

Agenda Item	7.
Report No	EDU/12/25

# The Highland Council

**Committee:** Education

**Date:** 4 June 2025

**Report Title:** Statutory Consultation: Closure of Kinlochewe Primary School - Final Report

**Report By:** Assistant Chief Executive - People

## 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 Following conclusion of the statutory consultation process, this report seeks Members' agreement to a recommendation to discontinue the provision of education at Kinlochewe Primary School, which has been "mothballed" since the summer of 2022.

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Agree to recommend that the Highland Council discontinues education at Kinlochewe Primary School, transferring its catchment to that of Gairloch Primary School. Kinlochewe Primary has not been operational since July 2022, and there is no evidence that the school would be viable in the future.

## 3. Implications

3.1 Resource - This is set out at **Appendix G** of the original proposal issued for consultation.

3.2 Legal - The proposed closure has been taken forward under the provisions of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 1980.

3.3 Risk - The main risks associated with the recommendation relate to the potential for call-in by Scottish Ministers. Officials have sought to mitigate the risk through review and evaluation to ensure that procedurally the requirements of the Act and statutory consultation process have been met.

3.4 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people) – None

3.5 Gaelic - The proposed closure would have no effect on Gaelic Medium Education (GME) which was not offered at Kinlochewe Primary School prior to the school being

mothballed. GME is offered at Gairloch Primary School. Pupils from the Kinlochewe Primary School catchment were able to opt for GME at Gairloch Primary School prior to Kinlochewe being mothballed.

#### 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 on 8 April 2024. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded that, as the school has been mothballed for almost 3 years, permanent closure will not alter the situation on the ground, and that there will thus be no significant impacts. Members are asked to consider the summary in **Appendix 1** to support the decision-making process.

#### 4.3.3 Impact Assessment Area Conclusion of Screening/Full Assessment

Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children and Young People – <i>No impact</i></li><li>• Children affected by disability – <i>No impact</i></li><li>• Older adults – <i>No impact</i></li></ul>
Socio-economic	<i>No impact</i>
Human Rights	<i>No impact</i>
Children's Rights and Well-being	<i>Positive impact</i>
Island and Mainland Rural	<i>No impact</i>
Climate Change	<i>No significant impact</i>
Data Rights	<i>No significant impact</i>

#### 5. Overview of Consultation Exercise

5.1 **Appendix 2** is the proposal for decision. The original proposal 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 There were 22 written responses from pupils of Gairloch Primary. The detailed comments from pupils can be viewed at **Appendix 4iii and Appendix 4v**.

- 5.3 HM Inspectors visited Gairloch Primary School and Shieldaig Primary School and had discussions with parents, staff, and children. They noted that children currently in the catchment area are happy and settled at alternative primary schools, with most opting for Gairloch Primary School, which has transport provided. Both Shieldaig and Gairloch Primary Schools are able to offer appropriate learning environments, with the opportunity for group learning and team activities.
- 5.4 There were 4 written responses received from other stakeholders. Two were from parents of current primary age children, another from a former pupil and former parent, and the other from Torrison and Kinlochewe Community Council. In general, three themes have emerged – i. Early Years provision, ii. Concerns around school transport, and iii. Questions around future school catchments. Copies of the written responses can be found at **Appendices 4i, 4ii, 4iv and 4vi**.
- 5.5 The public meeting was reasonably well-attended, given the small size of the local community. Broadly speaking, the discussion focused on the three themes set out in paragraph 5.4. The note of the meeting can be found at **Appendix 3**.
- 5.6 Following the completion of the formal consultation exercise, Council officials met with local pre-school parents (online) on 2 April to discuss options that might be possible locally. Suggestions made at the meeting included:

- The funding of a local childminder, to provide an early years' service in the community. It was acknowledged that the small number of children in the community was a potential barrier, and that accommodation would also likely be an issue. Whilst the local community hall has space, the room would require an extensive upgrade to gain registration with the Care Inspectorate.
- Failing the provision of a full-time childminder, the community would welcome some form of peripatetic service, even if for one day a week.
- The possibility of an outdoor "forest nursery" was mooted.
- In respect of transport, the Council should consider using the local community bus, with a transport escort to ensure suitable supervision.

The Council has agreed to work with the local community to investigate whether any of the above suggestions could be viable.

There has been no early years' service in Kinlochewe for a number of years, as the provision ceased operating even prior to the mothballing of the school itself in 2022. Nevertheless, the lack of Early Years is acknowledged as the main adverse effect of a permanent closure. This must be balanced against the evidence that a school in Kinlochewe is no longer viable.

