochy and Tore to Dingwall, and from Avoch and North Kessock to Inverness. Based on demand, taxis and minibuses are currently used. The council's proposal paper details travel arrangements based on existing catchment areas for secondary English Medium schools. In Inverness for example, young people's use of existing travel arrangements would result in them having to make further travel connections to Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis - Inverness Royal Academy, should the proposal proceed. This adds to the length and cost of young people's school day. In the proposal paper, travel arrangements are calculated based on distance from primary to secondary schools. This does not take account of remote areas, and children and young people's lived experiences of travelling for an education in Gàidhlig Medium. The council should articulate travel arrangements specific to catchment areas for Gàidhlig and avoid costs to parents. The council needs to ensure that transport, travel and cost is not a barrier to parents choosing Gàidhlig Medium Education. Children and young people, in accessing Gàidhlig Medium Education, need to experience excellence, equity, equality and fairness. The council should ensure that relevant impact assessments are undertaken, including equality and rural assessments. They should detail safeguarding arrangements for young children travelling on transport, including that young children are dropped off at close proximity to their school. In its final report, the council should ensure that all mileages between schools are included. A few are omitted in the proposal paper. The council need to be clearer on how they will decide on 'practicable arrangements' in utilising existing transport. They should also clarify the situations and contexts that merit transport by taxi or minibus. This should include reassurances about existing travel arrangements for individuals and their siblings. There are far fewer schools that offer Gàidhlig Medium

rather than English Medium. This in itself, necessitates more travel for children and young people. The council should review how it describes the cost of transport 'as additional' when sustaining the Gàidhlig language is a national priority, embedded in legislation, with fewer schools for Gàidhlig available.

- 5.6 In summary, Education Scotland noted that the Council are fulfilling statutory duties when setting up catchment areas for Gàidhlig Medium Education. Almost all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors supported the proposals, with a few adaptations and clarification. Stakeholders, and notably children and young people, spoke of their successes and pride in being fluent in Gàidhlig. HM Inspectors agree that catchment areas should be established, subject to appropriate action being taken on the issues raised in their report and described above. In taking forward the proposals, the council should continue working with stakeholders to ensure and resource high-quality 3-18 Gàidhlig Medium curricula and immersion environments in all of the designated Gàidhlig Medium establishments. They should ensure safe, effective, free and future-proofed travel and transport arrangements so there are no barriers, including costs, in accessing Gàidhlig Medium Education. In schools, where there are increasing school rolls, with further increases projected, the council should ensure that future planning keeps abreast with demand for Gàidhlig.
- 5.7 The reference in Education Scotland's report to the sgoil-àraich not operating is a reference to the former Croileagan Inbhir Pheofharain, a privately-run playgroup which collapsed in September 2022. GM pre-school provision in Dingwall is now provided under the management of Dingwall Primary School and the Highland Council.
- 5.8 Currently there is sufficient capacity at Croileagan Inbhir Narainn (11 children registered, capacity of 16).
- 5.9 The nursery class at Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhli Inbhir Nis has a registered capacity 106, including 76 children in the 3-25 age group. For the 2024-25 session, the total number of early years children is 97 but only 37 of them are full time. There are a high number of blended placements, more than half of the intake. Fifteen children do not join until January or April 2025. The maximum number in any given day is 87 but not until April 2025. There are only 69 on a Friday, even with the Jan/Apr intakes. In August the busiest day of the week is Thursday with 72 children, Fridays will only have 59. It would be possible to allocate Jan/Apr starts different times/days and still accommodate them within the current rooms/capacity. It is not unusual to do this in busy settings.
- 5.10 The Council's responses to the other matters raised by Education Scotland are set out at Responses 2 and 3, and 5-8 above.

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 The proposal does not change the existing arrangements for school transport.

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 were no alleged omissions or inaccuracies.

10.0 Overall Review of Consultation Exercise

- 10.1 Several respondents to the consultation exercise suggested that Ardersier should be part of the Nairn GM catchment rather than the BSGI catchment. This point was also made by one respondent from Croy. See Issue 2 above.
- 10.2 To further inform its decision on the above responses, Highland Council undertook an online survey of parents of primary and pre-school children, who were interested in GME. There were 3 responses from parents in Ardersier, all of whom favoured being part of the Millbank PS/Nairn Academy catchment for the purposes of GME. One response from Croy suggested that community should remain within the BSGI/IRA catchments for the purposes of GME.
- 10.3 After reviewing the consultation exercise and the results of the subsequent survey, the Council recommends that, for GME purposes, Ardersier should become part of the GME catchment for Millbank PS and Nairn Academy, but that Croy PS should remain with the Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis/Inverness Royal Academy GM catchments.
- 10.4 The new catchment boundaries are illustrated at **Appendices 7 and 8**.
- 10.5 The issues relating to Beauly, Tore and Munloch are covered at Response 6 and 7 above.

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.

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 sections 4 and 6 above.
- 12.2 The Education Scotland Inspector held discussions with relevant consultees and gathered a range 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 GM catchment areas for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy, should be implemented, but with the amendment that, for the purposes of GME, Ardersier should become part of the GME catchment for Millbank PS and Nairn Academy.

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.

Kate Lackie

Assistant Chief Executive

XX August 2024

CONSULTATION MEETING – PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREAS FOR BUN-SGOIL GHÀIDHLIG INBHIR NIS, INVERNESS ROYAL ACADEMY, DINGWALL PRIMARY SCHOOL, DINGWALL ACADEMY, MILLBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL, AND NAIRN ACADEMY

HELD AT MILLBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL – 5 SEPTEMBER 2023 – 6.30pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Panel

Cllr. Paul Oldham - Chairperson
Ian Jackson, Education Officer, Resources
Fiona Shearer, Area Education Manager
Lena Walker, Gaelic Education Support Officer

In Attendance

Louise Kinnear, Head Teacher, Millbank Primary School
Julie MacDonald, Head Teacher, Nairn Academy
Holly Souter, Teacher of Gàidhlig, Nairn Academy
Donald Paterson, Education Scotland
12 members of the public

The Chairperson – Cllr. Paul Oldham introduced himself as Vice-Chair of the Local Area Committee and welcomed everyone to the consultation meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposal to formally establish a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Millbank Primary School, Nairn Academy, and other schools, as set out in the recommendation to the proposal Paper.

The Proposal has been issued as a result of statutory guidance on Gaelic Education, produced by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

The Council officials present tonight were Ian Jackson, Education Officer, (Resources); Fiona Shearer, Area Education Manager; and Lena Walker, Gaelic Education Support Officer.

The Chairperson then invited Ian Jackson to describe the consultation process and the detailed reasons for issuing the Proposal.

Mr Jackson

As indicated by the Chairperson, the Council is required to introduce GM catchment areas under the terms of Statutory Guidance issued by BnaG. The setting up of a

catchment area involves a statutory consultation, of which this meeting was part. We are currently in the initial phase of that consultation, which is due to end on Friday 27 October, and anyone who wants to submit views in writing should do so by that date. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to gather views, and we will try to answer any questions that are raised.

The formal process has a number of stages and gives ample opportunity for views to be expressed to the Council before any final decision is made. Once the public consultation ends on 27 October, Education Scotland becomes involved. They will look at the Proposal Paper, the note of the meeting tonight, and any written representations, and will form a view on the educational benefits of the proposal. Education Scotland will contact Millbank Primary and Nairn Academy, and they will be keen to hear from any parents who wish to make their views known. The Council has to take account of Education Scotland's view on the educational benefits and respond to any points raised by their report, as well as any representations received as a result of the consultation process. Following the completion of that stage, the Council will prepare a Report reviewing the consultation exercise and present it to the Council's Education Committee. The Review Report will be published at least 3 weeks before it is submitted to Committee, and anyone who responded in writing to the initial consultation will be invited to make "further representations" during those 3 weeks. Any further representations that are made are submitted to the members of the Committee, either in advance or tabled on the day, so that members are fully informed of any issues that may have arisen. Members will also see copies of the original responses and the note of this meeting.

Because of the Statutory Guidance we mentioned earlier, the Council has to set up Gaelic Medium catchments. What is up for debate is its extent of that catchment. The GM catchment we are proposing for Millbank Primary is the same as the catchment for Nairn Academy, meaning that children will be eligible to enrol in GME at Millbank if they live within the EM catchments of Millbank, Rosebank, Auldearn and Cawdor Primary Schools. For Nairn Academy, the GM catchment will be identical to the school's EM catchment. Up to now there has been a "custom and practice" arrangement in respect of any children who wanted to attend Gaelic Medium education. To an extent therefore, this Proposal is simply formalising arrangements which have already been operating in practice.

In respect of BSGI/IRA, the proposed GM catchment covers all the primary schools within the catchments of IRA, Charleston, Culloden, IHS, and Millburn. We also propose to include two primary school catchments in the Fortrose ASG - North Kessock and Avoch. The Millbank Primary/Nairn Academy catchment will cover the Nairn ASG.

Although we are making this Proposal primarily in response to the statutory guidance on Gaelic Education, we also feel that the Proposal has educational benefits in

promoting the Gaelic language and bilingualism. My colleague Lena Walker will talk more about that in a few moments.

In summary, the benefit of the Proposal is that we're giving clarity to parents in respect of GME, making clear where entitlement exists and where it doesn't exist, and that's an improvement on the existing arrangements based on custom and practice.

The Chairperson then invited Lena Walker to outline the educational benefits of GME

Mrs Walker introduced the 3 frameworks used by Highland Council in terms of the Gaelic curriculum. Gaelic advice from Education Scotland is that we use to determine our curriculum in schools. The statutory Gaelic Language Plan is our corporate plan but it has a lengthy education section with outcomes that are currently under review. We are moving into a new Gaelic Language Plan which will have outcomes relating to promoting Gaelic education, supporting teacher networks and the wider aspects of 3-18 education. Finally, we have the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, which Ian has explained, which gives advice on GM catchments amongst other things. Gaelic education is demand-led and has been established in Nairn for a number of years now. We have a sustainable provision in the primary school and a new teacher in the secondary school. If there are any questions about the curriculum, I would be happy to take them.

The Chairperson opened the meeting to the floor.

Q1 – I am a parent of a GM P6 pupil and an S1 pupil at Nairn Academy. I've submitted a written reply to the consultation online. My concern is that my daughter has gone through GME at primary and has gone to Nairn Academy because it is our local school and there was no opportunity for me to access transport to IRA. I want my daughter to continue with GME, and she is keen to continue, but she is currently getting 3 lessons per week, in Gaelic language, but no other subject, and with no other European language on offer. Information I had from Nairn Academy at the end of last year was that Gaelic had to be planned for, they had to recruit a teacher, which they have and that's great, but the timetabling for Gaelic has been at the expense of French. That's a real disappointment. I feel that when you are saying "this is the Nairn Academy catchment, for GME, and this is the IRA catchment" the playing fields are not level. What is being offered for GME at IRA is different from the level of GME being offered at Nairn Academy, and that's where it feels we are being very short-changed. I realise there are steppingstones to better GM provision, but I was very disappointed that the subject was being offered at the expense of another language, because for me part of the attraction of learning Gaelic was to enhance children's ability of learning a further language.

Follow-up from the Floor - Can I just add to that, I was with CnamP when we fought with Highland Council to get Gaelic at Nairn Academy, and it was quite a battle to get it, but it is not the same as is at Inverness. The teacher left last term

and my daughter missed a whole term of Gaelic, and that's the problem, there is GME at Nairn Academy but if the sole teacher leaves there is no Gaelic.

A1 (Lena Walker) – The advice on Gaelic education is quite clear on how to plan for Gaelic in secondary schools. It is difficult in terms of timetabling because Gaelic is additional to what would be seen in an ordinary timetable, but we can have conversations, about what access pupils have to the teacher and when that is in their timetable. We wouldn't want it to be at the expense of another modern language, so the curriculum proportionality is led by what the teacher availability is and what the timetabling looks like.

Q2 – Your definition of GME is not 3 classes per week, which is what is being offered at Nairn Academy just now, so you are not offering GME. Therefore, if you are drawing boundaries and saying, "this is the Nairn Academy catchment for GME, you cannot broach this boundary", that's not a level playing field.

A2 (Lena Walker) – Gaelic Medium education is about a proportionality of the curriculum through the medium of Gaelic. Gaelic by itself is not GME, it is about access to Gaelic. Ideally we would be looking for a proportion of the curriculum through Gaelic. There are different ways to do that – it could be thorough subject delivery, PSE experiences, social experiences through Gaelic, house groups. The immersive experience would be extended beyond Gaelic as a subject.

Q3 - I have a child in P5 and I am the chair of the local CnamP. You mentioned proportionality several times. What proportion?

A3 (Lena Walker) – There is no clear definition of what the proportion is, but more than just Gaelic as a subject would be proportional. In each school, as has been pointed out, the proportion of the curriculum offered through the medium of Gaelic varies depending on the school a pupil may attend, and that proportion is dictated by staffing, and what the availability of staff is in that school to deliver subjects through the medium of Gaelic.

Q4 – So as things stand, I believe Nairn Academy has only 0.4 FTE of a position. With the numbers of pupils we have, at present and coming up at the Academy, even if the GM classes at Millbank were at capacity, what level of funding could we expect? What would that look like if we had say, 8 kids coming in every year? Would that look like proper GME? If not, I don't think parents would accept the catchment area being fixed in this way.

A4 (Ian Jackson) – Just to go back for the moment to the reference to "setting a boundary", obviously we are setting a boundary, and the Council's school enrolment scheme is based on the idea of catchment areas and that pupils will be enrolled automatically in the designated school for their home address, whether that be for EM or GM education. However, as I am sure many of you are aware, there is a national provision for parents to make what we call placing requests for another

school. When we talk about a boundary, I just wanted to make clear that it is a somewhat permeable boundary. Placing requests are usually granted but they may not be - there is a complex set of rules around that. The default position is that they are granted and but there are some situations where they are not. I just wanted to make it clear that the option exists.

Q5 – It does, but I took the last placing request at IRA this summer. There were 60 places and I took place 60, but the circumstances of my life are such that I just could not commit to taking my daughter there and back every day, so I had to choose Nairn Academy. In the summer just ended, there were 4 P7s who left GME at Millbank. Two went to IRA and two to Nairn Academy. There would not have been spaces for all 4 to have gone to Nairn Academy, that would have been 61 pupils in S1. Ultimately therefore, one of us did not have the choice.

A5 (Ian Jackson) – There are circumstances in which placing requests are refused, I wouldn't attempt to say otherwise. I just wanted to make sure people know that the request can be made.

Q6 – I have had lots of communication with Highland Council over several months about my placing request. My daughter had her transition arrangement and the week before the schools broke up, we were advised there would be no school transport. The custom and practice arrangement that you referred to was defaulted upon at that point. At no point were we told about that, during the whole of her P7 year, and it was the end of her transition arrangement that we were informed. We chose GME because we started in the toddler group and went into P1 with GME, and it was absolutely the best choice for my daughter. However, to continue with a full choice GME, my husband and I have to take her to school, whilst the other child that went that year got transport due to their family circumstances. The impact for my daughter is that I have to drop her at 7.30am at Starbucks, and she waits there until the school building opens at 8.00am. At the other end of the day, I teach, I can't get from my school to her at that time so she goes to Asda and sits in the café to wait for me. Sometimes that's until 5.30pm. That's the impact of what you are asking children to do by drawing such a narrow catchment area, or taking away the provision of transport for children like my daughter. The child protection arrangements are a nightmare. You could say that is bad parenting by me, but I would say she has been forced into that situation to continue with her Gaelic Medium education. The alternative is she went to Nairn and didn't get GME, that I had invested in since she was a toddler. I also have two other children coming up. They will face the same situation, or their GME stops. The boundaries are unsatisfactory and what has happened to my daughter is appalling. No-one in the Council has answered the questions I have raised, even though I have submitted FOIs

A6 (Ian Jackson) – I think part of the rationale around what the Council tried to do in Nairn was that before we had GME at Nairn Academy, there was a drop-off in GME from Millbank Primary School, in that children came out of GME at Millbank and

wanted to attend their local secondary school in Nairn. Consequently we wanted to build up the provision in Nairn. I realise that the provision at Nairn Academy doesn't offer the breadth that is on offer at IRA, and that we need to build up the numbers at Nairn to rectify that. When the catchments are set, wherever they may be set, hopefully they will clarify some of these rather messy arrangements around entitlements that have been alluded to. Arguably we should have started this process 10 years ago.

Q7 (Follow-up) – Arguably you should have had a consultation before removing transport for my child.

A7 (Ian Jackson) – The Council's school transport policy is based on the principle that a pupil gets transport to their catchment school, and not to other schools. What are the public buses like between Nairn and Inverness?

Comment from the Floor – She wouldn't get to school in time – not until about 10.30am. I would need to let her off at the retail park and let her make her own way to IRA. Also, the public buses are frequently cancelled. They can't be relied upon.

(Fiona Shearer) – Feel free to get in touch with me and we can have a chat about the individual situation, but in implementing the measures when we did, we were trying to stop some of the unfairness around transport, that had happened in the past. We have tried to reduce some of the unfairness.

Comment from the Floor – The decision that the Council took, without consultation, has now adversely impacted on my child for a year.

(Fiona Shearer) – This is why I feel it is better to have this consultation, so that it will formalise the process and there will no longer be the uncertainty that exists.

Comment from the Floor – But the custom and practice arrangement that prevailed before was that transport was provided to IRA for secondary school children who lived in Nairn and who were accessing GME.

(Ian Jackson) – Before there was provision of GME at Nairn.

Comment from the Floor – But there is no proper GME provision!

(Fiona Shearer) – Once provision was established at Nairn, the arrangement was that transport from Nairn to IRA would only be provided for those children who had older siblings at IRA.

Q8 - We are clear that GME has not been established at Nairn. It doesn't meet the requirements to be classed as GME. It seems like you are holding this consultation after the decision has been taken. We have a situation where in the past children were given transport through to IRA, and that has been changed with no parental communication. You are saying this is based on the idea that there is GME at Nairn Academy, but we consider it Gaelic language provision, not GME.

Q9 - Parents knew nothing about this change. When was it introduced?

Comment from the Floor – I have a child who is in S3 who gets transport, and so do others in that year. I have younger children who also receive transport. Nothing was ever communicated to me to say the younger ones only get transport because they have older siblings. No change was ever discussed. We have never been told that the transport entitlement had changed. There is a lack of communication. I have another child currently in GM P7. Do I just keep my head down and assume they will get transport?

A9 (Ian Jackson) – Where we implement a transport change, we normally apply a principle that any younger siblings of children who received transport prior to the change will also get transport. We don't expect siblings to attend different schools.

Q10 - I was involved in the meetings when we were trying to get GME in Nairn, 5-6 years ago, and this question came up then, because we were aware that the provision in Nairn was not going to be the same, but there were very many children who did not want to go to Inverness for GME. We were told at the time that the provision of transport to Inverness would continue until Nairn Academy offered the same level of GME as IRA. We were reassured of that at the time. These meetings were minuted. Parents and their children choose their preferred education for their own reasons. We are very happy with Nairn Academy, but you can't say it's the same as IRA.