## **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 8 May 2025. Any further representations that are received will be tabled at the meeting for the attention of Members.
- 6.2 Following consideration by the Committee, if the recommendation is agreed, the following timeline will be followed as required by the legislation.

- The recommendation of the Committee will be considered by the full Highland Council.
- If ratified by full Council, the Council must, within 6 working days of the Council decision, advise Scottish Ministers of the decision it has reached, provide them with the proposal paper and consultation report, and publish a notice stating that Ministers have been advised and the process through which representations may be made to Ministers regarding call-in of the proposal.
- From the date of the Council decision, there is a period of 3 weeks in which representations to Scottish Ministers regarding call-in of the proposal can be made by any interested party.
- Scottish Ministers then have a further up to 5 weeks in which to decide whether they will issue a call-in notice.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - People

Date: 2 May 2025

Author: Ian Jackson

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Integrated Impact Assessment
- Appendix 2 - Review of Consultation Report
- Appendix 3 - Note of Public Meeting
- Appendix 4 - List of Respondents to Consultation
- Appendix 4i-4xvi - Copies of individual responses
- Appendix 5 - Education Scotland Report
- Appendix A - Original Proposal Paper
- Appendix B - School Roll Forecasts Gairloch ASG
- Appendix C - SRF Methodology
- Appendix D - Kinlochewe Primary Existing Catchment
- Appendix E - Kinlochewe Catchment merged with Gairloch Primary
- Appendix F - Kinlochewe Catchment merged with Shieldaig Primary
- Appendix G - Financial Analysis

# Integrated Impact Assessment Screening

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## About proposal

**What does this proposal relate to?** Redesign or change to existing service

**Proposal name:** Review of Statutory Consultation on the Proposed Closure of Kinlochewe Primary School

**High level summary of the proposal:** Review of the statutory consultation proposing the permanent closure of Kinlochewe PS, which is currently temporarily closed (known as "mothballed"). Recommendation for decision.

**Who may be affected by the proposal?** Parents and children living in the school's catchment area.

**Start date of proposal:**

**End date of proposal:**

**Does this proposal result in a change or impact to one or more Council service?** Yes

**Which Council services will be impacted by this proposal?** People

**Does this relate to an existing proposal?** Yes

**Provide details of the existing proposal:** Statutory Consultation on the Proposed Closure of Kinlochewe Primary School, approved by the Education Committee on 21 November 2024.

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## Author details

**Name:** Ian Jackson

**Job title:** Education Officer

**Email address:** ian.jackson@highland.gov.uk

**Service:** People

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## Responsible officer details

**Name:** Annika Jansson

**Job title:** interim Chief Officer

**Email address:** annika.jansson@highland.gov.uk

**Sign off date:** 2025-04-09

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# Equalities, poverty, and human rights

## Protected characteristics

Select what impact the proposal will have on the following protected characteristics:

**Sex:** No impact

**Age:** No impact

**Disability:** No impact

**Religion or belief:** No impact

**Race:** No impact

**Sexual orientation:** No impact

**Gender reassignment:** No impact

**Pregnancy and maternity:** No impact

**Marriage and civil partnership:** No impact

**Protected characteristics impact details:** The proposal is to formalise the closure of a school that is already mothballed. Age is not a protected characteristic in relation to school provision.

## Poverty and socio-economic

What impact is the proposal likely to have on the following?

**Prospects and opportunities:** No impact

**Places:** No impact

**Financial:** No impact

**Poverty and socio-economic impact details:** Since the school is already subject to a temporary closure, there will not be any impact on the existing provision.

## Human rights

**Which of the below human rights will be affected by this proposal?**No human rights will be affected

**What impact do you consider this proposal to have on the human rights of people?**No impact

**Human rights impact details:** The proposal will confirm the existing situation on the ground and thus will not affect human rights.

## Equalities, poverty and human rights screening assessment

**What impact do you think there will be to equalities, poverty and human rights?** No impact

**Is a Full Impact Assessment required?** No

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## Children's rights and wellbeing

**What likely impact will the proposal have on children and young people?** As the school is already mothballed, there will be no effect on current educational arrangements for local children. The consultation exercise has identified local concern about the lack of early years education and childcare for parents in Kinlochewe, which the Council will work to address. However the proposal does not change the practical situation on the ground.

**Which of the below children's rights will be affected by the proposal?** You are working in the best interests of the child (Article 3)

**Explain how the children's rights selected above will be affected:** The numbers of children in the Kinlochewe PS catchment are such that the school is no longer viable, and there would be educational benefits to children attending an alternative school where there are larger numbers of children.

## Children's rights and wellbeing screening assessment

**What impact do you think there will be to children's rights and wellbeing?** Positive impact

**Is a Full Impact Assessment required?** No

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## Data protection

**Will your proposal involve processing personal data?** Yes

**Is any of this data already processed by the Highland Council?** Yes

**What is the purpose of the personal data being processed?** Parents and residents were invited to submit views in response to the consultation document. Responses will be published on the HC website together with the respondent's name and address (though not personal email addresses or phone numbers, or signatures). All respondents were offered to opportunity to request that their response is not published.

**Is there an up-to-date privacy notice available on the Highland Council website?** Yes

## Data protection screening assessment

**What change will there be to the way personal data is processed?** No significant change to current processing

**Is a Full Impact Assessment required?** No

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## Island and mainland rural communities

**Does your proposal impact island and mainland rural communities?** Yes

**Could people in island and mainland rural communities be affected differently?** No

**Have any negative impacts been identified?** Yes

**Provide details of negative impacts, mitigating actions and the service that is responsible for them:** If implemented, the proposal would mean that, in the future, children in the Kinlochewe area would have further to travel to school than would be the case if Kinlochewe PS re-opened. The Council provides free school transport for children in the P1-7 age group. Transport is not provided for pre-school children, and the Early Years Team will discuss alternative arrangements for such children.

## Island and mainland rural communities screening assessment

**What impact do you think there will be to island and mainland rural communities?** Minor differences

**Is a Full Impact Assessment required?** No

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## Climate change

**Does the proposal involve activities that could impact on greenhouse gas emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>e)?** Yes

**Does the proposal have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?** No

**Does the proposal have the potential to influence resilience to extreme weather or changing climate?** No

**Provide information regarding your selection above:** If implemented, the proposal would mean that, in the future, children in the Kinlochewe area would have further to travel to school than would be the case if Kinlochewe PS re-opened. The Council provides free school transport for children in the P1-7 age group, and it is likely that this will be by utilising existing transport travelling to Gairloch High School. It is possible in the future that some additional transport will be required, over and above the transport already provided, but the effects on CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions will be negligible.

## Climate change screening assessment

**Have you identified potential impact for any of the areas above or marked any as not known?** No

**Is a Full Impact Assessment required?** No





## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

### EDUCATION AND LEARNING SERVICE

#### REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AT KINLOCHEWE PRIMARY SCHOOL, RE-ASSIGNING ITS CATCHMENT AREA TO THAT OF GAIRLOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

This report has been prepared following a review of the proposal:

- To discontinue education provision at Kinlochewe Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Gairloch Primary School.

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period.
- Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting held at Kinlochewe Village Hall on 28 January 2025.
- The report from Education Scotland.

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

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<b>Appendix 3</b>	List of written submissions
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<b>Appendix A</b>	The proposal document and appendices
<b>Appendix B</b>	School roll forecasts for the Gairloch Associated School Group
<b>Appendix C</b>	School Roll Forecasting Methodology
<b>Appendix D</b>	Existing Kinlochewe PS catchment
<b>Appendix E</b>	Kinlochewe PS catchment merged with Gairloch PS
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<b>Appendix G</b>	Financial Analysis

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 Highland Council's Education Committee, at its meeting on 21 November 2024, agreed that a statutory consultation be undertaken on the proposal to discontinue the provision of education at Kinlochewe Primary School, re-assigning its catchment to that of Gairloch Primary School.
- 1.2 **Appendix A** is the original consultative paper and provides full details of the above proposal. **Appendices B - G** are the appendices to the original proposal.

- 1.3 Kinlochewe Primary School has been mothballed since the summer of 2022, when the remaining pupils transferred to either Gairloch Primary School or Shieldaig Primary School.
- 1.4 Having once again reviewed the status of Kinlochewe Primary, it is the Council's view that there is an insufficient number of children of suitable age in the Kinlochewe catchment who wish to attend Kinlochewe Primary School, and that consequently the school is no longer viable. Further details on this are provided in Sections 6 and 10 below.
- 1.5 Kinlochewe Primary School is designated as a rural school under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. In that context, the Council has had special regard to:
- any viable alternative to the closure proposal; alternatives were considered at Sections 6-10 of the Proposal Paper (**Appendix A**) and have been reconsidered in the light of responses received to consultation – see Sections 5-10 below.
  - the likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal (if implemented), with reference to (a) the sustainability of the community, (b) the availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community. The effect on the local community was considered at Section 15 of the Proposal Paper (**Appendix A**) and is further considered at Sections 6, 8 and 10 below, in the light of representations received during consultation.
  - the likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the proposal (if implemented) with reference in particular to;
  - the effect caused by such travelling arrangements including (in particular), (i) that on the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities, (ii) any environmental impact. The effects on school transport were considered at Section 13 of the Proposal Paper, (**Appendix A**) and reconsidered in the light of responses received to consultation – see Sections 6 and 10 below.