A10 (Ian Jackson) – We do have the situation of course, that until we build up the numbers at Nairn, we can't build up the range of GM subjects.

Q11 – I didn't get an answer to my question earlier, that if we had say, 8 kids coming in every year, what staffing provision would that get us?

A11 (Ian Jackson) – There is a formula for staffing in secondary schools, where the number of teachers is linked to the number of pupils. It's a very complicated formula. It's available on the website and we can send you a link to that.

(Fiona Shearer) – Our staffing formula impacts on different schools differently. It does depend on the size of the school. IRA is probably twice the size of Nairn Academy. The other issue we have in all of this is recruitment in GME, which is not straightforward, for primary or secondary. We do try hard to recruit and retain, but if someone leaves it can be difficult to recruit a replacement.

Q12 – The previous teacher at Nairn was lovely and was a qualified Geography teacher which was great, but when she left, we were left hoping the Council would recruit another Gaelic-speaking geography teacher, or our children had to change their subject choices. The key point is sustainability. I think that's one of our main concerns. We would love to see more numbers at Nairn, but our concern is that even if Millbank is at capacity, it may not lead to a sustainable situation at Nairn. Would it qualify for even one full time teacher? Does the Council have Nairn Academy's

back? Are there any prospects of staff being shared, so that teachers from IRA could offer subjects at Nairn?

A12 (Fiona Shearer) – We are looking at using technology for this. If you take someone out of IRA it impacts on the timetable there, but we will look at options for delivering lessons remotely. Absolutely we support Julie and the team at Nairn, but it can be very difficult to get supply cover at the best of times, doubly so when you need a Gaelic speaker.

(Julie MacDonald) – It's difficult to cover for subject specialists. Music is another particular example. This is a bit of a chicken and egg scenario. We did have lessons originally through e-sgoil, pre-COVID, but the relationship with the teachers was something we missed. It could cover a gap, but I don't think we would like to see it long-term. Until we grow the pupil numbers we won't be able to offer more. When I hear and see what is going on with Gaelic at IRA, we are nowhere near that.

Q13 - On that point, can I ask about the catchment areas? There are four feeder schools proposed for Nairn in a 5-mile something radius. It's a very small catchment, so how do we grow the numbers? For the next seven years, we are not going to have enough GM children to get close to IRA. We just don't have the numbers in such a small catchment.

(Follow-up from the floor) – My grandchildren are in Croileagan, but that facility can only take 16 children. Parents who are accepted are those who show most willingness for their children to go into GME. It's not going to grow if there is a limit of 16 on Gaelic pre-school.

(Follow-up from the floor) – The conversion rate from Croileagan is poor.

(Follow-up from the floor) – If there were more children there, that would help.

Q14 - I have a child in P1 in GME and another in P3. The P1 was one of a group of ten, but the P3 only has one other child in his year group. That child has a sibling in IRA, so potentially my child could be the only one in his year group to enter Nairn Academy as a GM pupil. That's a huge concern for me, socially and educationally. The wider concern is that we are a small catchment, with that divide between going to IRA and Nairn. Without the same provision in Nairn, there will always be that dilution. I wasn't aware of all these implications when I enrolled my child in Gaelic Medium within the school, or for example that the choice of Gaelic would potentially be at the expense of another language. It's a big decision for parents. If I chose IRA, along with the only other child in the year group, what would that mean for the future of GME at Nairn?

A14 (Ian Jackson) – Going back to the point about how we define the catchment, that's what this consultation is about really. If people have views, express them tonight or send them in. I would say that, on the eastern side, because it's a Council boundary with Moray, there is no possibility of changing. However, if people think

that, say, Ardersier and Croy should be included in Nairn rather than Inverness, that's an opinion we would have to consider.

Q15 – The Council doesn't provide transport for people from Ardersier or Croy to come here, so they don't really have that option.

A15 (Ian Jackson) – Unless the catchment was changed.

Q16 - It's a shorter journey from Ardersier to Nairn, compared with Inverness.

Follow-up from the floor - If you look at your justification for places like Avoch, you have used distance as the criterion for deciding between BSGI and Dingwall. The likes of Ardersier should be treated the same.

A16 (Ian Jackson) – The Fortrose situation is a little different in that there is no GME within the Fortrose ASG, so we are dividing that area up between Inverness and Dingwall, but the whole point of this exercise is to take views.

Q17 - The EM secondary school for Ardersier isn't IRA, so it's exactly the same situation. You made the decision for Fortrose on a school-by-school basis, but didn't make the same judgment for the Culloden ASG.

A17 (Ian Jackson) – Your point is well-made. We have to set out a proposal for people to comment upon. The assumption on the proposal is that people in Croy and Ardersier tend to gravitate towards Inverness rather than Nairn, but we will consider all the points made tonight.

(Fiona Shearer) – Historically, with EM, that has been the case. A few years ago we had to clarify the point, because a rumour surfaced that the Council was going to include Ardersier in the Nairn catchment area, and people locally did not want that. It could be a possibility though, that the GM and EM catchments could differ.

Q18 – If we could include Croy, Ardersier and maybe even Culloden in the Nairn GM catchment, we would have a much better opportunity to grow the pupil numbers.

Follow-up from the floor – Also IRA is at capacity.

Q19 - Would there be any chance to get a third GM class at Millbank, if the numbers increased?

A19 (Fiona Shearer) – Yes, that would be the normal thing, if the number grew sufficiently. We have annual staffing discussions, where we look at school rolls. Not to put a dampener on things, we are facing, nationally, a falling school roll.

Just to go back to the point made earlier about the Croileagan, that is a Partner Centre nursery, run by the Care and earing Alliance and not by the Council. The limit on the number of children will be around their building capacity and staffing, but I've made a note about ELC provision. We are restricted at Millbank as well, for ELC. If

there are people who would like GME but can't get into Croileagan, that's maybe something we need to look at.

Q20 – I run the Gaelic baby and toddler group in Nairn and have children in Croileagan. When we talk about growth, I feel I cannot promote GME past primary school anymore. We were able to promote 0-18 before, because we had IRA. I am really disappointed that my children will have to go to Nairn Academy. We are never going to have the numbers, we are too small. In my opinion, the Council is putting GME to death in Nairn. Not every parent who enrolls in GME at Millbank wants GME at secondary level, but there are some that do, and you are taking the opportunity away. I am really disappointed.

(Fiona Shearer) – What are the numbers like at the baby and toddler end?

Follow-up – The overall numbers are good, but not everyone wants Gaelic. When I try to speak to parents about what's going on, we can't talk past primary school, we can't encourage them about the Academy. What's the point of putting your children into GME for primary school if there is nothing for them in secondary?

Follow-up from the Floor - A lot of parents are directly asking that question. People don't know what's going to be available in the Academy. You are adding in more hurdles to GME all the time.

(Ian Jackson) – But before we had the provision in Nairn Academy there was a big drop-out rate in GME, because pupils from Nairn didn't want to travel to Inverness to continue to access GME. We were getting the opposite point of view put to us then.

Follow-up from the Floor – I think you need to make it clear what the options are and stick with them. Since my child started – he's now in P7 – the changes in the provision have been unbelievable, and what is on offer is nothing like what I was promised. The GM classes at Millbank are too small, there are only a few children in each year group. There's been a massive turnover of teachers at the school, and then at secondary we aren't being provided with anything suitable.

(Ian Jackson) – Do you feel we would be better off having no GME provision in Nairn?

Follow-up from the Floor – You need to build the provision. At Dingwall, there was a big push to get lots of the kids doing Gaelic for learners. I don't see that at Nairn. Are children being taught Gaelic in S1? If you have only, say, 4 kids being taught Gaelic, and yet you have a teacher, that isn't an effective use of resources. Many parents see it as a waste of money. Promoting Gaelic is always down to the parents, and we get very little from Highland Council. If a teacher leaves, send somebody down from Inverness. Yes, it would disrupt their timetable, but it's supposed to be a council for all of Highland.

(Fiona Shearer) – It's not quite as simple as that, I have to say. If someone has a teaching commitment, they are not necessarily going to be available to come to Nairn.

Follow-up from the Floor – It's been done in Moray. If other Councils can do it, why can't Highland Council? You can do, it just takes effort. When the previous teacher left, you didn't seem to do much about it.

(Fiona Shearer) – We did try to recruit, but as has been said, recruitment can be challenging, especially for GME.

(Julie MacDonald) – The delay over the summer was because we were waiting on a potential transfer. We initially didn't go to advert for that reason.

Q21 – I am one of those parents who moved to Nairn to access GME. I don't particularly have roots in Nairn. I've listened to the discussion with interest and I don't think we will solve the issues tonight. Widening the Nairn catchment to include Croy, Tornagrain and Ardersier might be one way of boosting numbers in Nairn and over time, maybe 10 years, that could have a positive impact. However everyone in this room is thinking of the next few years and the only solution I can see is that we keep IRA as an option for secondary school pupils. Otherwise there is too much of a disparity. The service needs to be equal for all.

A21 (Fiona Shearer) – Thank you for that point.

Q22 – If this is about setting catchments for GME, and Nairn Academy is not providing GME, why is this proposal being made? It is the IRA where the GM facility is.

A22 (Lena Walker) – When the catchment consultation began, there was a broader offer of GME available at Nairn. Geography was offered previously. The change of staffing in the last few weeks has created a situation where we need to look at the proportionality of the provision, along with the school.

Q23 – I don't think Nairn Academy has ever had that much compared to IRA. None of the timetables ever looked that strong for GME.

Follow-up from the Floor – I don't think any of the parents who chose Nairn Academy ever thought the provision would be the same as IRA. Parents were just grateful for having provision locally, after their children had put so much into primary school. It never seems to be easy for parents. I would like to say though, that this is about catchment areas, and any child who wants a place at IRA can request one. I have never heard of anyone being refused. The issue seems to be the transport. Now that you are putting in these catchments, it's giving you a reason to take away the transport.

A23 (Fiona Shearer) – We are creating these catchments because we have been asked to by the Scottish Government.

(Ian Jackson) – Yes, the catchments are being created because of statutory guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, who act as the agents of the Scottish Government in matters relating to the Gaelic language. There is therefore a legal pressure on us to define these catchment areas, but we clearly have to consider the points that have been made tonight. I do remember that there was a drop-off in GME in the Nairn area before we had provision at Nairn Academy, and Highland Council has acted with the best of intentions in setting up provision locally. It's maybe not exactly what parents wanted but that's where the intention came from.

Q24 – I would just like to say that we had a really positive meeting with Julie and Sarah before the summer when the school were in the process of hiring, and I really appreciate the very positive attitude towards Gaelic in the Academy, trying to make Gaelic visible, staff members learning and using the language, and looking forward to how the new building has a place for Gaelic. Where it falls down is in the funding and support from the Council, so when we are making a formal catchment decision, unless the Council is willing to look at more creative solutions for Nairn, I think we would struggle to get on board with the idea that everyone from Nairn should go to Nairn Academy for GME. The issue is how we get to the critical mass within the school, that means the investment is actually producing meaningful GME.

Q25 - How did the Council think that employing a single teacher would result in the same provision as they have from an entire department at IRA? It's not fair on parents and pupils. Why can't our young people have both? It's a very small number that travel from Nairn to IRA. It's not as if you will need to provide a bus for 30 kids. I don't understand why it has to be one or the other.

Follow-up from the Floor – There's already spaces on the transport that's going.

A25 (Fiona Shearer) – There aren't spaces every day. Only for two days a week.

(Ian Jackson) - We can look at that with our transport colleagues.

Q26 - In the new build for Nairn Academy, I assume there have been projections done for school roll? How many classrooms will be dedicated to GME? Will there be capacity for GME to expand?

A26 (Julie MacDonald) – There are no dedicated GM classrooms, but two are planned for modern languages. In the new build, there will be a lot of shared classrooms.

(Fiona Shearer) - The plans for the new build involved a much more creative use of space than is traditional.

(Julie MacDonald) – The crucial point is resource. We have started learner classes. Nothing we do at present can compare with IRA, but the aim is to achieve equity of provision, so that young people in Nairn will be able to access GME in their own catchment school, without having to travel to Inverness.

Q27 – Some of these discussions are unsettling for parents who have young children. The impact should not be under-estimated.

There being no further questions, the Chairperson thanked everyone for coming, and reminded everyone that representations should be sent to Ian Jackson, email Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk (address circulated in the letter), or via the online form, to arrive **no later than Friday 27 October 2023**. He also advised that the record of the meeting will be made available at least 3 weeks before the meeting of the Education Committee where it is intended that the report of the meeting, plus any submissions/representations and the view of Education Scotland on the proposal, will be considered.

CONSULTATION MEETING – PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREAS FOR BUN-SGOIL GHÀIDHLIG INBHIR NIS, INVERNESS ROYAL ACADEMY, DINGWALL PRIMARY SCHOOL, DINGWALL ACADEMY, MILLBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL, AND NAIRN ACADEMY

HELD AT DINGWALL PRIMARY SCHOOL – 19 SEPTEMBER 2023 – 6.30pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Panel

Cllr. Graham MacKenzie - Chairperson
Ian Jackson, Education Officer, Resources
Derek Martin, Area Education Manager
Lena Walker, Gaelic Education Support Officer
Hayley Brown, Senior Manager Early Years

In Attendance

Cllr. Margaret Paterson - Highland Council
Dolina Grant, Gaelic Community Officer, Highland Council
Sara MacAskill, Head Teacher, Dingwall Primary School
Rachel Hutcheson, Acting Depute Head Teacher, Dingwall Primary School
Lesley Allan, Education Scotland
3 members of the public

The Chairperson – Cllr. Graham MacKenzie introduced himself as Chair of the Local Area Committee and welcomed everyone to the consultation meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposal to formally establish a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Dingwall Primary School, Dingwall Academy, and other schools, as set out in the recommendation to the proposal Paper.

The Proposal has been issued as a result of statutory guidance on Gaelic Education, produced by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

The Council officials present tonight were Ian Jackson, Education Officer, (Resources); Lena Walker, Gaelic Education Support Officer; Hayley Brown, Senior Manager Early Years. Derek Martin, Area Education Manager, joined the meeting a few minutes later.

The Chairperson then invited Ian Jackson to describe the consultation process and the detailed reasons for issuing the Proposal.

Mr Jackson advised that as indicated by the Chairperson, the Council is required to introduce GM catchment areas under the terms of Statutory Guidance issued by BnaG. The setting up of a catchment area involves a statutory consultation, of which this meeting was part. We were currently in the initial phase of that consultation, which was due to end on Friday 27 October, and he urged anyone who wanted to submit views in writing to do so by that date. The purpose of tonight's meeting was to gather views, and we would try to answer any questions that are raised.

Mr Jackson added that the formal process has a number of stages and gives ample opportunity for views to be expressed to the Council before any final decision is made. Once the public consultation ends on 27 October, Education Scotland becomes involved. They will look at the Proposal Paper, the note of the meeting tonight, and any written representations, and will form a view on the educational benefits of the proposal. Education Scotland will contact Dingwall Primary, and they will be keen to hear from any parents who wish to make their views known. The Council has to take account of Education Scotland's view on the educational benefits and respond to any points raised by their report, as well as any representations received as a result of the consultation process. Following the completion of that stage, the Council will prepare a Report reviewing the consultation exercise and present it to the Council's Education Committee. The Review Report will be published at least 3 weeks before it is submitted to Committee, and anyone who responded in writing to the initial consultation will be invited to make "further representations" during those 3 weeks. Any further representations that are made are submitted to the members of the Committee, either in advance or tabled on the day, so that members are fully informed of any issues that may have arisen. Members will also see copies of the original responses and the note of this meeting.

Because of the Statutory Guidance we mentioned earlier, the Council has to set up Gaelic Medium catchments. What is up for debate is its extent of that catchment. The GM catchment we are proposing for Dingwall Primary and Dingwall Academy covers all the primary schools within the catchments of Dingwall Academy and Alness Academy. It would also cover the majority of the schools within the Fortrose Academy area. Up to now there has been a "custom and practice" arrangement in respect of any children who wanted to attend Gaelic Medium education. To an extent therefore, this Proposal is simply formalising arrangements which have already been operating in practice.

In respect of BSGI/IRA, the proposed GM catchment covers all the primary schools within the catchments of IRA, Charleston, Culloden, IHS, and Millburn. We also propose to include two primary school catchments in the Fortrose ASG - North Kessock and Avoch. The Millbank Primary/Nairn Academy catchment will cover the Nairn ASG.

Although we are making this Proposal primarily in response to the statutory guidance on Gaelic Education, we also feel that the Proposal has educational benefits in promoting the Gaelic language and bilingualism. My colleague Lena Walker will talk more about that in a few moments.

In summary, the benefit of the Proposal is that we're giving clarity to parents in respect of GME, making clear where entitlement exists and where it doesn't exist, and that's an improvement on the existing arrangements based on custom and practice.

The Chairperson commented that the Dingwall Academy catchment covered a wide area, and asked for clarification on how far west the proposed GM catchment extended. Mr Jackson advised that the proposed catchment extends as far west as Achanalt, and also includes Strathconon, travelling in a slightly different direction.

The Chairperson also asked about capacity within Dingwall Primary. Were officials confident about the capacity of Dingwall PS to absorb GM pupils travelling from elsewhere?

Mr Jackson commented that the proposal was largely formalising existing custom and practice arrangements, and therefore was not expected to cause capacity issues. The Council does however continually monitor school rolls for any potential capacity issues.

Rachel Hutcheson advised that the GM roll at the school, was 74, so they were just into 4 GM classes. There was capacity in all four classes.

Cllr. Paterson asked if there was a "Plan B" in the event of capacity issues arising?

Mr Jackson advised that if the Council defines a catchment for GM pupils, the normal presumption would be that any children living within that catchment would be admitted to the school, assuming of course they were seeking to access GME. If a situation arose that the school had no space for catchment pupils, then the Estates Team would look at a Plan B, which might involve a demountable building being installed. At present however, we were not anticipating that as an issue.

The Chairperson then invited Lena Walker to outline the educational benefits of GME

Mrs Walker advised that bilingualism was about a lot more than two languages. There were social and cognitive benefits as well as linguistic ones. Children gain access to two cultures, and the opportunity to develop an interest in different cultures. Linguistically, total immersion leads to earlier awareness of stylings and words and to language improvement, abilities which have a wider impact.

GME provision in Highland follows demand from parents, and is vital for the growth and indeed the survival of Gaelic. Highland Council has a Gaelic Language Plan, and has made a clear commitment to increase the number of Gaelic speakers and increase

the profile of the language. We have a strong focus on GME, and the creation of catchment areas will enhance the status of the language across Highland communities.

The Chairperson opened the meeting to the floor.

Q1 – I have 3 questions. The first is about the Dingwall catchment boundary. What do you envisage for Beauly? Is it potentially the case that it could be part of the Dingwall GM catchment?