## 2.0 Consultation process

- 2.1 The formal consultation period ran from Monday 13 January 2025 to Friday 28 February 2025. Written representations on the proposal were sought from interested parties as defined within the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.
- 2.2 In accordance with statutory requirements, the following were consulted:
- (i) Parents/carers of pupils attending Gairloch Primary School; including parents/carers of pre-school pupils.
  - (ii) Parents/carers of pupils attending Shieldaig Primary School; including parents/carers of pre-school pupils.
  - (iii) The Parent Council of Gairloch Primary School.
  - (iv) The Parent Council of Shieldaig Primary School.
  - (v) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.
  - (vi) Staff of Gairloch Primary School.

- (vii) Staff of Shieldaig Primary School.
- (viii) Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council.
- (ix) Gairloch Community Council.
- (x) Shieldaig Community Council.
- (xi) Garve and District Community Council.
- (xii) Trade Union representatives.

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

2.4 A public meeting was held at Kinlochewe Community Hall on 28 January 2025. The meeting was advertised in advance on the Highland Council website, "X" Account and Facebook page, and in the *Ross-shire Journal*. The minute of the meeting is at **Appendix 2**.

### **3.0 Review of proposals following the consultation period**

3.1 Following receipt of written representations received by Highland Council and consideration of oral representations made at the public meeting, officials reviewed the proposals.

3.2 The feedback from the consultation was considered by a range of Council officials. This ensured that the Council met the requirements of the 2010 Act.

3.3 The outcome of this review process is reflected in the response, conclusion and recommendations outlined below.

### **4.0 Responses**

4.1 A list of those who responded in writing during the public consultation is at **Appendix 3**. There were 4 written responses (not including the pupil questionnaires). Copies of the responses can be found at Appendices 3i-3xiv.

4.2 The views of pupils of a suitable age at Gairloch and Shieldaig Primary Schools (which included the pupils living within the Kinlochewe catchment area) were sought by means of an age adapted questionnaire. Appendix 3iii summarises the views of the children at Gairloch Primary, whilst Appendix 3v contains the view of the sole pupil from Kinlochewe attending Shieldaig Primary.

### **5.0 Overview of Issues raised during the consultation period**

5.1 There were 22 written responses from pupils of Gairloch Primary. The detailed comments from pupils can be viewed at Appendix 3iii and Appendix 3v.

5.2 HM Inspectors visited Gairloch Primary School and Shieldaig Primary School and had discussions with parents, staff and children. They noted that children currently in the catchment area are happy and settled at alternative primary schools, with most opting for Gairloch Primary School, which has transport provided. Both Shieldaig and Gairloch Primary Schools are able to offer appropriate learning environments, with the opportunity for group learning and team activities.

- 5.3 The arguments advanced by the pupils in favour of re-opening the school, are set out at Issues 1-3 below, together with arguments put forward in support of closure.
- 5.4 There were 4 written responses received from other stakeholders. Two were from parents of current primary age children, another from a former pupil and former parent, and the other from Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council. In general, three themes have emerged – i. Early Years provision, ii. Concerns around school transport, and iii. Questions around future school catchments.
- 5.5 The public meeting was reasonably well-attended, given the small size of the local community. Broadly speaking, the discussion focused on the three themes set out in paragraph 5.4.
- 5.6 The main arguments put forward are summarised below, together with the responses from the Council. Where different responses raise similar issues, these have been “grouped” for the purposes of the response.

## 6.0 Responses to the Issues raised in Public Consultation

- 6.1 Arguments advanced by the children in favour of re-opening are set out at Issues 1-3 below and addressed at Responses 1-3.

### Issue 1

- I think they should reopen Kinlochewe Primary because it will save petrol.
- I think it's a good idea because people who go to Gairloch have to get the bus and their parents have to pay the bus so they go to school so I think it's easier not to pay.
- Because it would be extra work if you change what the building is used for and everyone really enjoyed going there for school and nursery. I really hope you can do that.

### Response 1

Parents don't have to pay fares for the bus taking children to Gairloch High School, and the bus has to go to the High School anyway.

If the school closes the Council might transfer the building to the local community or sell it to someone else. Whoever takes over the building would need to do work on changing it, but at the moment it's just an empty school building, not doing anyone any good. It could become something much more useful for the village.

### Issue 2

I wish all the kids in Kinlochewe would just go to Kinlochewe School, that would be much better.

**Response 2**

The Council understands what is being said here. We agree with it. However, Kinlochewe School was mothballed because most of the parents in the area (and there were not that many) had sent their children to other schools.

**Issue 3**

I really like the playground and the school and want people to look after the building too. It would save money to have the school in Kinlochewe, from the transport.

**Response 3**

The primary school age children from Kinlochewe are travelling to Gairloch on the bus that takes pupils to Gairloch High School which the Council pays for anyway, so any additional transport costs are small. In any case the Council saves money by not employing staff at Kinlochewe Primary.

If the school closes, the Council will listen to any proposals for use of the building and grounds by the community.

- 6.2 Arguments advanced by the children in favour of continuing to mothball Kinlochewe Primary School are set out at Issue 4 below and addressed at Response 4.

**Issue 4**

I think we should think about it more because Kinlochewe School could turn into another thing like a creative thing or a Sunday School and Kinlochewe kids could come to Gairloch Primary.

**Response 4**

The Council has been thinking about the future of the school for almost 3 years now, so we think it is time to decide.

- 6.3 Arguments advanced by the children in favour of closing Kinlochewe Primary School are set out at Issue 5 below, and addressed at Response 5.

**Issue 5**

- So the children from Kinlochewe can still be with their friends.
- \*I enjoy Gairloch Primary and I don't want to leave. Kinlochewe Primary had way less people.
- I prefer to go to Gairloch because some people want to stay at Gairloch and like playing with their friends.

- I think that if people from Kinlochewe come to Gairloch Primary it would give people an opportunity to meet new people, especially for people going to the High School because they can meet more people who they are going to High School with.
- Because all the teachers are really good in Gairloch.
- Because there is no point in opening another school of like 5 people.
- \*Because I'm good friends with them.
- I think that if Kinlochewe Primary opens it might not have many people.
- So there is more people to play.
- So there is more people.

#### **Response 5**

The Council agrees with these comments. It's great for us to see that so many of the children enjoy being at Gairloch Primary.

- 6.4 The arguments advanced in written responses are set out at Issues 6-12 below and addressed at Responses 6-12. Where different responses raise similar concerns, these have, to an extent, been combined as a single issue.

#### **Issue 6**

I have read the proposal for Kinlochewe Primary School and am writing to you as a former student of Kinlochewe Primary and former resident of Kinlochewe village, with a child who also attended Kinlochewe Pre-School before it closed. This news is extremely disheartening. I understand the reasoning, essentially to save money really. Particularly as the school needs some maintenance. But there are currently at least 8 families with young children in Kinlochewe itself, of which around 7 are primary school age and 6 are pre-school age or younger. This is more children than Poolewe Primary currently has. We also saw Shieldaig Primary go from around 7 kids to almost 27 in the last few years, which shows how quickly things can change. Currently, there is also currently enough teachers in the ASG to cover Kinlochewe Primary re-opening. I think you should re-consider closing Kinlochewe Primary School, it would be a huge loss to the future of the community.

#### **Response 6**

Although there are a number of families with pre-school or primary age children in the area, Kinlochewe Primary was originally mothballed because the majority of parents had placed their children in other schools, via placing requests.

The consultation exercise has not identified any significant demand amongst parents for a re-opening of Kinlochewe Primary. On the contrary, there seems to be a general acceptance that the school is no longer viable.

There is no clear evidence to support the suggestion that the closure of a village school leads to a decline in local population. The Scottish Government's Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, which reported in 2014, noted that the existence of a school is not always a pre-requisite for a community to exist or thrive, and that there is a lack of robust evidence on how pre-school, childcare and school proximity (and freedom from threat of closure) links to the sustainability of communities. As noted above, Kinlochewe Primary was first mothballed precisely because of a decline in the number of children attending, despite the presence of a local school.