A1 (Ian Jackson) – The proposal suggests that children in Beauly go to BSGI and Inverness Royal Academy. We have put that forward because the old County boundary between Inverness-shire and Ross-shire ran between Beauly and Muir of Ord. We have followed that by suggesting that Beauly goes to Inverness and Muir of Ord to Dingwall. Also because Beauly is part of the Charleston ASG for English Medium and we felt they looked more towards Inverness. We are aware that there has been a history of children in Beauly opting for either BSGI or Dingwall for GME. If there are any children from Beauly currently attending GME at Dingwall, that would continue in the event the GM catchments were confirmed as currently drafted. I would add though, that this is a consultation. If people have views on the catchment boundaries, we want to hear about that and we will consider the views put forward.

Q2 - My second question is how close to capacity is BSGI, and how would that affect placing requests? If someone put in a placing request to go from Beauly to Dingwall, would that be seen more favourably than someone from Culbokie wanting to go to BSGI/IRA? Which type of placing request would be more likely to be successful?

A2 (Ian Jackson) – Placing requests are governed by national legislation. The default position is that we grant placing requests. There are certain circumstances where we refuse them. In fact, where those circumstances apply we are obliged to refuse them. One is where the school does not have the capacity to take the placing request without employing an extra teacher. The teacher staffing for primary schools is set in bands that correspond to the number of pupils. For example, 20-47 pupils in a school results in two teachers, 48-71 is three teachers, 72-96 is four teachers, and so on. If admitting the child would require an additional teacher, we would refuse the request as it is judged to be an unreasonable cost to the taxpayer. There are other specified circumstances where we would refuse a request, but all requests would be judged against the same criteria, no matter where they were from or which schools were involved.

(Derek Martin) – The Education Act is very clear that children should be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents, provided there are no additional costs to the taxpayer. The default position is very much “If we have the space, why wouldn’t we?”

(Ian Jackson) – The only other thing I will add about placing request is that the Council does not provide school transport to children on placing requests. However, with the national scheme of free bus travel for U-22s, if there is a public bus on the route, then children can take advantage of that.

Q3 – My third question is about nursery provision. Once these catchments are defined, does that mean that nursery provision has the same catchment, and is that statutory?

(Ian Jackson) – I'll make a comment and then hand over to Hayley, who is the expert on this subject. We don't have catchments for pre-school provision, because the Scottish Government see flexibility for parents as the priority in terms of pre-school provision. It's what parents need in terms of hours and days and locations that is the priority. I know that, broadly speaking, many parents tend to place their children in the school nursery where they plan to send their children to school, but there are no formal defined catchments.

(Hayley Brown) – I agree with Ian's comments. There are no defined catchments for nursery.

Q4 (follow-up) – So if someone from Culbokie wanted to send a child to Gaelic pre-school in Dingwall, is that dependent upon the same sort of staffing issues you outlined for school provision?

(Derek Martin) – It's more about transport at that stage. Again however, our position would be "Why wouldn't we?"

(Ian Jackson) – Something which occasionally arises, and this is quite understandable from the parent's perspective, is where a child is enrolled in a school nursery that is not their child's designated catchment school, parents sometimes assume that their child will then be automatically enrolled for the school. Because however, there is a difference between the admission procedures, a child enrolled in a school nursery would still have to put in a placing request for P1, if the school was not the catchment school.

Q5 – I have a question about the Croileagan. Obviously it is closed at the moment. I have a 2-year-old, and would like to know whether the Croileagan will be there next August.

(Hayley Brown) – Highland Council are in the process of registering a new GM nursery provision in Dingwall. There are some building works to do. Because it is classed as a new registration, there are some things that were accepted under the previous registration because they were historic, but for us to get a new registration, we need to do some works. I don't see that taking a long time. We have already put the application for registration into the Care Inspectorate, and we should be able to compete that as soon as the building works are done. We will obviously have to recruit staff as well. We will do that concurrently. It's a priority for us.

Q6 – Do you have a target date for all that? Would it be by Christmas, or by next Easter?

(Hayley Brown) – Certainly before Christmas.

Q7 – Will all the staff have Gaelic?

(Hayley Brown) – Yes. We intend for it to be a facility offering Gaelic immersion.

Q8 - What will be the maximum number of children?

(Hayley Brown) – We anticipate it will be the same as previously. If the Care Inspectorate have set that figure, it's based on the number of toilets, the floor space etc. Given that they were registered previously, we are anticipating the same.

There being no further questions, the Chairperson thanked everyone for coming, and reminded everyone that representations should be sent to Ian Jackson, email Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk (address circulated in the letter), or via the online form, to arrive **no later than Friday 27 October 2023**. He also advised that the record of the meeting will be made available at least 3 weeks before the meeting of the Education Committee where it is intended that the report of the meeting, plus any submissions/representations and the view of Education Scotland on the proposal, will be considered.

List of Respondents to Statutory Consultation Exercise – Proposal to Create Gaelic Medium Catchment Areas for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy.

1. Sarah Canham
2. Kirsty Weatherspoon
 - 2a. Kirsty Weatherspoon further comments
3. Julie Read
4. Neil Souter
5. Katy Welch
6. Cerian Baldwin
7. Meadhbh Maguire
 - 7a. Meadhbh Maguire further comments
8. Comann nam Pàrant
9. Bòrd na Gàidhlig
10. Mr and Mrs Hilton

Name of consultation: Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy

Your comments: I would like to dispute why our address is not included in the Millbank catchment area for Gaelic education when the Bun-sgoil Ghaidhling Inbhir Nis school which is going to be out catchment area is much further away that Millbank PS. Our address is Cedar House Cawdor Nairn and we sit on the catchment line for Cawdor and Croy catchment area. I can understand for normal catchment areas the Croy/Cawdor line needs to be somewhere but for Gaelic Education why pupils would be sent to Inverness rather than Nairn, when Nairn is much closer. It does not seem sensible that you are just grouping current Nairn catchment areas together to get the Gaelic catchment area when looking at time to get to school Millbank is a much closer school than travelling all the way to Inverness.

Upload documents or letters :

I am commenting as: Parent

I am commenting on behalf of:

Name:

Title	First name	Last name
Ms	sarah	canham

Address:

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
IV12 5XS	Cedar House, Cawdor, IV12 5XS	Yes

Name of consultation: Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy

Your comments: We live in Ardersier so closer to Nairn than Inverness travel time and our family and life is mainly in Ardersier and Nairn so sending our child to Inverness wouldnt be an option for us, this would mean we wouldnt chose Gaelic Medium for our 3 children which would be very sad considering the push for Gaelic speakers.

It wouldnt be benefical to our children to go a city they have very little tie or connection to.

It would be longer time travelling for them also and age 5 years old this just doesnt seem a good use of their time or energy.

Would placement requests still be considered?

Upload documents or letters :

I am commenting as: Parent

I am commenting on behalf of: Public

Name:

Title	First name	Last name
Mrs	Kirsty	Weatherspoon

Address:

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
lv27bp	26, Macpherson Way, Ardersier, IV2 7BP	Yes

Hello.

Margaret gave me your email address. I just wanted to chat through our situation. Our son starts p1 next year , then my daughter will start 2026 and our son will start 2029 (currently pregnant and due in Dec)

We had made the decision we wanted all our children to go to GM in Millbank. We live in Ardersier but our life is in Ardersier/Nairn including family for childcare etc and I will likely work in Nairn in the future . So we had visited millbank and I have enrolled on a Gaelic course in preparation.

The catchment areas had come as a surprise to us. We live in Inverness catchment if the catchment areas go ahead.

This is a huge concern as we won't send our children to school in Inverness as it just wouldn't make sense for us as a family. We would be very sad if our children weren't granted a placement request for Millbank so it has thrown our plans up the air a bit especially as it's only a few months until we apply for p1 and 11 months until our oldest starts p1.

I just wanted to chat through this with you and raise our concerns.

Thanks Kirsty Weatherspoon

Response to the Consultation Proposals regarding establishing catchment areas for GME primary and secondary schools within Highland Region.

Respondent:

Mrs Julie Read

Parent of Sophie Read, age 9, in GM6 at Millbank Primary School in Nairn.

Parent of Kirstie Read, age 11, just transitioned to S1 Nairn Academy, supposedly into GME (see below).

Dear Highland Council, Bord Na Gaidhlig, associated parliamentarians and stakeholders,

I have read with interest your Proposals, and shall attend the public meeting at Millbank Primary School on 5 September 2023, 1830.

We live in Nairn, within the catchment for Millbank Primary School.

My daughters have both attended Gaelic Toddlers in the town, spent their preschool years at Croileagan Inbhir Narainn, have been through GME at Millbank Primary School and are both considered fluent Gaelic speakers.

There is a prominently displayed banner in the town stating that bilingual education in GME is available from ages 3-18 within Nairn - *but Nairn Academy is not delivering GME under your own definition.*

<https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Statutory-Guidance-for-Gaelic-Education.pdf>

On page 25 of this 48 page document it states:

2.15 The GME curriculum from S1 to S3 and into the Senior Phase (S4-S6) remains one based on the principle of immersion in Gaelic. It is considered essential that education authorities and schools identify the curricular areas and subjects, in addition to Gaelic, that are possible to deliver through the medium of Gaelic, based on the availability of staff and young people's choices.

2.16 Schools should aim to deliver a sufficient proportion of the secondary curriculum through the medium of Gaelic to enable young people to continue to develop their fluency in Gaelic. Schools and education authorities should plan for this, taking their lead from the subjects for which qualifications are available from the SQA (see paragraphs 2.18-19). Some secondary schools with GME will offer other subject provision and this will depend on local circumstances and teacher availability. Schools and education authorities should collaborate to develop secondary level GME curriculum opportunities, sharing of expertise, courses and a range of delivery methods, including the use of distance learning and technology..

Referring specifically back to the Consultation Document, Appendix A, Paragraph 6.1 it states that :

'The provision of GME at Nairn Academy is a relatively recent development....'

Kirstie Read has just entered S1 at Nairn Academy.

Out of her 32 periods per week, only 3 classes are in Gaelic - these are Gaelic language for fluent speakers. Nothing else (ie, none of the social or practical classes are being taught through the medium of Gaelic).

Frustratingly also, the 3 Gaelic lessons that she does receive are at the expense of another modern language.

I fought hard during Kirstie's last term at Millbank Primary School for the option for her to receive transport to the IRA to continue true GME, where the current S1s get 4 Gaelic lesson for fluent speakers per week, plus Modern Studies, Geography, History, RMPS and PSE all in Gaelic - plus they receive French classes.

In your consideration regarding GME catchment areas, you must understand that currently insufficient quantity of Gaelic is being delivered to even call it GME.

Therefore families from Nairn wishing their children to continue with full Gaelic immersion *must* be given the option to continue it at IRA, with the provision of transport - GME, as defined in the above Statutory Guidance Document, is not available at any more local establishment.

Pupils from Millbank commencing GME S1 at the IRA in session 2021-2022, and prior to this date, receive funded transport for the approximately 18 mile journey.

Subsequent S1 intakes (with the exception of the younger siblings of the above families) do not receive this option, and they are left to either sort their own transport arrangements, or to settle for non-GME (as described above) at Nairn Academy.

I very much look forward to your considered response.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Read
Parent stakeholder.

Name of consultation: Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy

Your comments: Looking at the distances involved in the catchment area for Millbank and BSGI, it would be more appropriate for areas such as Ardersier and Croy to be included in the Millbank catchment area. This would also be beneficial to expand the number of GME pupils within Millbank and Nairn Academy at a time when both BSGI and IRA are running much nearer capacity than Millbank and Nairn Academy.

Ardersier -> Millbank = 6.7 miles
 Ardersier -> BSGI = 12 miles
 Ardersier -> Nairn Academy = 6.1 miles
 Ardersier -> Inverness Royal Academy = 12.3 miles

Croy -> Millbank = 7.1 miles
 Croy -> BSGI = 10.6 miles
 Croy -> Nairn Academy = 7.3 miles
 Croy -> Inverness Royal Academy = 10.9 miles

Upload documents or letters :

I am commenting as: Local resident

I am commenting on behalf of:

Name:

Title	First name	Last name
Mr	Neil	Souter

Address:

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
iv2 7bq	31, Macpherson Way, Ardersier, IV2 7BQ	Yes

Name of consultation: Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy

Your comments: As a parent of two children in the catchment area, and friends with a number of local parents who have voiced the same concerns, but say they don't have the time to go to meetings or write letters to council, I feel I need to protest the time and money being spent on a dying language which can be learned in later life if that is an interest. I was born in Nairn, and chose to return here to raise my children, I would hope they will do the same, There is currently no option to learn spanish in Nairn Academy, despite it being widely spoken worldwide, we need our children to learn across a broad spectrum in order to find options in the workplace, and I object to Gaelic being pushed as an agenda when there has been no demand for it. Please reconsider spending the time and money on, say, fixing our run-down buildings, assisting this staffing problems, or supporting our children who, at the end of the day, have to take the skills and subjects learned in the classroom into the wider world. Thank you for your time.

Upload documents or letters :

I am commenting as: Parent

I am commenting on behalf of: myself and local parents

Name:

Title	First name	Last name
Mrs	katy	welch

Address:

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
IV12 5JB	Fornightly Cottage Fornightly, Nairn, IV12 5JB	Yes

Hi,

Many thanks for consulting on the above proposal. My son is currently in GME preschool.

We live in the Heights of Achterneed which is a small single track road. At present, pupils attending Dingwall Academy are transported from our area on a large 30+ seater coach. It used to be a 16+ seater mini bus and given the small number of kids I'm unclear why a large coach is used on such a narrow windy steep road. A mini bus is used to transport primary children to Strathpeffer Primary.

The proposal to transport primary age GME children via the Dingwall Academy coach makes us feel concerned. I've listed our concerns and questions below.

1) Will GME primary kids be dropped at Dingwall Primary prior to the coach going onto Dingwall Academy?

2) Dingwall Primary is very congested at drop off and pick up times. Where will the coach drop the kids off and how will it turn safely?

3) How will the safety of the primary age children be monitored whilst they are on the coach? On a large coach on our narrow windy steep road, the driver will be concentrating on the road not what is happening on the coach. Expecting very young kids of 5/6 years old to sit amongst teenagers doesn't sit comfortably with us unless properly monitored. The large coach is currently more than half empty.

4) Would it be possible for a mini bus to be used instead? We appreciate that depends on the numbers of children but at present we understand that a 16-21 seater would be sufficient for GME primary kids and academy pupils. This seems like a good compromise but is Highland Council able to dictate what vehicle the bus company uses?

Much appreciated

Cerian Baldwin

Name of consultation: Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy

Your comments: I would support the town of Beaully to be added to the Dingwall catchment rather than Inverness.

Inverness has a significant level of growth to the East and there will be sustained pressure on accommodating the demand within Inverness for the foreseeable future. Adding Beaully to the Dingwall catchment removes some of that pressure from Inverness and Dingwall is a more straightforward journey from Beaully than the road through clachnaharry to Inverness. Since the trains go through both towns there are public transport options available for older pupils of the academy and Dingwall academy is better connected to the train station than the IRA which is nowhere near Inverness rail station. I think the historic division between Inverness and Ross shire was between Beaully and Muir of ord but this historic boundary in administrative terms does not reflect the reality of the towns of Dingwall and Beaully and the connections between them in the present day. Kids in Beaully are poorly served by both English medium and Gaelic medium educational facilities in that the primary school has recently had its replacement shelved from the capital program and the lack of secondary education in the town which leaves an awful gap between drumnadrochit and Inverness where pupils have long travel to secondary school despite living in established settlements like Beaully. Dingwall is closer to Beaully and having Beaully within the Dingwall catchment would reduce the pressure on Inverness Royal academy and also on the traffic between Beaully and Inverness.

Upload documents or letters :

I am commenting as: Parent

I am commenting on behalf of:

Name:

Title	First name	Last name
Dr	Meadhbh	Maguire

Address:

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
IV15 9LE	Ben View, Craig Road, Dingwall, IV15 9LE	Yes

Good afternoon Ian, further to my comments already submitted I would like to add that I would consider the Nairn catchment to be too small and it ought to be extended West to include Ardesier, Croy Tornagrein and the area around the airport. The level of housing growth allocated east of Inverness is going to place huge pressure on Inverness Royal academy and I don't think the IRA will have the capacity to take on the demand that will result from that size of area. It would be short sighted not to use this opportunity to rationalise the catchments so that they taken on a more equal share of the demand. The catchments as currently proposed run the risk of having to build a further school when it becomes evident that the IRA cannot meet the demand within its catchment. And given that process is glacial in pace, it would be regrettable that students and parents would have to work within a pressurized sub standard environment waiting on that solution which was so obviously avoidable at this very stage. Also how is it justifiable for students to travel from Ardeseir all the way to General ease road in Inverness which is not exactly in a central location? They are obviously closer to Nairn and should be accommodated there.

On another vain- I am not clear on whether developer contributions will be sought towards capacity constraints in Gaelic medium schools as the councils existing developer contributions supplementary guidance makes it clear that Gaelic schools could secure funding towards them in this way but we simply haven't up until now. The growth in demand for Gaelic medium education in the region surely makes this position untenable and new developments including small development of 1-4 houses should be making payments towards Gaelic medium capacity constraints accordingly.

I would appreciate if you could acknowledge receipt of my comments.

Kind regards,

Dr Meadhbh Maguire



Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Nairn; Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy

Comann nam Pàrant (Nàiseanta) (CnP) welcomes the formalisation of school catchment areas for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in Inverness, Dingwall and Nairn areas.

CnP appreciate the complexities around these catchments due to the geography of the area and the tendency of people to gravitate towards Inverness for work or access to amenities.

Bun-sgoil Gàidhlig Inbhir Nis and Inverness Royal Academy

Whilst we are in general agreement with the proposed catchment, there are, as noted in the consultation document, a number of children who currently attend BSGI from outwith the proposed catchment. We welcome the re-assurance that these children, along with their siblings in the future, will continue to be supported with transport. We are aware that there may be an issue with capacity in the future at BSGI as GME continues to grow and parents should also be given re-assurance that any future placing requests for siblings of pupils currently attending the schools will be successful. We also note from the consultation document that a number of pupils attend BSGI from the “Nairnside / Croy” area and we are aware that there has been discussion as part of the Nairn consultation on including Croy and Ardersier in the Nairn catchment rather than for BSGI. Whilst we appreciate that this may have potential to improve numbers in Nairn, we believe that BSGI as a stand-alone Gaelic school is a more attractive option for parents and that making this change could have a negative impact on uptake of GME from these areas.

It is difficult to fully comment on the proposal to include Avoch and North Kessock in the BSGI catchment with Tore and Munlochy in the Dingwall catchment without more evidence on which would be the more attractive option for parents. That said, as there are currently pupils attending BSGI from Munlochy, it would seem to indicate that families would be more inclined to travel to Inverness for GME. It is also worth noting that Inverness has the more attractive option for parents with a dedicated Gaelic school compared to provision in Dingwall which is provided in a mainly English medium environment. Educationally the total immersive experience provided in a Gaelic school has benefits and we feel this should be taken into account and consideration given to including Tore and Munlochy in the BSGI catchment as well as Avoch and North Kessock. GME provision at Inverness Royal Academy also offers a wider GME experience for pupils.

Dingwall Primary School and Dingwall Academy

Again, we are in general agreement with the proposed catchment, apart from the inclusion of Tore and Munlochy (see previous comment). However, given some of the distances involved and travelling times, particularly from the Fortrose ASG we hope that there will be opportunities in the future to have other GME provision within the area.