School enrolments in Highland are in decline generally. Since 2018 the annual total number of primary school children in Highland has been:

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
17349	17301	16835	16714	16572	16187	15895

As can be seen, the number has dropped each year, and this pattern is expected to continue for the next few years at least. Sadly, this has inevitable repercussions for our primary schools.

### **Issue 7**

I would suggest that as Achnasheen is nearer to Strathgarve Primary than Gairloch Primary, then the catchment area should be split in two with Achnasheen going to Strathgarve and Kinlochewe going to Gairloch. This would mean no school transport has to try and get up and down Glen Docharty safely in the winter months and children in Achnasheen will have less travel to/from school.

### **Response 7**

The above argument is not unreasonable, but it will not be possible for the Council to make such a change as a result of the current consultation, as we have not consulted on the specific proposal to change the catchment in this way. The legislation that prescribes the consultation process for school closure proposals also sets out the process to be followed for changes to school catchment areas. The process includes consulting with pupils, parents and staff within "any school affected by the proposal."

Currently, Achnasheen lies within the primary school catchment for Kinlochewe Primary School, and therefore the secondary school catchment for Gairloch High School. Moving Achnasheen into the Strathgarve Primary School catchment would move it into the secondary catchment for Dingwall Academy. We have not consulted the parents of either Gairloch High or Dingwall Academy about such a proposal.



In light of this representation, the Council will consider whether to undertake a consultation on the change, but this could only take place following the completion of the current exercise on the future of Kinlochewe Primary.

### **Issue 8**

Highland Council should investigate the possibility of permitting parents to choose whether to send their parents to Shieldaig Primary School or Gairloch Primary School, with the introduction of a shared catchment. This is also relevant to pre-school education.

There are still several primary aged and younger children in the village, and families that may go on to have children. We feel that consideration needs to be given to the alternative provision that is given to those children. Many children whose parents chose to put them to Gairloch did so because that was the only option with transport. If they had been given the option of Shieldaig with transport they may have chosen differently. We chose Shieldaig for many reasons including the fact that it was our cluster school, and has more of the small community school feel that we moved here for. We would suggest catchment zoning to Shieldaig to future-proof its numbers, or parents to have the choice as travel time is more or less the same to either.

### **Response 8**

The Highland Council's system of school catchments is for the management of school enrolment, that is, P1 ages and above. Catchment areas do not apply to pre-school education and childcare, where flexibility is a key principle.

For the purposes of school enrolment, the Council generally follows a policy of allocating every address in Highland to a school designated for that address. At entry to P1, and to S1, children are automatically enrolled in their designated school, although parents may submit a placing request for their children to attend an alternative school. There are a small number of exceptions to this principle, all of them resulting from Committee decisions on school closures in the 1980s and 1990s, taken by the former Highland Regional Council.

Education authorities are required by law to secure "adequate and efficient provision of school education" and our catchment-based school enrolment system is one of the means by which we give effect to that. Highland Council spends a significant sum annually on school transport, a reflection of our relatively sparse and scatted population. A system in which parents had a choice of transport to more than one school would require a considerable increase to our expenditure on school transport, with an inevitable knock-on effect to expenditure in other areas of the Council's budget.

The Council does recognise that there is little difference in the distance and travel time between Kinlochewe and Gairloch on the one hand and Kinlochewe and Shieldaig on the other. On balance however, the Council does not feel it can justify allowing a choice of transport to either school. The decisions taken along these lines during the last century have had a long-term effect on the Council, and are, understandably, perceived as unfair by parents to whom such a choice is not extended.

### **Issue 9**

TKCC reiterates the concerns of local parents regarding school transport and the current unsatisfactory situation of four-year-olds having to share transport with secondary school pupils. A separate arrangement for primary age pupils should be investigated whether they are travelling to and from Shieldaig or Gairloch

### **Response 9**

It is common practice in Highland for primary school age pupils to share school transport with secondary age children. There is no reason to treat pupils travelling to Gairloch any differently from pupils elsewhere in Highland.

The Council can look at a variety of measures to mitigate any concerns about the sharing of transport. This might include introducing a buddying system, or possibly reserving seats at the front of the bus for primary age children. On some occasions we would look at whether it is appropriate for a very young child to travel with secondary age pupils.

### **Issue 10**

No pre-school provision is available for Kinlochewe children without travelling to either Gairloch or Shieldaig. Therefore, if there was a proven need to re-open Kinlochewe Primary, it would be key to also provide pre-school education within Kinlochewe.