There is also potential to further develop the current provision in Dingwall. Highland Council have in the past considered establishing a dedicated Gaelic school in Dingwall and we would support this as the next logical step for GME in this area. We are also aware that there are currently some issues with pre-school provision, and we hope this situation will be speedily rectified before it has too much of a detrimental effect on enrolment for GME.

Millbank Primary School and Nairn Academy

CnP agree with this catchment. Although it is a small catchment area there is potential for growth in GME from pre-school through to secondary. We note the current restrictions in numbers in Croileagan, which is a partner service nursery run by an English medium organisation, and this situation should be reviewed by the council with a view to establishing council run Gaelic medium early learning and childcare provision. This would allow numbers to increase and lead to an increase in enrolment for primary provision.

We also note parental concerns around secondary provision at Nairn Academy. We welcomed the fairly recent introduction of Gaelic provision at the Academy which allows Gaelic medium pupils to continue with Gaelic in their local school, remain with their peer group from primary and participate in after-school activities. Given the level of concern from parents we hope that the council will continue to support Nairn Academy to expand provision for GME. There are also examples of good practice from a number of schools who although they have limited subject teaching in Gaelic maximise the opportunities that pupils have to develop their Gaelic language skills through participation in projects and activities such as the national debate. We would also encourage Highland Council to consider opportunities for more collaboration with other schools such as Inverness Royal Academy, and involvement in community activities such as are provided through Comunn na Gàidhlig.

Transport


We note the proposal, for all catchments, that the default position will be for the council to utilise current secondary school transport for all provision. We are concerned that this may not always be appropriate for very young children and would remind the council that any proposal should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME for their children. Transport should not be a barrier to accessing GME.

Promotion and Information

The council hopes that setting the catchment areas will provide clarification for parents on their entitlement to GME and this is welcome. We hope that the council will ensure that all parents in the associated schools are made aware prior to enrolment for primary education that they do have an opportunity, supported by the council, to access GME.

We would also expect the council to continue to promote the opportunity for parents to submit a request for GMPE in line with the Education Act (Scotland) 2016.

M. Wentworth
27.10.2023

 <p>Freagairt Bhòrd na Gàidhlig do Cho-chomhairle Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd air sgìrean-sgoile FtG airson Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis Bun-sgoil Inbhir Pheofharain Acadamaidh Inbhir Pheofharain Bun-Sgoil Bruach na Muilne Acadamaidh Inbhir Narann</p> <p>24^{mh} Dàmhair 2023</p>	<p>Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Response on the Highland Council Consultation on GME Catchment Area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis Inverness Royal Academy Dingwall Primary School Dingwall Academy Millbank Primary School Nairn Academy</p> <p>24th October 2023</p>
<p>1. Ro-ràdh</p> <p>Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' cur fàilte ann am prionnsapal, air an iomairt gus sgìrean-sgoile airson Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig (FtG) a stèidheachadh anns na sgoiltean a tha air an liostadh gu h-àrd. Tha am Bòrd ag aithneachadh gu bheil Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' gluasad a dh'ionnsaigh a bhith a' stèidheachadh sgìrean-sgoile far a bheil solar FtG ann an sgìre na Comhairle.</p> <p>Tha an Stiùireadh Reachdail air Foghlam Gàidhlig agus Plana Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig airson 2018-23 mar bhunait airson freagairt a' Bhùird dhan cho-chomhairle seo. Tha e mar bhunait dhan Stiùireadh Reachdail, gum bu chòir FtG a leasachadh agus gum bu chòir fàs a thoirt air agus tha barrachd mion-fhiosrachaidh air seo san stiùireadh.</p>	<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>Bòrd na Gàidhlig welcomes in principle, the initiative to establish school catchment areas for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in the above listed schools. The Bòrd recognises that Highland Council is moving to the establishment of catchment areas where there does exist GME provision in the Council's area.</p> <p>The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education and the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 form the basis for the Bòrd's response to this consultation. The Statutory Guidance, where there is further detail on the steps involved, has as its basis that GME should develop and grow.</p>

<p>2. Fiosrachadh Co-chomhairleachaidh</p> <p>Tha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd ag ràdh gu bheil iad airson sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh air na h-adhbharan a leanas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tha an Stiùireadh Reachdail air Foghlam Gàidhlig a' moladh gun stèidhich Ùghdarrasan Ionadail sgìrean-sgoile airson FtG. • Tha dìth soilleireachd ann an-dràsta do phàrantan agus luchd-cùraim a tha ag iarraidh FtG dhan chuid chloinne anns na coimhearsnachdan a tha air am frithealadh leis an t-solar FtG a tha air a liostadh. Tha an t-Ùghdarras Ionadail a' dèanamh na h-eacarsaich a rèir an dleastanais a bhith a' toirt seachad Luach as Fheàrr ann an lìbhrigeadh sheirbheisean. • Tha an t-Ùghdarras Ionadail air an cleachdadh a chur an sàs de bhith a' toirt seachad còmhhdail taobh a-staigh astar siubhail reusanta, a thathar a' mineachadh sa chumantas mar taobh a-staigh 15 mìle bho sgoil a tha a' lìbhrigeadh FtG. 	<p>2. Consultation Information</p> <p>The Highland Council say they want to establish catchment areas for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education recommends that Local Authorities establish catchment areas for GME. • There is currently a lack of clarity for parents and carers seeking to access GME in the communities served by the GME provision listed. The Local Authority is undertaking the exercise in line with the duty to provide Best Value in service delivery. • The Local Authority has used the practice of providing transport within a reasonable travelling distance, which has generally been understood to mean within 15 miles of a school delivering GME.
<p>3. Molaidhean na Comhairle</p> <p>Solarachadh FtG ann am Buidheann Sgoiltean Cho-cheangailte Inbhir Narann (Acadamaidh Inbhir Narann agus Bun-sgoil Bruach na Muilne).</p> <p>Ann am prionnsapal tha taic Bhòrd na Gàidhlig ri bhith a' stèidheachadh sgìre-sgoile soilleir airson solar FtG ann am Buidheann Sgoiltean Cho-cheangailte Inbhir Narann, an dà chuid solar airson Àrd-sgoile agus Bun-sgoile, mar a tha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' moladh.</p> <p>Tha sinn a' toirt fa-near do raon de</p>	<p>3. Council Recommendation</p> <p>GME Provision Nairn ASG (Nairn Academy and Millbank Primary).</p> <p>In principle Bòrd na Gàidhlig supports the establishment of a clear catchment area for the GME provision in the Nairn ASG, both Secondary and Primary provision, as proposed by the Highland Council.</p> <p>We note a range of concerns raised by</p>

<p>dhraghan a thog pàrantan a thaobh solar FtG taobh a-staigh Buidheann Sgoiltean Cho-cheangailte Inbhir Narann agus tha sinn a' moladh gu làidir gun tèid ceumannan èiginneach a ghabhail gus piseach a thoirt air an t-suidheachadh a' gabhail a-steach na leanas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gun tèid plana a chur an sàs gus goireasan a bharrachd fhaighinn gus curraicealam FtG leudaichte a libhrigeadh (tha seo a' gabhail a-steach an dà chuid taic bho thidsearan taobh a-muigh na Buidhne Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte agus a bhith a' fastadh thidsearan a bharrachd). Tha sinn a' moladh gun tèid am plana airson leasachadh curraicealaim a chur ri chèile le taic bho Fhoghlam Alba, Roinn na Gàidhlig agus Albais aig Riaghaltas na h-Alba (Sgeama Thabhartasan Sònraichte agus 's dòcha Maoin Calpa na Gàidhlig). Is urrainn Sgioba an Fhoghlaim aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig comhairle agus taic phroifeiseanta a bharrachd a thoirt seachad cuideachd. • Bu chòir Tabhartas Curraicealaim FtG aig Acadamaidh Inbhir Narann a leudachadh gach seisean. • Bu chòir dhan Phlana Leasachaidh Sgoile bhliadhnail agus an Aithisg Inbhean is Càileachd Bhliadhnail sealltainn gu soilleir do phàrantan dè na leasachaidhean a thathar a' libhrigeadh air a' Churraicealam gach seisean. <p>Tha e deatamach gum bithear a' coimhead air an t-solar FtG taobh a-staigh Buidheann Sgoiltean Cho-cheangailte Inbhir Narann mar sheirbheis 3-18, a' toirt foghlam tràth-bhliadhnach, bun-sgoile agus àrd-sgoile aig àrd-ìre do phàrantan. Tha</p>	<p>parents concerning GME provision within the Nairn ASG and strongly recommend that urgent steps are taken to improve the position including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan be put in place to secure additional resource to deliver an expanded GME curriculum (this relates to both delivery of support from teachers outwith the ASG and recruitment of additional teachers). We recommend that the plan for curriculum development be constructed with support from the Education Scotland, Scottish Government Gaelic and Scots Division (Specific Grant Scheme and potentially the Gaelic Capital Fund). The Education Team at Bòrd na Gàidhlig can also provide additional professional advice and support. • The GME Curriculum Offer at Nairn Academy should be expanded each session. • The annual School Improvement Plan and Annual Standards and Quality Report should clearly indicate for parents the improvements in the Curriculum Offer being delivered each session. <p>It is crucial that the GME provision within the Nairn ASG is envisioned as a 3-18 service providing parents with Early Years, Primary and Secondary education of a high quality. Parents have raised concerns regarding the 3-18 vision. We recommend strongly that</p>
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<p>pàrantan air draghan a thogail a thaobh na lèirsinn 3-18. Tha sinn a' moladh gu làidir gun tèid taobh nan Tràth-bhliadhnaichean de sholar 3-18 ath-sgrùdadh, agus gun tèid plana gnìomh a chruthachadh gus dèanamh cinnteach gun tèid làn fheum a dhèanamh den ùidh ann am FtG sa choimhearsnachd gus am bi barrachd misneachd aig pàrantan ann an solar FtG bho aois 3-18 sna Tràth-bhliadhnaichean, sa bhun-sgoil agus san àrd-sgoil.</p> <p>Am measg nan amasan a th' aig eacarsaichean airson a bhith a' stèidheachadh sgìrean-sgoile, tha a bhith a' neartachadh misneachd phàrantan ann am FtG, a bhith a' soilleireachadh chùisean a thaobh lìbhrigeadh sheirbheisean agus a bhith a' cruthachadh shuidheachaidhean far am bi seirbheisean FtG ionadail a' tàladh barrachd is barrachd theaghlaichean gus "critical mass" a stèidheachadh. Tha comharran soilleir bhon eacarsaich cho-chomhairleachaidh gum feumar obair mhòr a dhèanamh gus misneachd a thogail. Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig den bheachd gum bu chòir planadh leasachaidh a chur an sàs gus am bi fianais shoilleir air adhartas san Aithisg Inbhean is Càileachd airson seisean 2023-24, a thèid a dhèanamh gach seisean às dèidh sin.</p> <p>Buidheann Sgoiltean Cho-cheangailte Inbhir Pheofharain, Alanais agus na Cananaich (Acadamaidh Inbhir Pheofharain agus Bun-sgoil Inbhir Pheofharain)</p> <p>Ann am prionnsapal tha taic Bhòrd na Gàidhlig ri bhith a' stèidheachadh sgìre-sgoile soilleir airson solar FtG ann am Buidheann Sgoiltean Cho-cheangailte Inbhir Pheofharain, Alanais agus na Cananaich, an dà chuid airson solar Àrd-sgoile agus Bun-sgoile, mar a mhol Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd.</p> <p>Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' toirt fa-near gu bheil dùbhlain ann fhathast a thaobh</p>	<p>the Early Years aspect of the 3-18 provision is reviewed, and an action plan created to ensure that interest in GME within the community is fully exploited so that across the 3-18 GME provision parental confidence in GME Early Years, Primary and Secondary is increased.</p> <p>Amongst the aims of the establishment of catchments exercise are the reinforcement of parental confidence in GME, the establishment of clarity around service provision and the creation of the conditions where local GME services will attract more and more families to establish a "critical mass". There are clear indications from the consultation exercise that considerable work requires to be done to build confidence. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is of the view that development planning should be put in place so that in the Standards and Quality Report for session 2023-24 there is clear evidence of progress, which will then be sustained each session thereafter.</p> <p>Dingwall, Alness and Fortrose ASGs (Dingwall Academy and Dingwall Primary)</p> <p>In principle Bòrd na Gàidhlig supports the establishment of a clear catchment area for the GME provision in the Dingwall, Alness and Fortrose ASG, both Secondary and Primary provision, as proposed by the Highland Council. Bòrd na Gàidhlig notes that there remain some challenges around travelling times and ensuring that GME as an option continues to be attractive for parents.</p>
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<p>amannan siubhail agus a bhith a' dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil FtG fhathast tarraingeach mar roghainn do phàrantan.</p> <p>Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' moladh gun cùm an t-Ùghdarras Ionadail air a' conaltradh le coimhearsnachdan ann am Buidheann Sgoiltean Cho-cheangailte na Cananaich le dùil a bhith a' stèidheachadh solar FtG san àm ri teachd.</p> <p>Tha na h-amannan agus astaran siubhail airson Srath Chonainn agus Cromba fhathast taobh a-muigh a' mhineachaidh choitcheinn gu bheil astar siubhail reusanta nas lugha na 15 mìle. Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' moladh gun obraich an t-Ùghdarras Ionadail le coimhearsnachdan ionadail gus sgrùdadh a dhèanamh air na cothroman a th' ann gus solar FtG a stèidheachadh taobh a-staigh na sgìre ionadail anns na h-àiteachan sin.</p> <p>Bidh e cudromach leantainn air adhart a' planadh solar FtG taobh a-staigh na Buidhne Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte seo le lèirsinn airson seata de sheirbheisean FtG bho aois 3-18.</p> <p>Buidheann Sgoiltean Cho-cheangailte Inbhir Nis (BSGI, Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis)</p> <p>Ann am prionnsapal tha taic Bhòrd na Gàidhlig ri bhith a' stèidheachadh sgìre-sgoile shoilleir airson solar FtG ann am Buidheann Sgoiltean Cho-cheangailte Inbhir Nis, a' gabhail a-steach an dà chuid solar Àrd-sgoile agus Bun-sgoile, mar a mhol Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd.</p> <p>Coltach ri Srath Chonainn agus Cromba, tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' toirt fa-near gu bheil an t-astar airson cuid de sgoiltean taobh a-muigh an radius 15 mìle ged nach eil amannan siubhail cho dùbhlanaich. Ach, a-rithist dh'fhaodte gum bi cothrom ann</p>	<p>Bòrd na Gàidhlig recommends that the Local Authority continue to engage with communities in Fortrose ASG with a view to setting up GME provision at a future point.</p> <p>The travelling times and distances for Strathconon and Cromarty remain outwith the general interpretation that reasonable travelling distance is less than 15 miles. Bòrd na Gàidhlig recommends that the Local Authority work with local communities to explore the potential for setting up GME provision within the local area in these areas.</p> <p>It will be important to continue planning GME provision within this ASG with a vision for a 3-18 set of GME services.</p> <p>Inverness ASGs (BSGI, Inverness Royal Academy)</p> <p>In principle Bòrd na Gàidhlig supports the establishment of a clear catchment area for the GME provision in the Inverness ASGs, both Secondary and Primary provision, as proposed by the Highland Council.</p> <p>Similar to Strathconon and Cromarty, Bòrd na Gàidhlig notes that distances for some schools are outwith the 15-mile radius though travelling times are not as challenging. However, again there may be scope for developing further GME provision within local</p>
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<p>barrachd solair FtG a chruthachadh taobh a-staigh nan sgìrean ionadail seo gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil seirbheis FtG nas ionadaile ann.</p> <p>San dealachadh, tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig ag aithneachadh cho iom-fhillte 's a tha an solar anns na Buidhnean Sgoiltean Cho-cheangailte a tha air an liostadh agus a' moladh na h-obrach a tha oifigearan air a dhèanamh gus fuasglaidhean fhaighinn airson raon farsaing de dhiofar dhùbhlain. Ge b' e dè an co-dhùnadh a bhios ann a thaobh sgìrean-sgoile, tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' moladh, gun tèid iomairt sanasachd a chruthachadh gus an tuig pàrantan gu furasta far a bheil an t-seirbheis FtG aca suidhichte agus mar a gheibh iad cothrom air taic còmhhdhail.</p>	<p>areas to ensure that a more local GME service is provided.</p> <p>In conclusion Bòrd na Gàidhlig recognises the complexity of provision in the listed ASGs and commends the work officers have done to find solutions to a wide range of challenges. Bòrd na Gàidhlig recommends that whatever the outcome of decision-making regarding catchments, a publicity initiative is developed so that parents can easily understand where their GME service is located and how they might access transport support.</p>
<p>4. Stiùireadh Reachdail airson Foghlam Gàidhlig</p> <p>Tha an Stiùireadh Reachdail airson Foghlam Gàidhlig a' moladh gun tèid sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh airson sgoiltean far a bheil Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig (FtG) ri fhaighinn (Earrann 2.53 is 2.54).</p> <p>Sgìrean-sgoile is Stiùireadh airson Àiteachan a Ghleidheadh do Sgoilearan</p> <p>Bu chòir do dh'ùghdarrasan foghlaim sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh airson FtG, agus dh'fhaodadh gum bi iad ag iarraidh beachdachadh air an iarrtas a th' ann airson FtG nuair a tha iad a' stèidheachadh stiùireadh airson nan àiteachan a thèid a ghleidheadh do sgoilearan ann am FtG.</p> <p>A rèir 2.54:</p> <p>Bu chòir do sgìre-sgoile airson sgoile FtG a bhith na sgìre far a bheil an t-ùghdarras foghlaim den bheachd</p>	<p>4. Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education</p> <p>The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education recommends that catchment areas be established for schools where Gaelic-medium education (GME) is provided (Section 2.53 & 2.54).</p> <p>Catchment Areas and Placing Guidelines</p> <p>Education authorities should establish catchment areas for GME provision and may wish to consider demand for GME when setting guidelines for placing pupils in GME provision.</p> <p>2.54 states:</p> <p>A catchment area of GME provision should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is</p>

<p>gu bheil e reusanta do chloinn san sgìre sin, a tha airson a dhol gu FtG, siubhal dhan sgoil, agus bu chòir gum bi cothrom ann pàrantan a thàladh gu bhith cur an cuid chloinne gu FtG.</p> <p>Mar sin, tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' cur fàilte ann am prionnsapal, air a' mholadh gun tèid sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh airson Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig anns na sgoiltean air an liostadh sa cho-chomhairle phoblaich seo.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Therefore, Bòrd na Gàidhlig welcomes in principle, the recommendation that catchment areas be established for Gaelic Medium Education in the listed schools in this public consultation.</p>
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Public consultation Gaelic Medium Catchment Areas Proposal

It is understood that the Highland Council (*the Council*) is seeking the views of local communities on a proposal to establish Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy. In doing so have prepared an 'Educational Benefits Statement' and a number of 'Catchment Maps' for the three proposed catchments.

As parents of two children within the Nairn Millbank Primary School GM unit and one child within the Inverness Royal Academy GM unit, our comments are as follows:

Educational Benefits Statement – Introduction:

This paper states in the introduction section that the consultation seeks '...To formalise the current arrangements relating to Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME) in Nairn Academy, under which the catchment area for Nairn Academy will apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium education...'.

This statement implies that there is an existing agreed arrangement and that currently Nairn Academy offers a GME Education. However, both of these statements are far from accurate. Nairn Academy has never operated as a formal GME setting and as shown below is not operating currently as one, nor will it have the pupil demand in the future to operate as one.

Moreover, the removal of the longstanding transport for secondary GME pupils from Nairn to the IRA back in 2022, was never subject to any formal consultation and or public discussion, instead it was removed without warning and justification to the secondary intake for academic year 2022. Therefore the assertion that this consultation is to ratify a previously agreed position is wholly inaccurate.

Nairn Academy Current Gaelic Medium Education Provision

The consultation implies that Nairn Academy is operating a GME currently. This assertion is fundamentally incorrect, as recognised and confirmed by the Council panel at the public meeting on 5th September 2023, Nairn Academy only has 2no. students with S1 and 3no. Students in S2 wishing to participate in GM.

Additionally, these students are only being taught a very limited timetable which precludes teaching any subjects within the medium of GM and the students within S1 who have elected to take the GM language course are doing so at the expense of a foreign language, which we understand might not comply with educational requirements

Whereas it is understood that GME students within Dingwall Academy are taught History, Geography and Modern Studies all within the medium of GM and GME students at the IRA are taught History, Geography, Modern Studies, RMPS and PSE within the medium of GM. Therefore, until Nairn Academy can offer an equivalent and compliant GME experience it is unrealistic to expect parents with Nairn to accept a substandard GME when compared to neighbouring schools.

Nairn Academy Future Ability to Offer Gaelic Medium Education

Whilst it is admirable that the Council wishes to develop a GME unit at secondary level within Nairn, and one which we would fully support. The current consultation demonstrates that when the Nairn Academy proposed catchment is compared to both the IRA and Dingwall Academy proposed catchments, Nairn Academy one is insufficient to provide sufficient students to warrant a GME unit.

This is based on Nairn Academy GME proposed catchment being served by just 4no. primary schools, whilst the proposed IRA catchment is served by 33no. primary schools and the proposed Dingwall Catchment is served by 19no primary schools.

Furthermore, Millbank Primary School in Nairn has been operating a GME unit for several years and currently operates two GME classes across the whole school – GM 1-3 & GM 4-7 with a roll of 28 pupils. Over the years of operating the GME unit in Millbank, the GME school role has been fairly static and is unlikely to increasing significantly due to the size of the primary school catchment and the current role of the GM nursery within the town. As such, it can be forecasted that the number of pupils undertaking GME at Nairn Academy will not increase significant and instead will be a relatively low number of pupils and one which would be unsustainable to support a GME within Nairn Academy.

Whereas Dingwall Academy is feed from a GME unit with a role of 75 pupils and IRA is feed from a GME unit of 214 pupils. Both of which are significantly higher than the Nairn Academy Catchment and therefore have the ability to sustain the existing GME units associated with the secondary GME within these locations.

Comparative Catchment Areas

Given the above has demonstrated that Nairn Academy is currently not offering a GME education and has insufficient demand in the future to deliver one. It is realistic to assume parents of the current pupils enrolled within the Millbank primary GME unit to want a 'like for like' education as being offered in neighbouring catchments and one that satisfies the legislative requirements for GME.

Therefore, it is argued that the most suitable option would be to reinstate the transport of Nairn Academy GME pupils to the IRA for secondary GME as the most appropriate and would not be adversely prohibited due to distance between Millbank PS and the IRA; as this distance is approximately an 18mile journey, which is similar to a number of travel distances proposed for the other catchments (namely, Cromarty Primary to Dingwall Academy at 19.2miles, Beaully Primary to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis at 17.6 miles, Teanassie Primary to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis at 17.2 miles, Foyers Primary to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis at 18.2 miles, Stratherrick Primary to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis at 18.1 miles, Cromarty Primary to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis at 25.9 miles and Resolis Primary to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis at 20.9 miles).

Doing so, would offer the parents of the Nairn primary GME unit the option of either seeking a full, proper and comparative secondary GME at the IRA if they so wish, or retaining their children within Nairn to attend Nairn Academy where they can accept a lesser GM education.

I look forward to receiving confirmation of receipt of our response and we are happy to discuss any of the matters outlined above.

Yours sincerely,

Mr & Mrs Hilton.

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The Highland Council to establish Gàidhlig Medium catchment areas for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis; Bun-sgoil Inbhir Pheofharain - Dingwall Primary School; Bun-sgoil Bruach na Muilne - Millbank Primary School, Nairn; Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis - Inverness Royal Academy, Acadamaidh Inbhir Pheofharain - Dingwall Academy and Acadamaidh Inbhir Narainn - Nairn Academy.

November 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His 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 Gàidhlig Medium catchment areas for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis; Bun-sgoil Inbhir Pheofharain - Dingwall Primary School; Bun-sgoil Bruach na Muilne - Millbank Primary School, Nairn; Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis - Inverness Royal Academy, Acadamaidh Inbhir Pheofharain - Dingwall Academy and Acadamaidh Inbhir Narainn - Nairn Academy. Section two of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section three of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section four 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.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

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

- attendance at the public meetings on 5, 13 and 19 September 2023 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- visits to the site of Bun-sgoil Bruach na Muilne - Millbank Primary School, Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig, Inbhir Nis; Bun-sgoil Inbhir Pheofharain - Dingwall Primary School; Acadamaidh Inbhir Narainn - Nairn Academy; Acadamaidh Inbhir Pheofharain - Dingwall Academy and Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis - Inverness Royal Academy. This entailed 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 council organised a public consultation from 21 August to 27 October 2023. Copies of the proposal document were available widely, including at all 64 schools named in the proposal. The proposal document was available in ten libraries and published on the council's website.

Stakeholders were invited to respond to the consultation by completing a form or using electronic mail. Ten stakeholders responded to the consultation, of whom almost all were parents. The council held three public meetings. These were at Bun-sgoil Bruach na Muilne - Millbank Primary School on 5 September 2023; Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis on 13 September 2023, and at Bun-sgoil Inbhir Pheofharain - Dingwall Primary School on 19 September 2023. Twelve members of the public attended the meeting in Bun-sgoil Bruach na Muilne - Millbank Primary School. Three members of the public attended the meeting in Bun-sgoil Inbhir Pheofharain - Dingwall Primary School. No members of the public attended the meeting in Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. Children and young people have not been consulted by the council directly. HM Inspectors consulted children and young people in our engagements.

2.3 Stakeholders who responded to the consultation raised a range of concerns and suggested how improvements can be made to the proposals. These related to the 3-18 curriculum, transport and travel, capacity in some schools to enable expansion of Gàidhlig Medium Education and how some districts have been assigned to catchment areas. Comann nam Pàrant and Bòrd na Gàidhlig responded to the consultation. The latter did so as a statutory consultee. Both organisations agree with the proposal, subject to a few amendments. Bòrd na Gàidhlig felt that urgent action should be taken on developing more equity in the secondary curriculum at Acadamaidh Inbhir Narainn-Nairn Academy. They offered to advise in taking this forward. Bòrd na Gàidhlig suggested that the council have clear guidelines on placing requests to support parents who wished their child to be educated out with their catchment area. Comann nam Pàrant agreed with many aspects of the proposal. They felt that parents were more likely to choose Gàidhlig Medium provisions in Inverness, particularly as parents travelled into the city for employment. They also cited the benefits of all Gàidhlig schools. Both organisations raised issues on travel and transport. Comann nam Pàrant highlighted that travel options had to be attractive to parents and not a barrier to accessing Gàidhlig Medium Education.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The Highland Council sets the context for their educational benefit statement as meeting outcomes towards Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017 and their Gaelic Language Plan. The council detail their commitment to continue increasing the speakers of Gàidhlig, who also accrue all the benefits of bilingualism. They refer to achieving outcomes towards best value for their service. The council feel that drawing up catchment areas clarifies for parents how they access Gàidhlig Medium Education. HM Inspectors agree that there are benefits to most of what the council is proposing. However, the council still need to take important actions to improve further the potential educational benefits resulting from their proposal.

3.2 A significant stakeholder concern is how well the proposals, if accepted, will result in children and young people having a quality, consistent and equitable 3-18 curriculum. Stakeholders recognise the importance of a well-planned curriculum in achieving high levels of fluency in Gàidhlig. Details of this are in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4.

3.3 For the catchment area covered by the Dingwall area, stakeholders raised concerns that sgoil-àraich (early learning and childcare) is not currently available. In Inverness and Nairn catchment areas, stakeholders highlighted that capacity for enrolments are being reached at sgoil-àraich. The council should clarify in their final report how parents can access sgoil-àraich.

3.4 Stakeholders in Nairn raised concerns that not enough of the curriculum was available through immersion in Gàidhlig at the secondary stages. For a few young people within the proposed catchment for Nairn, educational benefits would reduce by not being able to attend Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis – Inverness Royal Academy. Specifically, young people access a more bespoke curriculum offer through Gàidhlig by attending secondary education in Inverness. At

the same time, stakeholders recognised the importance of Gàidhlig Medium Education being available in local areas. HM Inspectors agree that children and young people should access a 3-18 curriculum, in which immersion education is available in line with the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017. While Acadamaidh Inbhir Narainn - Nairn Academy build their curriculum offer, some parents are content to continue using the local secondary school. For those who are not, they should have an option of sending their child to Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis - Inverness Royal Academy, with dedicated, free transport provided. The council needs to plan further with staff in Nairn to develop a strategy to resource a curriculum that provides continuity and progression for the young people in Gàidhlig Medium Education. This should ensure that staffing allocations are sufficient to plan the curriculum for individuals and small groups of young people who are learning through Gàidhlig at the primary stages. Nairn Academy's new school building needs to support creating an immersive environment. Staff should be supported in their ambition to teach Gaelic (Learners) to young people.

3.5 The council invited stakeholders to suggest how schools are allocated to catchment areas. A few stakeholders suggested some changes that the council should consider. For some smaller villages, such as Ardersier and Croy, some stakeholders suggested that children and young people attend Gàidhlig Medium Education in Nairn rather than as assigned to Inverness. They felt that this was more attractive for parents and would increase enrolments in Nairn. A few stakeholders suggested that children and young people residing in Beaully should be included in the catchment area for Dingwall rather than Inverness. The current catchment area for English Medium at Fortrose Academy is being allocated between the provisions for Gàidhlig Medium at Dingwall and Inverness. Almost all stakeholders agreed with how these named districts would be allocated, as long as effective and equitable transport and travel arrangements were being provided consistently.

3.6 The council should provide further clarity and support on travel and transport. Particularly, Ardersier and Croy to Nairn; Alness, Beaully, Cromarty, Culbokie, Munlochy and Tore to Dingwall, and from Avoch and North Kessock to Inverness. Based on demand, taxis and minibuses are currently used. The council's proposal paper details travel arrangements based on existing catchment areas for secondary English Medium schools. In Inverness for example, young people's use of existing travel arrangements would result in them having to make further travel connections to Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis - Inverness Royal Academy, should the proposal proceed. This adds to the length and cost of young people's school day. In the proposal paper, travel arrangements are calculated based on distance from primary to secondary schools. This does not take account of remote areas, and children and young people's lived experiences of travelling for an education in Gàidhlig Medium. The council should articulate travel arrangements specific to catchment areas for Gàidhlig and avoid costs to parents. The council needs to ensure that transport, travel and cost is not a barrier to parents choosing Gàidhlig Medium Education. Children and young people, in accessing Gàidhlig Medium Education, need to experience excellence, equity, equality and fairness. The council should ensure that relevant impact assessments are undertaken, including equality and rural assessments. They should detail safeguarding arrangements for young children travelling on transport, including that young children are dropped off at close proximity to their school. In its final report, the council should ensure that all mileages between schools are included. A few are omitted in the proposal paper. The council need to be clearer on how they will decide on 'practicable arrangements' in utilising existing transport. They should also clarify the situations and contexts that merit transport by taxi or minibus. This should include reassurances about existing travel arrangements for individuals and their siblings. There are far fewer schools that offer Gàidhlig Medium rather than English Medium. This in itself, necessitates more travel for children and young people. The council should review how it describes the cost of transport 'as additional' when sustaining the Gàidhlig language is a national priority, embedded in legislation, with fewer schools for Gàidhlig available.

3.7 Stakeholders also requested that schools ringfence sufficient placings for Gàidhlig Medium Education where there are increasing school rolls and restrictions generally on admissions. The council should consider that their policy for Gàidhlig includes making sufficient places available for Gàidhlig Medium Education, as well as that placing requests support Gàidhlig Medium Education.

4. Summary

The Highland Council are fulfilling statutory duties when setting up catchment areas for Gàidhlig Medium Education. Almost all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors support the proposals, with a few adaptations and clarification. Stakeholders, and notably children and young people, spoke of their successes and pride in being fluent in Gàidhlig. HM Inspectors agree that catchment areas should be established, subject to the actions that we recommend in section three of this report. In taking forward the proposals, the council should continue working with stakeholders to ensure and resource high-quality 3-18 Gàidhlig Medium curricula and immersion environments in all of the designated Gàidhlig Medium establishments. They should ensure safe, effective, free and future-proofed travel and transport arrangements so there are no barriers, including costs, in accessing Gàidhlig Medium Education. In schools, where there are increasing school rolls, with further increases projected, the council should ensure that future planning keeps abreast with demand for Gàidhlig.

HM Inspectors
November 2023

Achd Sgoiltean (Co-chomhairleachadh) (Alba) 2010

Aithisg le Foghlam Alba a' dèiligeadh ri taobhan foghlaim a' mholaidh bho Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd gus sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh airson Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis; Bun-sgoil Inbhir Pheofharain; Bun-sgoil Bruach na Muilne, Inbhir Narann; Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis , Acadamaidh Inbhir Pheofharain; agus Acadamaidh Inbhir Narainn.

An t-Samhain 2023

1. Ro-ràdh

1.1 Chaidh an aithisg seo bho Fhoghlam Alba ullachadh le Luchd-sgrùdaidh Foghlaim an Rìgh (Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh) a rèir cumhaichean [Achd Sgoiltean \(Co-chomhairleachadh\) \(Alba\) 2010](#) (“an Achd 2010”). 'S e adhbhar na h-aithisge seo beachdachadh neo-eisimeileach agus neo-phàirteach a libhrigeadh air moladh Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd airson sgìrean-sgoile Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a stèidheachadh airson Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis; Bun-sgoil Inbhir Pheofharain; Bun-sgoil Bruach na Muilne, Inbhir Narann; Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis; Acadamaidh Inbhir Pheofharain; agus Acadamaidh Inbhir Narainn. Tha earrann a dhà den aithisg a' toirt seachad mion-fhiosrachadh goirid air a' phròiseas chonaltraidh. Tha earrann a trì den aithisg a' toirt seachad beachdachadh Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh air taobhan foghlaim a' mholaidh, a' gabhail a-steach beachdan cudromach air an cur an cèill le luchd-comhairleachaidh. Tha earrann a ceithir a' toirt seachad geàrr-chunntas air a' bheachd san fharsaingeachd aig Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh air a' mholadh. Aon uair 's gum faigh iad an aithisg seo, tha an Achd ag òrdachadh gum feum a' chomhairle beachdachadh oirre agus an uair sin an aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannach aca ullachadh. Bu chòir gum foillsichear an aithisg seo an lùib aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannach na comhairle. Tha seo còmhla ri mìneachadh air ciamar, ann an crìoch a chur air a' mholadh, a rinn iad ath-sgrùdadh air a' mholadh thùsail, a' gabhail a-steach geàrr-chunntas air puingeann a chaidh a thogail anns a' phròiseas chonaltraidh agus freagairt na comhairle riutha. Feumaidh a' chomhairle an aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannach aca fhoillseachadh trì seachdainean mus gabh iad an co-dhùnadh mu dheireadh aca.

1.2 Bheachdaich Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh air:

- buaidhean coltach a' mholaidh air clann agus daoine òga sna sgoiltean; agus luchd-cleachdaidh sam bith eile; clann a bhios nan sgoilearan taobh a-staigh dà bhliadhna bho chaidh am pàipear molaidh fhoillseachadh; agus clann agus daoine òga eile ann an sgìre na comhairle;
- buaidhean coltach sam bith eile aig a' mholadh;
- ciamar a tha a' chomhairle an dùil buaidhean dona sam bith a dh'fhaodadh tighinn am bàrr bhon mholadh a lùghdachadh no a sheachnadh; agus
- na buannachdan foghlaim a tha a' chomhairle an dùil a thig bho thoirt gu buil a' mholaidh, agus adhbharan na comhairle airson na beachdan seo a ruigsinn.

1.3 Ann a bhith ag ullachadh na h-aithisge seo, ghabh Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh na gnìomhachdan seo os làimh:

- frithealadh nan coinneamhan poblach bhiortail a chaidh a chumail air 5, 13 agus 19 Sultain 2023 mu dheidhinn molaidhean na comhairle;
- beachdachadh air a h-uile sgrìobhainn bhuntainneach a chaidh a sholarachadh leis a' chomhairle a thaobh a' mholaidh, gu sònraichte aithris nan sochairean foghlaim agus sgrìobhainnean co-chomhairleachaidh co-cheangailte, freagairtean sgrìobhte bho phàrantan is eile; agus
- tadhalan air làraichean Bun-sgoil Bruach na Muilne, Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Bun-sgoil Inbhir Pheofharain, Acadamaidh Inbhir Narainn, Acadamaidh Inbhir Pheofharain agus Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis. Thachair còmhraidhean le luchd-conaltraidh buntainneach an lùib seo.

2. Pròiseas Co-chomhairleachaidh

2.1 Ghabh Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd os làimh co-chomhairleachadh air a' mholadh/molaidhean aca a rèir [Achd Sgoiltean \(Co-chomhairleachadh\) \(Alba\) 2010](#).

2.2 Chuir a' chomhairle co-chomhairleachadh poblach air dòigh bho 21 Lùnastal gus 27 Dàmhair 2023. Bha lethbhreacan de sgrìobhainn a' mholaidh rim faotainn fad is farsaing, a' gabhail a-steach aig a h-uile gin de na 64 sgoiltean a chaidh ainmeachadh sa mholadh. Bha sgrìobhainn a' mholaidh ri faotainn ann an deich leabharlannan agus chaidh a foillseachadh air làrach-lìn na comhairle. Chaidh cuireadh a thoirt do luchd-ùidhe freagairt a thoirt don cho-chomhairleachadh le bhith a' coileanadh foirm no le bhith a' cleachdadh post-dealain. Fhreagair deichnear luchd-ùidhe don cho-chomhairleachadh, a' mhòr-chuid dhiubh nam pàrantan. Chuir a' chomhairle trì coinneamhan poblach air dòigh. Thachair iad seo aig Bun-sgoil Bruach na Muilne air 5 Sultain 2023, Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis air 13 Sultain 2023, agus aig Bun-sgoil Inbhir Pheofharain air 19 Sultain 2023. Bha dusan ball den phoball an làthair aig a' choinneimh ann am Bun-sgoil Bruach na Muilne. Bha trìùir bhall den phoball an làthair aig a' choinneimh ann am Bun-sgoil Inbhir Pheofharain. Cha robh ball sam bith den phoball an làthair aig a' choinneimh ann am Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. Cha deach clann is daoine òga a cho-chomhairleachadh gu dìreach leis a' chomhairle. Bha clann is daoine òga air an co-chomhairleachadh le Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh sna conaltraidhean againn.