We are concerned about the challenges of accessing nursery and the impact this will have on families living in our village. Whether it was Shieldaig or Gairloch nursery parents would need to do two hours of driving a day to drop their child off. This is prohibitive to those who don't have a car or cannot afford the time or expense. This disproportionately discriminates against lower income families, which in turn has obvious implications for our community. The significant transport burden becomes a factor in parents' decisions on whether to take the advantage year at nursery or not. Parents should not be put in a position where they have to put their transport costs ahead of their child's developmental readiness for school.

We would suggest dedicated primary/nursery transport with adequate supervision. If that is not possible then a peripatetic play worker to run toddler/nursery sessions in the village.

### **Response 10**

The current Proposal is to close the school and the pre-school nursery. The Council does not think it realistic to maintain a pre-school nursery if the school itself closes, not least because of the issues that would arise with the management of such a facility. There has also been no early years' service in Kinlochewe for a number of years, as the provision ceased operating even prior to the mothballing of the school itself in 2022.

We do recognise, however, that the closure of the school and nursery would mean that parents of pre-school children have long journey times to access the nearest school nurseries, and that the Highland Council does not provide transport for pre-school children.

Council officials met with local pre-school parents (online) on 2 April to discuss options that might be possible locally. Suggestions made at the meeting included:

- The funding of a local childminder, to provide an early years' service in the community. It was acknowledged that the small number of children in the community was a potential barrier, and that accommodation would also likely be an issue. Whilst the local community hall has space, the room would require an extensive upgrade to gain registration with the Care Inspectorate.
- Failing the provision of a full-time childminder, the community would welcome some form of peripatetic service, even if for one day a week.
- The possibility of an outdoor "forest nursery" was mooted.
- In respect of transport, the Council should consider using the local community bus, with a transport escort to ensure suitable supervision.

The Council has agreed to work with the local community to investigate whether any of the above suggestions could be viable.

The lack of Early Years is acknowledged as the main adverse effect of a permanent closure. This must be balanced against the evidence that a school in Kinlochewe is no longer viable.

### **Issue 11**

Where are the School Fund monies from Kinlochewe held? These monies had been fund raised by Kinlochewe Primary and it is only right that HC returns them so that they can be shared between Shieldaig and Gairloch Primary Schools.

### **Response 11**

The School Fund is retained at present as Kinlochewe Primary might still re-open, unless and until the current closure proposal is implemented. If the school is closed the School Fund will be split between Gairloch Primary and Shieldaig Primary, probably in proportion to the number of Kinlochewe pupils attending.

#### **Issue 12**

There is a general concern that there is no accommodation for key education workers in this area, e.g. for pre-school, primary and secondary school teaching staff. This is a matter which needs addressed to maintain an adequate complement of education staff within our local schools.

#### **Response 12**

The availability of accommodation for schools-based staff is not one of the factors that has led to the lack of demand for places at the school.

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

- 7.1 In line with legislative requirements, Education Scotland was invited to submit comments on the Council's proposals. A copy of the report from Education Scotland is appended – **Appendix 5**.
- 7.2 In their report, Education Scotland HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits outlined by The Highland Council in their proposal to permanently close Kinlochewe Primary School. Children currently in the catchment area are happy and settled at alternative primary schools, with most opting for Gairloch Primary School, which has transport provided. Both Shieldaig and Gairloch Primary Schools are able to offer appropriate learning environments, with the opportunity for group learning and team activities. Since it was mothballed, the existing Kinlochewe Primary School building has begun to deteriorate and may require investment to bring it into use.
- 7.3 Inspectors noted that stakeholders were concerned at the loss of pre-school provision in Kinlochewe; that families may not be able to access the provision at Shieldaig and Gairloch due to the distance and time involved and a lack of transport; local people in the village do not want to lose the only playground; and stakeholders would like the Council to consider giving parents the choice of both Shieldaig and Gairloch Primary Schools instead of making the catchment area Gairloch Primary School only. Education Scotland recommended that, if the proposal is agreed, the Council should engage further with the local community to address the issues they have raised.

### **8.0 Effects on the Community**

- 8.1 Paragraphs 13.1 - 13.3 of the Proposal Paper set out the Council's assessment of the effects of closure on the local community and advises that Highland

Council would be keen to work with the local community to see whether the current school building and site could be turned over to community use.

- 8.2 The consultation exercise identified concerns about the effect of the school closure on the future health of the community. The issues raised are addressed at Response 6 above.
- 8.3 Response 6 highlights that there is no clear evidence to support the suggestion that the closure of a village school leads to a decline in local population. The Scottish Government's Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, which reported in 2014, noted that the existence of a school is not always a pre-requisite for a community to exist or thrive, and that there is a lack of robust evidence on how pre-school, childcare and school proximity (and freedom from threat of closure) links to the sustainability of communities.