2.3 Thog an luchd-ùidhe a fhreagair an co-chomhairleachadh raon de chùisean-iomagain agus chuir iad air adhart mar a dh'fhaodadh leasachaidhean a dhèanamh ris na molaidhean. Bha iad seo ceangailte ris a' churraicealam trì gu 18, còmhhdail is siubhal, comas ann an cuid a sgoiltean gus Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a leudachadh agus mar a chaidh cuid a sgìrean a shònrachadh do sgìrean-sgoile. Fhreagair Comann nam Pàrant agus Bòrd na Gàidhlig ris a' cho-chomhairleachadh. Fhreagair Bòrd na Gàidhlig mar neach-co-chomhairleachaidh reachdail. Dh'aontaich an dà bhuidheann leis a' mholadh, air chumha grunn atharrachaidhean. Bha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' faireachdainn gum bu chòir gluasad gu deifreach gus barrachd cothromais a leasachadh sa churraicealam àrd-sgoile aig Acadamaidh Inbhir Narainn. Bha iad a' tairgsinn gum faodadh iadsan comhairle a thoirt seachad air mar a dh'fhaodar seo a thoirt air adhart. Chuir Bòrd na Gàidhlig air adhart gum bu chòir don chomhairle stiùireadh soilleir a thoirt seachad air iartasan airson àite, gus taic a thoirt do phàrantan a bha airson am pàiste aca a bhith air a theagasg taobh a-muigh na sgìre-sgoile aca. Dh'aontaich Comann nam Pàrant le iomadh taobh den mholadh. Bha iadsan a' faireachdainn gun robh pàrantan nas buailtiche a bhith a' taghadh solarachadh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann an Inbhir Nis, gu h-àraid a chionn 's gun robh mòran phàrantan a' siubhal don bhaile airson obair. Dh'ainmich iad cuideachd na buannachdan a tha aig a h-uile sgoil Ghàidhlig. Thog an dà bhuidheann cùisean a thaobh siubhal agus còmhhdail. Chuir Comann nam Pàrant cuideam air mar a dh'fheumas roghainnean siubhail a bhith tarraingeach do phàrantan, seach rudeigin a bhiodh gam bacadh bho bhith a' faighinn cothrom air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig.

3. Taobhan foghlaim a' mholaidh

3.1 Tha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' cur an cèill an co-theacsa airson aithris nan sochairean foghlaim aca agus iad airson toraidhean a choileanadh a thaobh Stiùireadh Reachdail air Foghlam Gàidhlig, 2017, agus a' phlana Ghàidhlig aca. Tha a' chomhairle a' toirt seachad mion-fhiosrachadh air a' ghealltanais aca a bhith a' cumail orra a' cur am meud àireamh luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig, a bhios cuideachd a' faighinn nam buannachdan uile a thig à dà-chànanachas. Tha iad a' toirt iomradh air coileanadh nan toraidhean a thaobh luach as fheàrr airson na seirbheise aca. Tha a' chomhairle a' faireachdainn gum bi cur an cèill nan sgìrean-sgoile a' soilleireachadh do phàrantan mar a gheibh iad cothrom air Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Tha Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ag aontachadh gun tig sochairean às a' chuid bu mhotha de na tha a'

chomhairle a' moladh. Feumaidh a' chomhairle fhathast, ge-tà, gnìomhan cudromach a ghabhail gus leasachadh a bharrachd a thoirt air na sochairean foghlaim a dh'fhaodadh tighinn às a' mholadh aca.

3.2 B' e aon chùis-iomagain chudromach am measg luchd-ùidhe dè cho math 's a bhios na molaidhean, ma thathar a' gabhail riutha, a' toirt gu buil curraicealam 3 gu 18 a tha sàr-mhath, co-sheasmhach agus cothromach. Tha luchd-ùidhe ag aithneachadh cho cudromach 's a tha curraicealam deagh phlanaichte airson ìrean àrda de dh'fhileantachd ann an Gàidhlig a ruigsinn. Gheibhear mion-fhiosrachadh air seo ann am paragrafan 3.3 agus 3.4.

3.3 A thaobh na sgìre-sgoile a thathar a' moladh airson sgìre Inbhir Pheofharain, thog luchd-ùidhe cùisean-iomagain a chionn 's nach eil sgoil-àraich (tràth-ionnsachadh is cùram-chloinne) ri faotainn an sin an-dràsta. A thaobh sgìrean-sgoile Inbhir Nis agus Inbhir Narann, chuir luchd-ùidhe cuideam air a' phuing gu bheil comasachd airson chlàrachaidhean ga ruigsinn aig sgoil-àraich. Bu chòir don chomhairle a dhèanamh soilleir san aithisg dheireannaich aca mar a gheibh pàrantan cothrom air sgoil-àraich.

3.4 Thog luchd-ùidhe ann an Inbhir Narann cùisean-iomagain nach robh gu leòr den churraicealam ri fhaotainn tro bhogadh ann an Gàidhlig aig ìrean àrd-sgoile. Airson grunn dhaoine òga taobh a-staigh na sgìre-sgoile a thathar a' moladh airson Inbhir Narann, bhiodh buannachdan foghlaim gan lùghdachadh a chionn 's nach rachadh aca air Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis a fhrithéaladh. Gu sònraichte, bidh daoine òga a' faighinn cothrom air tairgse curraicealaim nas tàillearaichte tron Ghàidhlig le bhith a' frithealadh foghlam àrd-sgoile ann an Inbhir Nis. Aig an aon àm, dh'aithnich luchd-ùidhe cho cudromach 's a tha e gu bheil Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig ri fhaotainn ann an sgìrean ionadail. Tha Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ag aontachadh gum bu chòir cothrom a bhith aig clann is daoine òga air curraicealam trì gu 18 anns a bheil foghlam bogaidh ri fhaotainn a rèir Stiùireadh Reachdail air Foghlam Gàidhlig, 2017. Fhad 's a tha Acadamaidh Inbhir Narainn a' togail na tairgse curraicealaim aca, tha cuid a phàrantan toilichte a bhith a' cumail orra a' cleachdadh na h-àrd-sgoile ionadail. Dhaibhsan nach eil toilichte sin a dhèanamh, bu chòir an roghainn a bhith ann am pàiste aca a chur gu Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis, le còmh-dhail an-asgaidh air a sholarachadh a dh'aon-ghnothach. Feumaidh a' chomhairle planadh a bharrachd a dhèanamh le luchd-teagaisg ann an Inbhir Narann gus ro-innleachd a leasachadh airson curraicealam a sholarachadh a bhios a' toirt seachad leantainneachd agus adhartas ann am Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Bu chòir gu bheil seo a' dèanamh cinnteach gu bheilear a' riarachadh gu leòr de luchd-obrach gus an curraicealam a phlanadh airson sgoilearan fa leth agus airson bhuidhnean beaga de dhaoine òga a tha ag ionnsachadh tron Ghàidhlig aig na h-ìrean bun-sgoile. Feumaidh an togalach ùr airson Acadamaidh Inbhir Narainn taic a thoirt do chruthachadh àrainneachd bogaidh. Bu chòir gu bheilear a' toirt taic do luchd-obrach aig a bheil miann-adhartais Gàidhlig (Luchd-ionnsachaidh) a theagasg do dhaoine òga.

3.5 Thug a' chomhairle fiathachadh do luchd-ùidhe moladh a thoirt seachad air mar a bu chòir sgoiltean a bhith air an riarachadh do sgìrean-sgoile. Chuir grunn luchd-ùidhe atharrachaidhean air adhart, air am bu chòir don chomhairle beachdachadh. Airson cuid a chlachain nas lugha, leithid Àird nan Saor agus Crothaidh, chuir grunn luchd-ùidhe air adhart gum bu chòir do chlann is daoine òga Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a fhrithéaladh ann an Inbhir Narann seach a bhith air an riarachadh do dh'Inbhir Nis. Bha iad a' faireachdainn gun robh seo nas tarraingiche do phàrantan agus gum biodh e a' cur ri clàrachaidhean ann an Inbhir Narann. Chuir grunn luchd-ùidhe air adhart gum bu chòir do chlann is daoine òga a tha a' fuireach sa Mhanachainn a bhith air an gabhail a-steach san sgìre-sgoile airson Inbhir Pheofharain seach Inbhir Nis. Tha an sgìre-sgoile làithreach airson foghlam tro mheadhan na Beurla aig Acadamaidh na Cananaich ga riarachadh eadar na solarachaidhean airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig aig Inbhir Pheofharain agus Inbhir Nis. Bha cha mhòr a h-uile neach-ùidhe ag aontachadh le mar bu chòir na sgìrean ainmichte seo

a bhith air an riarachadh, cho fad 's a tha ullachaidhean èifeachdach agus cothromach gan solarachadh gu cunbhalach airson còmh dhail agus siubhal.

3.6 Bu chòir don chomhairle barrachd soilleireachd is taic a thoirt seachad air siubhal is còmh dhail. Gu h-àraid, a thaobh Aird nan Saor is Crothaidh gu Inbhir Narann; Alanais, a' Mhanachainn, Cromba, Cùil Bhàicidh, Poll Lochaidh agus an Todhar gu Inbhir Pheofharain, agus Abhach agus Ceasag a Tuath gu Inbhir Nis. Stèidhte air iartras, an-dràsta thathar a' cleachdadh tagsaidhean is meanbh-bhusaichean. Tha pàipear a' mholaidh bhon chomhairle a' cur air adhart ullachaidhean siubhail stèidhte air sgìrean-sgoile làithreach nan àrd-sgoiltean foghlam tro mheadhan na Beurla. Ann an Inbhir Nis, mar eisimpleir, nan robh na daoine òga a' cleachdadh nan ullachaidhean siubhail a th' ann an-dràsta, dh'fheumadh iad ceanglaichean còmh dhail a bharrachd fhaighinn gu Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis, ma bha am moladh ri dhol air adhart. Bhiodh seo a' cur ri fad is cosgais latha-sgoile nan daoine òga. Ann am pàipear a' mholaidh, tha ullachaidhean siubhail air an obrachadh a-mach stèidhte air an astar bho bhun-sgoil gu àrd-sgoil. Chan eil seo a' toirt fa-near sgìrean iomallach, agus fèin-fhios beatha chloinne is dhaoine òga a thaobh siubhal airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Bu chòir don chomhairle ullachaidhean siubhail a chur air adhart a tha sònraichte do sgìrean-sgoile airson na Gàidhlig agus cosgais airson phàrantan a sheachnadh. Feumaidh a' chomhairle dèanamh cinnteach nach eil còmh dhail, siubhal is cosgais mar bhacadh do phàrantan a tha airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a thaghadh. Nuair a tha iad a' faighinn cothrom air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig, feumaidh clann is daoine òga a bhith a' fìdreadh sàr-mhathas, cothromas, co-ionannachd agus cothromachd. Bu chòir don chomhairle dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil na measaidhean buaidh buntainneach gan gabhail os làimh, a' gabhail a-steach measaidhean buaidh air co-ionannachd is air sgìrean dùthchail. Bu chòir dhaibh fiosrachadh a thoirt seachad air ullachaidhean dìon airson chlann òga agus iad a' siubhal air còmh dhail, a' gabhail a-steach gu bheil clann òga air an toirt glè fhaisg air an sgoil aca. San aithisg dheireannaich aca, bu chòir don chomhairle dèanamh cinnteach gu bheilear a' cur an cèill a h-uile astar mhiltean eadar sgoiltean. Tha grunn dhiubh air an dearmad ann am pàipear a' mholaidh. Feumaidh a' chomhairle a bhith nas soilleire air mar a nì iad co-dhùnadh air 'ullachaidhean practaigeach' a thaobh cleachdadh còmh dhail a th' ann mar-thà. Bu chòir dhaibh soilleireachadh a thoirt seachad air na suidheachaidhean is co-theacsaichean a dhleasas còmh dhail le tagsaidh no meanbh-bhus. Bu chòir gu bheil seo a' gabhail a-steach ath-mhisneachadh mu ullachaidhean siubhail làithreach airson sgoilearan agus am bràithrean/peathraichean. Tha an àireamh de sgoiltean a tha a' tairgsinn Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig fada nas lugha na an àireamh a tha a' tairgsinn foghlam tro mheadhan na Beurla. Tha a' phuuing seo a' ciallachadh gum feum a' chlann is daoine òga barrachd siubhail a dhèanamh co-dhiù. Bu chòir don chomhairle ath-bhreithneachadh a dhèanamh air mar a tha iad a' toirt cunntas air cosgais siubhail mar rudeigin 'a bharrachd' nuair a tha cumail suas na Gàidhlig na phrìomhachas nàiseanta, air am fighe a-steach ann an reachdas, le nas lugha de sgoiltean Gàidhlig rim faotainn.

3.7 Dh'iarr luchd-ùidhe cuideachd gum bi sgoiltean a' gleidheadh àiteachan gu leòr airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig far a bheil àireamh sgoile a' dol am meud agus far a bheil cuibhreachaidhean ann san fharsaingeachd air cead tighinn a-steach. Bu chòir don chomhairle beachdachadh air gu bheil am poileasaidh aca airson Gàidhlig a' gabhail a-steach toirt seachad àiteachan gu leòr airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig, a bharrachd air iartrasan airson àite a tha a' toirt taic do Fhoghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig.

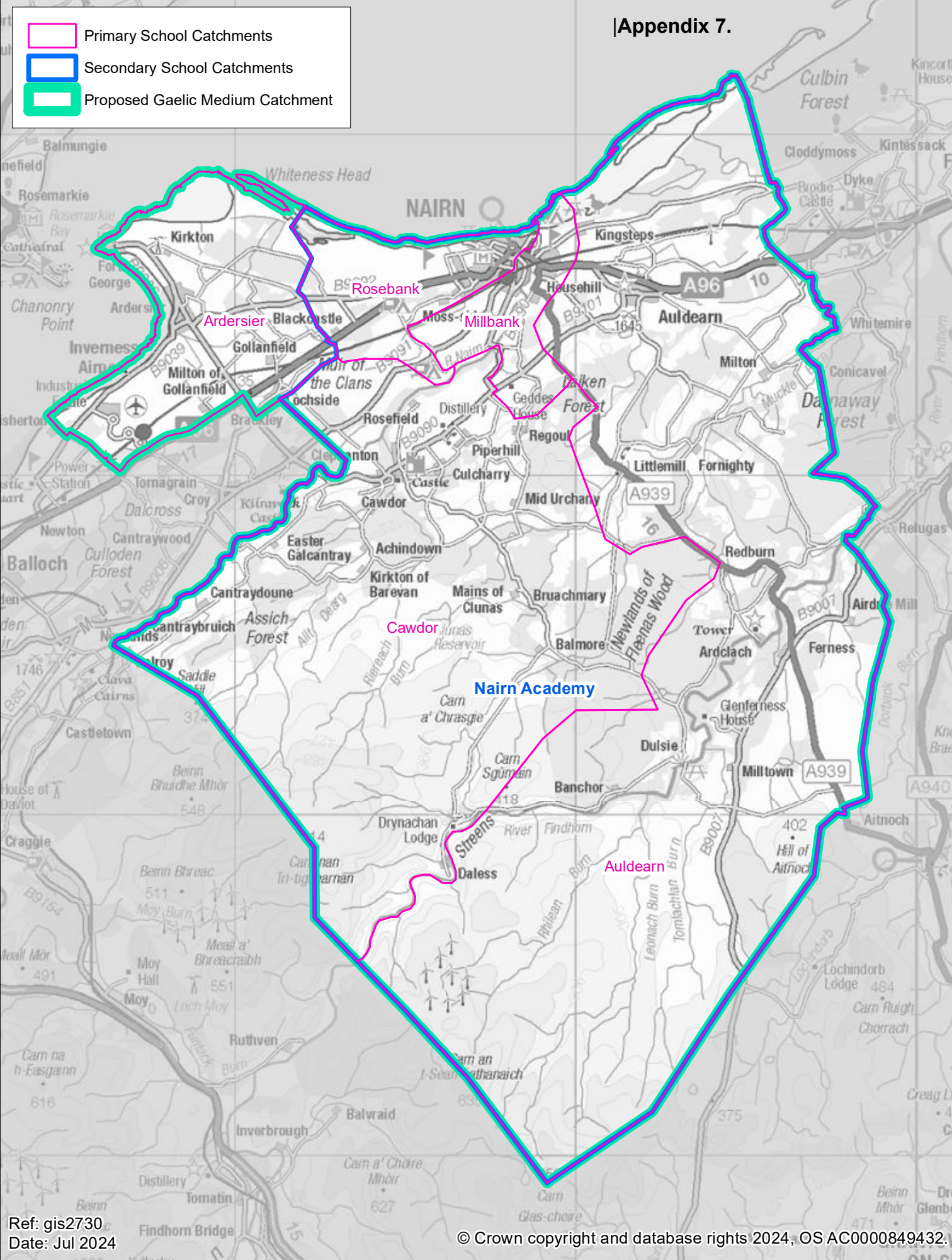
4. Geàrr-chunntas

Tha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' coileanadh nan dleastanasan reachdail aca a thaobh cur air bhonn sgìrean-sgoile airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Bha cha mhòr a h-uile neach-ùidhe a choinnich ri Luchd-sgrùdadh an Rìgh a' toirt taic do na molaidhean, le grunn atharrachaidhean is soilleireachadh. Bhruidhinn luchd-ùidhe, gu h-àraid clann is daoine òga, mu dheidhinn an cuid

shoirbheachasan agus pròis ann a bhith fileantach sa Ghàidhlig. Tha Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ag aontachadh gum bu chòir sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh, air chumha nan gnìomhan a tha sinn a' moladh ann an earrann a trì den aithisg seo. Ann a bhith a' toirt air adhart na molaidhean, bu chòir don chomhairle cumail orra ag obair le luchd-ùidhe gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil a' goireasachadh curraicealaman sàr-mhath airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig airson trì gu 18 agus àrainneachdan bogaidh anns a h-uile gin de na buidhnean a tha air an comharrachadh airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Bu chòir dhaibh dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil ullachaidhean còmh-dhalach is siubhail ann a tha sàbhailte, èifeachdach agus an-asgaidh agus a sheasas ris an àm, air chor 's nach eil cnapan-starra ann, a' gabhail a-steach cosgaisean, a thaobh cothrom fhaighinn air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Ann an sgoiltean far a bheil àireamhan na sgoile a' dol am meud, agus barrachd mheudachaidhean gan ro-mheasadh, bu chòir don chomhairle dèanamh cinnteach du bheil planadh airson an ama ri teachd a' cumail suas ris an iarrtas airson Gàidhlig.

Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh An t-Samhain 2023

- Primary School Catchments
- Secondary School Catchments
- Proposed Gaelic Medium Catchment



Ref: gis2730
Date: Jul 2024

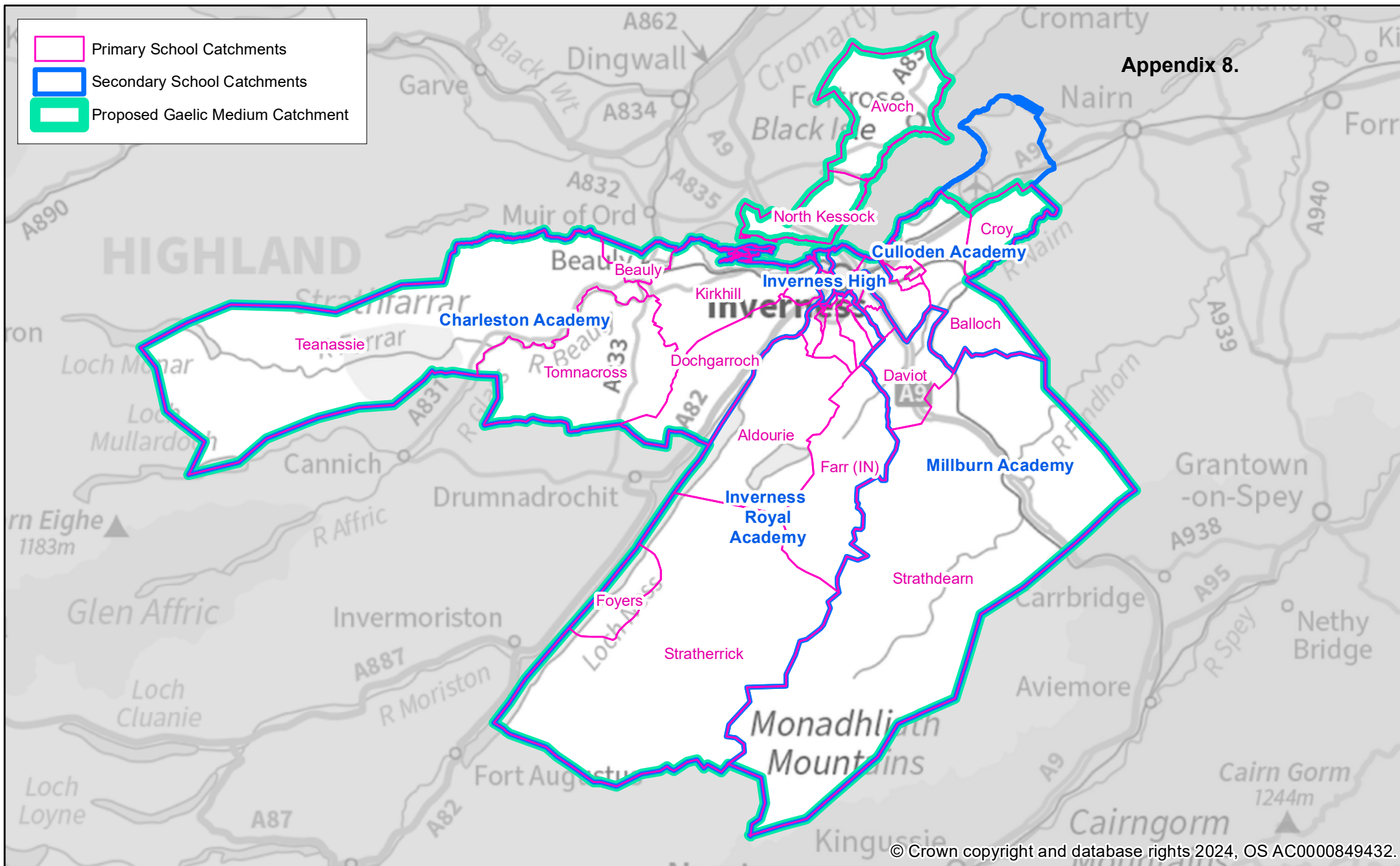
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Proposed Gaelic Medium Catchments Millbank Primary School & Nairn Academy

N
1:140,000



- Primary School Catchments
- Secondary School Catchments
- Proposed Gaelic Medium Catchment



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Ref: gis2730
Date: Jul 2024

Proposed Gaelic Medium Catchments **Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis & Inverness Royal Academy**

N
1:370,000



THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

The proposal is to establish Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Nairn; Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy

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 Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis (BSGI). The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of 33 primary schools, (full details below). Particular arrangements will apply for transport to BSGI from the other EM catchment areas.
- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Dingwall Primary School. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of 19 primary schools, (full details below). Particular arrangements will apply for transport to Dingwall Primary from the other EM catchment areas.
- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Millbank Primary School. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of 4 primary schools, (full details below). Particular arrangements will apply for transport to Millbank Primary from the other EM catchment areas.
- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Inverness Royal Academy. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of Inverness Royal Academy, Charleston Academy, Culloden Academy, Inverness High School, and Millburn Academy and part of the catchment area of Fortrose Academy. Particular arrangements will apply for transport to Inverness Royal Academy from the other EM catchment areas.
- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Dingwall Academy. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of Dingwall Academy and Alness Academy, and part of the catchment area of

Fortrose Academy. Particular arrangements will apply for transport to Dingwall Academy from the other EM catchment areas.

- To formalise the current arrangements relating to Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME) in Nairn Academy, under which the catchment area for Nairn Academy will apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium education.

Existing primary school catchments for the provision of English Medium education will be unaffected.

Highland Council is making this Proposal to comply with Statutory Guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig under Section 9 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. Part 1 of the Statutory Guidance specifically relates to the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 and the duty placed on education authorities to promote and support Gaelic education. The Guidance includes a specific requirement on local authorities to create GM catchment areas for schools that offer GME.

The proposed changes, if approved, will be implemented at the conclusion of the statutory consultation process.

Any identified parental demand for future local provision of GME from within any of the primary schools identified above, would be assessed in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education (2017).

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Proposal Paper Published

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

- Inverness Royal Academy
- Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis
- Aldourie Primary School
- Cauldeen Primary School
- Farr Primary School
- Foyers Primary School
- Hilton Primary School
- Holm Primary School
- Lochardil Primary School
- Charleston Academy
- Beaully Primary School
- Dochgarroch Primary School
- Kinmylies Primary School
- Kirkhill Primary School
- Muirtown Primary School
- Teanassie Primary School
- Tomnacross Primary School
- Culloden Academy
- Ardersier Primary School
- Balloch Primary School
- Cradlehall Primary School
- Croy Primary School
- Duncan Forbes Primary School
- Smithton Primary School
- Inverness High School
- Central Primary School
- Dalneigh Primary School
- Merkinch Primary School
- Millburn Academy

- Crown Primary School
- Daviot Primary School
- Drakies Primary School
- Inshes Primary School
- Milton of Leys Primary School
- Raigmore Primary School
- Nairn Academy
- Millbank Primary School
- Auldearn Primary School
- Cawdor Primary School
- Rosebank Primary School
- Fortrose Academy
- Avoch Primary School
- North Kessock Primary School
- Cromarty Primary School
- Culbokie Primary School
- Munlochy Primary School
- Resolis Primary School
- Tore Primary School
- Alness Academy
- Ardross Primary School
- Bridgend Primary School
- Coulhill Primary School
- Kiltearn Primary School
- Obsdale Primary School
- Dingwall Academy
- Dingwall Primary School
- Ben Wyvis Primary School
- Ferintosh Primary School
- Marybank Primary School
- Mulbuie Primary School
- Strathconon Primary School
- Strathgarve Primary School
- Strathpeffer Primary School
- Tarradale Primary School

- Alness Library
- Ardersier Library
- Beaully Library
- Cromarty Library
- Culloden Library
- Fortrose Library
- Inshes Library
- Inverness Central Library
- Muir of Ord Library
- Nairn 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

Education Service

County Buildings

High Street

Dingwall

IV15 9QN

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, Education Service, County Buildings, High Street, Dingwall, IV15 9QN,

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 all of the schools listed above, including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (ii) The Parent Councils of each of the above schools.
- (iii) All staff of the schools listed above.

- (iv) Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.
- (v) Trade union representatives.
- (vi) All Community Councils for the areas covered by the Proposal.
- (vii) Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- (viii) Comann nam Pàrant.
- (ix) Education Scotland.

Advertisement in Local Media

Notices announcing the public meetings will be placed in the *Inverness Courier*, *Ross-shire Journal* and in the Nairnshire edition of the *Press and Journal*, as well as on the Highland Council's website and Facebook page.

Consultation Period

The consultation for this Proposal will run from 21 August 2023 and will end on 27 October 2023. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

Public Meetings

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

Millbank Primary School – 5 September 2023, 6.30pm

Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 13 September 2023, 6.30pm

Dingwall Primary School – 19 September 2023, 6.30pm

Anyone wishing to attend the public meetings is invited to do so. The meetings will be convened by the Council, will be chaired by a senior elected councillor, and will be addressed by officers of the Education Service. Electronic invitations will be sent to all statutory consultees.

The meeting will provide opportunities 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 of questions asked and views expressed. The note will be published on the Council website. The meeting may 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:

Business Support Team

Education Service

County Buildings

High Street

Dingwall

IV159QN

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, 27 October 2023 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 6 November 2023, 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 summary notes of the public meetings that will be held and so far as is practicable a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 24 November 2023. 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 meetings. It will then prepare a Consultation Report. This Report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be sent to anyone who submitted a written representation during consultation. It will be available on the Council website as well as at the affected school and local library, free of charge. The Report will include a summary of the written and oral representations made during consultation and a copy of the Education Scotland Report, together with the Council's considered response to the issues raised. The Report will include details of details of any alleged inaccuracies and/or omissions and how these have been handled. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to being submitted to the Council's Education 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.

The Council intends to publish its Report in the spring of 2024 prior to submission to the Council's Education Committee in May or June 2024. 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 Education 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 in 2017 specifies that local authorities should establish catchment areas for Gàidhlig Medium education, and the Council must comply with this Guidance. 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 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:
 - Bòrd na Gàidhlig has issued statutory guidance recommending that local authorities create catchment areas for GME.
 - Highland Council has not previously specified catchment areas for all 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).
- 2.2 Outwith our defined GM catchments, the 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 Advance notification of the proposal has been provided to local elected councillors representing the wards in which the 3 schools are located, as well as with the Head Teachers of the schools directly affected. Contact was also made with the Parent Councils of the affected schools. An explanation of the Proposal was provided and comments were invited.
- 3.2 There is no compulsion on pupils from any other catchment to attend GME. The Proposal merely seeks to clarify the opportunity to do so.

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

- 4.1 There are 4 primary schools within the ASG. Millbank Primary is the only one to offer GME at the primary stage. Nairn Academy also offers GME.

Millbank Primary School

- 5.1 Millbank Primary is located within the town of Nairn. At the time of writing, the school's anticipated roll for August 2023 was 31 pupils across P1-7 in Gàidhlig Medium and 204 pupils across P1-7 in English Medium. There are also currently 15 children in Cròileagan Inbhir Narainn (Gàidhlig Medium pre-school partner centre nursery).
- 5.2 The GM pupils in P1-7 at present are almost all from within Nairn. There are currently 2 Gaelic Medium classes and a further 8 mainstream English Medium classes in the school.

Nairn Academy

- 6.1 For the 2022-23 school session, 8 pupils attending Nairn Academy are studying Gàidhlig for fluent speakers. The anticipated roll of Nairn Academy for August 2023 is 670 pupils. The provision of GME at Nairn Academy is a relatively recent development and the number of GM pupils at the school is expected to increase.

Proposed School Catchments for GME

- 7.1 Approximate travel distances and times to Millbank Primary from the other schools in the ASG are set out below:

Rosebank Primary – Millbank Primary – 0.2 miles, 2 minutes on foot.

Auldearn Primary – Millbank Primary – 2.9 miles, 8 minutes travel time.

Cawdor Primary – Millbank Primary – 5.4 miles, 11 minutes travel time.

- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 The Council is sympathetic to the idea that Gàidhlig Medium Education should be accessible as many pupils Highland as possible, provided it is practical and reasonable to provide access.
- 7.4 The Council therefore proposes that the GM catchment for Millbank Primary will overlay the English Medium catchments of Auldearn Primary, Rosebank Primary, and Cawdor Primary, but with restrictions on transport as set out below.
- 7.5 In considering the principles of Best Value – see paragraph 1.2 above - Highland Council has noted that to provide dedicated transport from the areas outwith Nairn, but within the Millbank GM catchment, could result in an unacceptably high level of additional cost to the taxpayer.
- 7.6 The Council therefore proposes that school transport to GME at Millbank Primary will be on the basis of utilising the existing transport for Nairn Academy, wherever it is practicable to do so. Dedicated transport by taxi or minibus will not normally be provided.
- 7.7 The map at **Appendix B** shows the proposed GM catchment for Millbank Primary School with the existing EM catchments outlined in red.
- 7.8 No changes are proposed for these catchments in respect of English Medium education.
- 7.9 For the purposes of GME, the Nairn Academy catchment will be the same as the school's existing catchment.

Current and Planned Provision of Gàidhlig Medium Education within the Dingwall, Alness and Fortrose ASGs

- 8.1 There are 9 primary schools within the Dingwall ASG. Dingwall Primary is the only one to offer GME at the primary stage. Dingwall Academy also offers GME.
- 8.2 There are 5 primary schools within the Alness ASG, none of which offer GME at present. Alness Academy offers Gaelic for Learners, but not Gàidhlig medium education.
- 8.3 There are 7 primary schools within the Fortrose ASG, none which offer GME at present. Fortrose Academy does not offer Gaelic as a subject.

Dingwall Primary School

- 9.1 Dingwall Primary is located within the town of the same name. At the time of writing, the school's anticipated roll for August 2023 was 75 pupils across P1-7 in Gàidhlig Medium and 353 pupils across P1-7 in English Medium. There are also 23 children in Cròileagan Inbhir Pheofharain (Gàidhlig Medium pre-school partner centre nursery).
- 9.2 About two-thirds of the GM pupils are from Dingwall itself, with the next largest group coming from the Conon Bridge/Maryburgh area. Pupils also attend from Alness/Invergordon, Contin/Strathpeffer, and Muir of Ord
- 9.3 There are currently 4 Gaelic Medium classes and a further 13 mainstream English Medium classes in the school.

Dingwall Academy

- 10.1 For the 2022-23 session, 29 pupils attending Dingwall Academy are studying Gàidhlig for fluent speakers. The anticipated roll of Dingwall Academy for August 2023 is 1,050 pupils.

Proposed School Catchments for GME

- 11.1 Approximate travel distances and times to Dingwall Primary from the other schools in the Dingwall and Alness ASGs are set out below:

Ben Wyvis Primary – Dingwall Primary – 4 miles, 10 minutes travel time.

Ferintosh Primary – Dingwall Primary – 8.3 miles, 14 minutes travel time.

Marybank Primary – Dingwall Primary – 7.6 miles, 14 minutes travel time.

Mulbuie Primary - Dingwall Primary – 6.2 miles, 12 minutes travel time.

Strathconon Primary - Dingwall Primary – 19.5 miles, 37 minutes travel time.

Strathgarve Primary - Dingwall Primary – 13.8 miles, 25 minutes travel time.

Strathpeffer Primary - Dingwall Primary – 5.1 miles, 11 minutes travel time.

Tarradale Primary - Dingwall Primary - 7.5 miles, 17 minutes travel time.

Ardross Primary - Dingwall Primary - 12.2 miles, 20 minutes travel time.

Bridgend Primary - Dingwall Primary - 10.3 miles, 19 minutes travel time.

Coulhill Primary - Dingwall Primary – 10.4 miles, 19 minutes travel time.

Kiltearn Primary - Dingwall Primary - 5.6 miles, 10 minutes travel time.

Obsdale Primary - Dingwall Primary - 11.6 miles, 19 minutes travel time.

- 11.2 Approximate travel distances and times to Dingwall Primary from the schools in the Fortrose ASGs are set out below:

Avoch Primary – Dingwall Primary – 14.5 miles, 25 minutes travel time.

Cromarty Primary – Dingwall Primary – 19.2 miles, 34 minutes travel time.

Culbokie Primary – Dingwall Primary – 6.2 miles, 12 minutes travel time.

Munlochy Primary - Dingwall Primary – 11 miles, 20 minutes travel time.

North Kessock Primary - Dingwall Primary – 12 miles, 20 minutes travel time.

Resolis Primary - Dingwall Primary – 10.6 miles, 17 minutes travel time.

Tore Primary – Dingwall Primary – 7.7 miles, 14 minutes

- 11.3 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.
- 11.4 The Council is sympathetic to the idea that Gàidhlig Medium Education should be accessible as many pupils Highland as possible, provided it is practical and reasonable to provide access.
- 11.5 In line with the above, The Council therefore proposes that the GM catchment for Dingwall Primary will overlay the English Medium catchments of all the schools in the Dingwall and Alness ASGs, but with restrictions on transport as set out below.
- 11.6 The Council also proposes that the GM catchment for Dingwall Primary should overlay the majority of schools within the Fortrose ASG. This is discussed in more detail in Section 16 below.
- 11.7 In considering the principles of Best Value – see paragraph 1.2 above - Highland Council has noted that to provide dedicated transport from the areas outwith Dingwall, but within the proposed GM catchment, could result in an unacceptably high level of additional cost to the taxpayer.
- 11.8 The Council therefore proposes that school transport to GME at Dingwall Primary will be on the basis of utilising the existing transport for Dingwall Academy, wherever it is practicable to do so. Dedicated transport by taxi or minibus will not normally be provided.
- 11.9 The proposed GM catchment for Dingwall Academy will be the same as the catchment for Dingwall Primary.

Current and Planned Provision of Gàidhlig Medium Education within the Five Inverness ASGs

- 12.1 There are 5 Associated School Groups within Inverness – Charleston, Culloden, Inverness High, Inverness Royal Academy, and Millburn.
- 12.2 Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis is a dedicated GM school which has offered GMPE to all primary school aged pupils within these 5 ASGs. At secondary school level, Inverness Royal Academy also offers GME, and are the only schools to do so within this group of ASGs

Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis

- 13.1 Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis is located within Inverness. At the time of writing, the school's anticipated roll for August 2023 was 214 pupils across P1-7, organised into 8 classes. There are currently 76 children in Sgoil-àraich (Gàidhlig Medium pre-school nursery).
- 13.2 A large majority of pupils attending the school have addresses within the City of Inverness, but a proportion attend from the City's rural hinterland, particularly the Nairnside/Croy area, as well as some from communities within Ross-shire, such as North Kessock, Muir of Ord, Munlochy and Strathpeffer.

Inverness Royal Academy

- 14.1 For the 2022-23 session, 123 pupils attending Inverness Royal Academy are studying Gàidhlig for fluent speakers. The anticipated roll of Inverness Royal Academy for August 2023 is 1,364 pupils.

Proposed School Catchments for GME

- 15.1 Most of the 33 schools are located within the City of Inverness. Of those that are not, approximate travel distances and times to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis are set out below:

Beaully Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 17.6 miles, 27 minutes travel time.

Dochgarroch Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 6.3 miles, 12 minutes travel time.

Kirkhill Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 11.8 miles, 22 minutes travel time.

Teanassie Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 17.2 miles, 30 minutes travel time.

Tomnacross Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 15.6 miles, 27 minutes travel time.

Daviot Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – miles, minutes travel time.

Strathdearn Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 16.2 miles, 22 minutes travel time.

Ardersier Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 12.3 miles, 22 minutes travel time.

Balloch Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 6.3 miles, 16 minutes travel time.

Croy Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis - miles, minutes travel time.

Aldourie Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 6.1 miles, 10 minutes travel time.

Farr Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis - 6 miles, 12 minutes travel time.

Foyers Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 18.2 miles, 33 minutes travel time.

Stratherrick Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis - 18.1 miles, 32 minutes travel time.

15.2 Approximate travel distances and times to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis from the schools in the Fortose ASGs are set out below:

Avoch Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 14.3 miles, 25 minutes travel time.

Cromarty Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 25.9 miles, 43 minutes travel time.

Culbokie Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis - 15.4 miles, 25 minutes travel time.

Munlochy Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 10.5 miles, 17 minutes travel time.

North Kessock Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 7.1 miles, 14 minutes travel time.

Resolis Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 20.9 miles, 33 minutes travel time.

Tore Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 10.7 miles, 17 minutes

15.3 In line with the criteria set out in Section 11 above, the Council proposes that the GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis will overlay the English Medium catchments of all the schools in the Charleston, Culloden, Inverness

High, Inverness Royal Academy and Millburn ASGs, but with restrictions on transport as set out below.

- 15.4 The Council also proposes that the GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis should overlay two of the schools within the Fortrose ASG. This is discussed in more detail in Section 16 below.
- 15.5 In considering the principles of Best Value – see paragraph 1.2 above - Highland Council has noted that to provide dedicated transport from the areas outwith Inverness, but within the proposed GM catchment, could result in an unacceptably high level of additional cost to the taxpayer.
- 15.6 The Council therefore proposes that school transport to GME at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis will be on the basis of utilising the existing transport for Inverness Ryal Academy or the Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis itself, wherever it is practicable to do so. Dedicated transport by taxi or minibus will not normally be provided.
- 15.7 The proposed GM catchment for Inverness Royal Academy will be the same as the catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis.

The Fortrose ASG

- 16.1 It can be seen from the descriptions of distances and travel times, that within the Fortrose ASG, the schools at Culbokie, Resolis and Cromarty are significantly closer to Dingwall Primary than they are to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. The Council therefore proposes to include these school catchments within the GM catchment for Dingwall Primary.
- 16.2 Conversely, the school at North Kessock is much closer to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. The Council therefore proposes to include this school catchments within the GM catchment of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis.
- 16.3 The schools at Avoch and Munlochy are almost equidistant between Dingwall Primary and Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, whilst the school at Tore is marginally closer to Dingwall.
- 16.4 Given the proximity of Tore and Munlochy, it seems to make sense to group the schools together. Furthermore, the two schools are currently managed by a single Head Teacher on a “cluster” basis. On balance, the Council proposes to include the two schools within the GM catchment of Dingwall Primary.
- 16.5 The decision on Avoch is finely balanced, but The Council proposes to include this school catchments within the GM catchment of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis.

- 16.6 Highland Council would welcome comments on the most appropriate zoning of the schools at Tore, Munlochy and Avoch for the purposes of GME.

Catchment Proposals

- 17.1 The map at **Appendix C** shows the proposed GM catchment for Dingwall Primary School with the existing EM catchments outlined in red.
- 17.2 The map at **Appendix D** shows the proposed GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, with the existing EM catchments outlined in red.
- 17.3 No changes are proposed for these catchments in respect of English Medium education.
- 17.4 For the purposes of GME, the Dingwall Academy catchment will be the same as the proposed GM catchment for Dingwall Primary School. This is to allow pupils who attended GME at Dingwall Primary to continue to access GME during their secondary school education.
- 17.5 Similarly, for the purposes of GME, the Inverness Royal Academy catchment will be the same as the proposed GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. This is to allow pupils who attended GME at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis to continue to access GME during their secondary school education.

Educational Benefits

- 18.1 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.
- 18.2 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.
- 18.3 It is acknowledged that bilingualism has educational benefits as it provides the user with a better sense of the structure of language, and bilingual children often find it easier to pick up other languages. The continued availability of Gaelic medium education in schools within the relevant ASGs, as evidenced by the new catchments, will provide children with the opportunity to develop these skills for life.

- 18.4 The creation of GM catchment areas will demonstrate the Council's commitment to the long-term future of Gaelic Medium education. Evidence of this commitment may help with the known problem with "drop-out" from GME.
- 18.5 The Education section of the Council's Gaelic Language Plan sets out the following aims:
- That the Highland Council increases the percentage of pupils in GME from potential enrolment figures at key transition points.
 - That the Highland Council increases the percentage of pupils undertaking Gaelic through the Primary Language Learning programme, based on the 1+2 Language Learning Approach and subsequently through secondary Gaelic Learner Education across The Highland Council area.
 - That the Highland Council creates a Gaelic education transitions strategy for retaining children in 0–3/childcare to nursery, nursery to primary, primary to secondary 1, and the Broad General Education to senior phase.
 - That the Highland Council develops a curriculum and workforce plan for the delivery of Gaelic education at all levels (0–3, nursery, primary and secondary) including clear signposting to www.teagasg.com and early years' recruitment via The Highland Council's website.
 - That the Highland Council undertakes a Highland-wide survey of existing Gaelic education staff to identify career-long professional learning needs, particularly in relation to Gaelic language skills, and develops a programme of training and support.
 - That the Highland Council ensures that Gaelic education is considered as part of the school estates capital development whenever possible.
- 18.6 The Proposal will raise the profile of Gaelic in the area and make it clear that the opportunity exists for children in the other primary school catchments to attend GME at Millbank Primary, Dingwall Primary and Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. It will therefore assist with our aim of increasing enrolments, and forms part of our Strategy of providing improved transitions that will help retain children within GME.

Effects on School Transport

- 19.1 Pupils attending GME are offered school transport on the same basis as children attending English Medium education. Paragraphs 7.6, 11.8, and 15.6 above provide more details of how the Council proposes to provide school transport in the case of the schools featured in this Proposal.
- 19.2 Currently, there are pupils accessing GME at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis and at Dingwall Primary, who receive transport but whose homes are outwith the newly defined catchments. Where pupils had enrolled in school prior to the creation of the GM catchments, and where they were already in receipt of school transport, the Council will continue to provide it. School transport will also be provided to any younger siblings of such pupils, provided their older siblings are still at the same school.

Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements

- 20.1 The Proposal is not expected to have any direct effect on staff and management arrangements.

Effect on the Local Communities

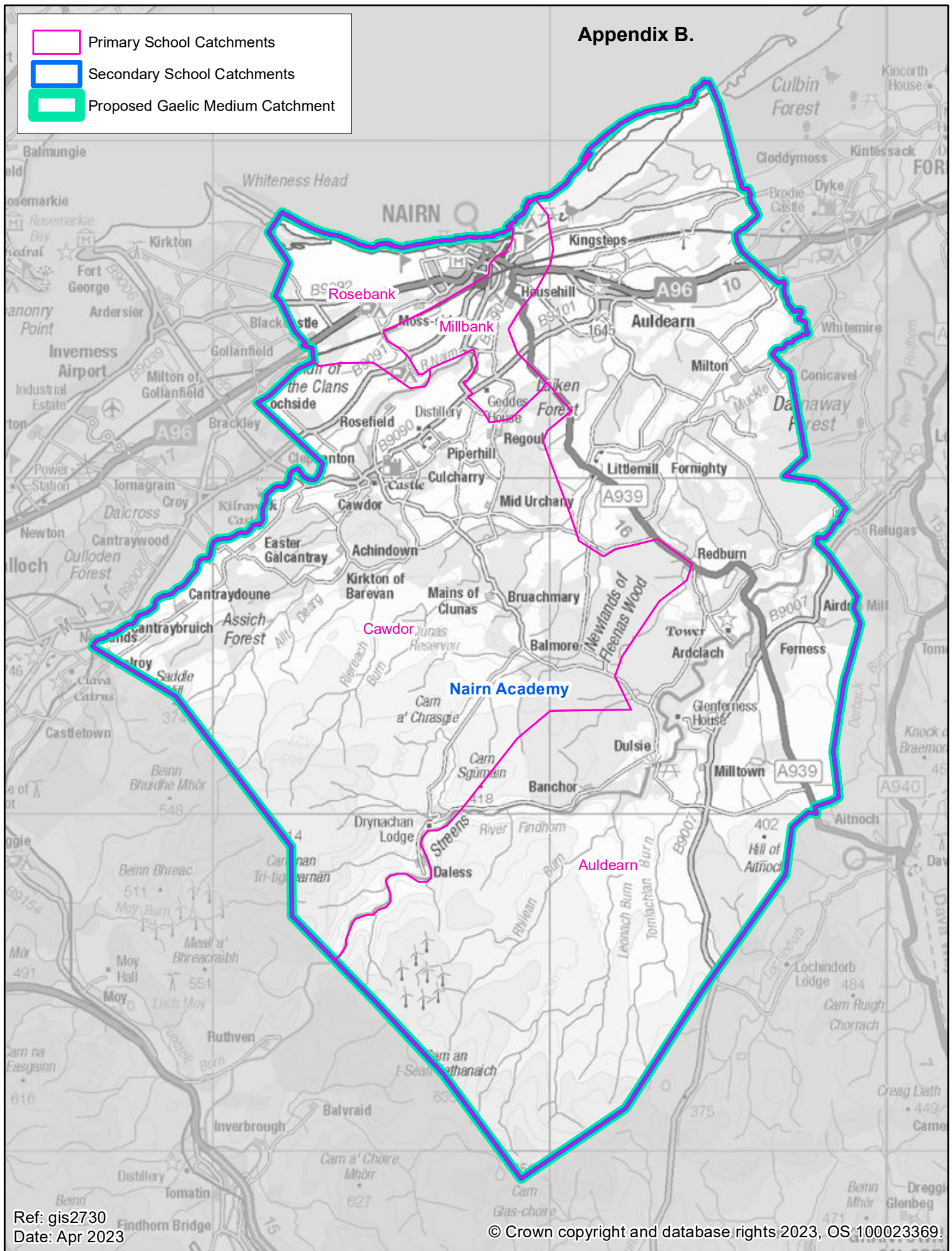
- 21.1 The proposal is not expected to have any impact on the wider local communities.

Recommendation

- 22.1 Highland Council recommends the adoption of Gàidhlig Medium catchment areas for Millbank Primary School, Nairn Academy, Dingwall Primary School, Dingwall Academy, Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, and Inverness Royal Academy, along the lines set out in this paper.
- 22.2 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 Education Committee of the Highland Council.

END OF PROPOSAL PAPER

- Primary School Catchments
- Secondary School Catchments
- Proposed Gaelic Medium Catchment



Ref: gis2730
Date: Apr 2023

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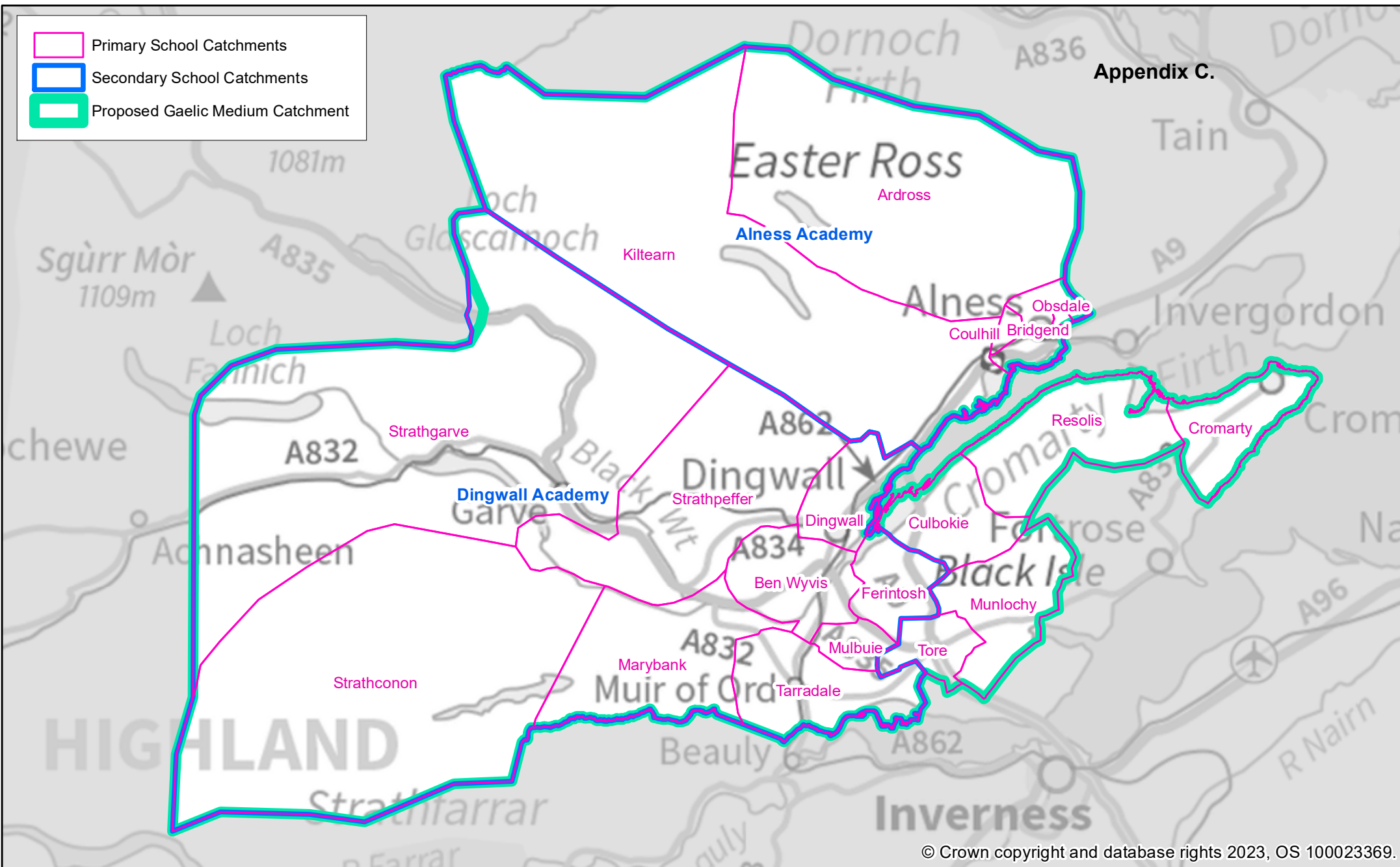
Proposed Gaelic Medium Catchments Millbank Primary School & Nairn Academy



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- Primary School Catchments
- Secondary School Catchments
- Proposed Gaelic Medium Catchment

Appendix C.



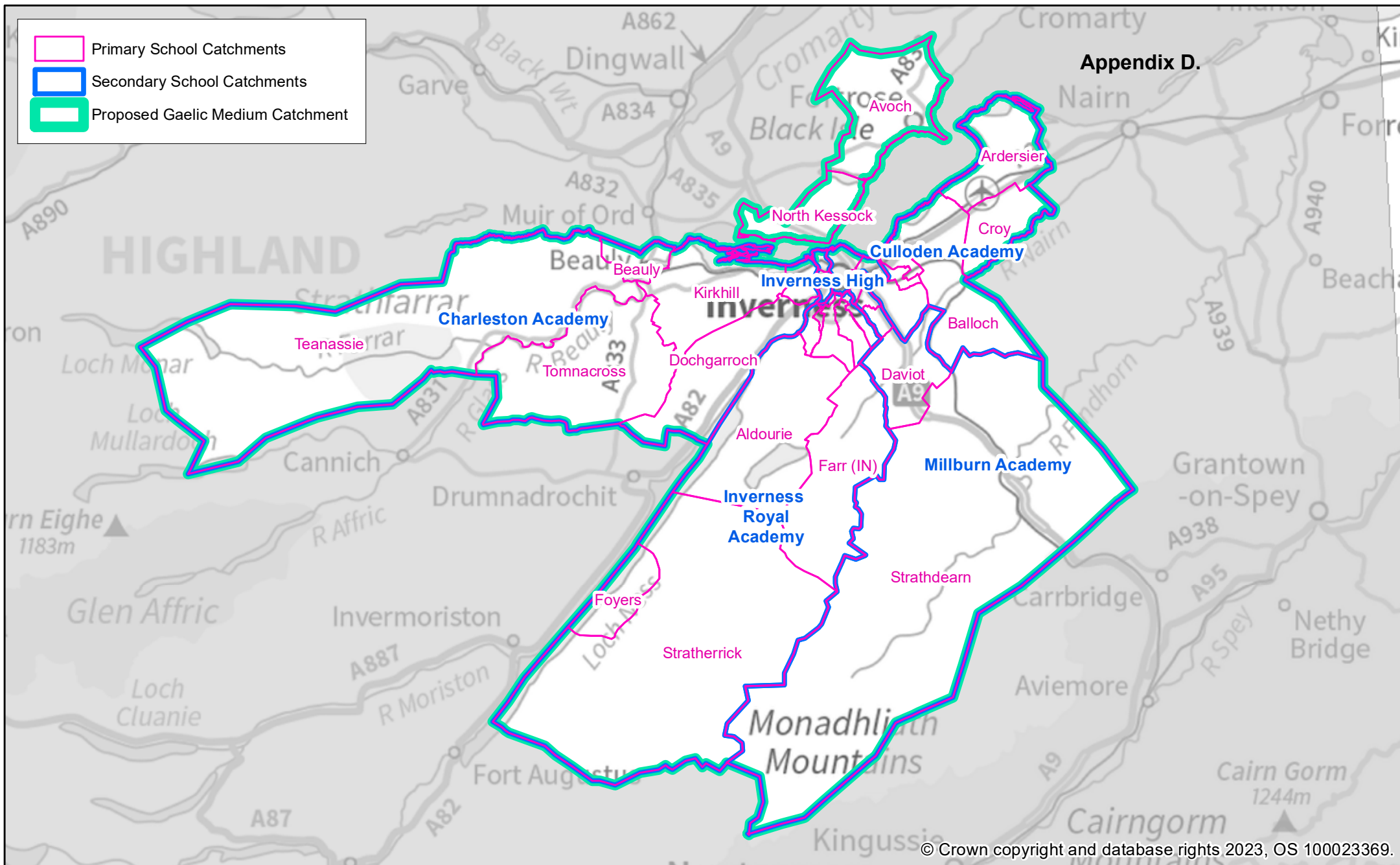
Proposed Gaelic Medium Catchments Dingwall Primary School & Dingwall Academy

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Date: Apr 2023

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- Primary School Catchments
- Secondary School Catchments
- Proposed Gaelic Medium Catchment



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Date: Apr 2023

Proposed Gaelic Medium Catchments

Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis & Inverness Royal Academy

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