## **9.0 Alleged omissions or inaccuracies**

- 9.1 There were no alleged omissions or inaccuracies.

## **10.0 Further Review of Alternatives to Closure**

10.1 Throughout the consultation the Council has had special regard to the provision for rural schools within Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. In particular, the Council has had special regard to the following:

- any viable alternative to the closure proposal;

Sections 6-10 of the Proposal Paper identified and discussed the following alternatives to closure:

- i. To continue with the current "mothballing" arrangement.
- ii. To re-open Kinlochewe Primary School with its current catchment area.
- iii. To re-open Kinlochewe Primary School with an expanded catchment area.
- iv. To re-open Kinlochewe Primary School as a school offering Gaelic Medium education.

- 10.2 Sections 7 and 8 of the Proposal Paper set out the Council's consideration as to why Options i and ii above would not be viable options for Kinlochewe Primary School. No additional suggestions were made during consultation.
- 10.3 Similarly, in respect of option (iii) in paragraph 10.1 above, Section 9 of the original Proposal Paper set out the reasons why an expanded catchment area would not be a viable option for Kinlochewe Primary School. Again, no suggestion to this effect was made during consultation.
- 10.4 It was suggested in consultation that, in the event Kinlochewe Primary were closed, that a joint catchment should be created for the Kinlochewe area, allowing a choice between Shildaig Primary School and Gairloch Primary School. Another respondent suggested the community of Achnasheen should

be re-zoned to the Strathgarve Primary School catchment rather than the Gairloch Primary catchment.

- 10.5 The above suggestions are not “alternatives to closure”. Rather they are suggestions for alternative courses of action if the school does close. The issues are discussed at Responses 7 and 8 above.
- 10.6 Response 7 above explains why the Council cannot implement the suggested change for Achnasheen, as a result of the current consultation. It does however leave open the possibility of a new consultation to effect the change requested.
- 10.7 Response 8 sets out the Council’s view on the suggestion of a joint catchment.
- 10.8 Section 10 of the original Proposal Paper set out the reasons why re-opening Kinlochewe Primary School as a school offering Gaelic Medium education would not be a realistic option. No suggestion to this effect was made during consultation.
- 10.9 Having reconsidered each of the alternatives identified at Sections 6-10 of the Proposal Paper, the Highland Council has concluded that the alternatives to closure would not deliver the educational benefits of the proposal.
- 10.10 No further alternative approaches were suggested during the consultation exercise.
- 10.11 The Council has also reconsidered the likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal (if implemented), with reference in particular to; (a) the sustainability of the community, (b) the availability of the school’s premises and its other facilities for use by the community;

The potential community impact of the proposal was considered at Section 13 of the Proposal Paper and is further considered at Section 8 above.

- 10.12 The Council has further reconsidered the likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the proposal (if implemented) with reference in particular to (a) the effect caused by such travelling arrangements including (in particular), (i) that on the school’s pupils and staff and any other users of the school’s facilities, (ii) any environmental impact, (b) the travelling arrangements are those to and from the school of (and for) the school’s pupils and staff and any other users of the school’s facilities.
- 10.13 The impact of the proposal on travel time was considered at Section 13 of the original proposal paper. As Kinlochewe Primary School has been mothballed since the summer of 2022, implementation of the proposal would not require the introduction of any different travelling arrangements for pupils or staff. It is accepted that the travel times from Kinlochewe to Gairloch are long for primary school children. However, this must be balanced against the reality of the simple lack of demand for a school at Kinlochewe that has now been evident for almost 3 years.

## **11.0 Procedure for Call-in by the Scottish Ministers**

- 11.1 As set out in The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Highland Council is required to notify the Scottish Ministers of its decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Paper and Consultation Report. The Scottish Ministers have an eight-week period from the date of that final decision on 26 June 2025 to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Within the first three weeks of that eight-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Therefore, anyone who wishes to make representations to the Scottish Ministers can do so up until midnight on **16 July 2025**. The Scottish Ministers will have until midnight on 20 August 2025 to take a decision on the call-in of the Closure Proposal.
- 11.2 Anyone wishing to make a representation to the Scottish Ministers requesting them to call-in the decision to close Kinlochewe Primary School is asked to email [schoolclosure@gov.scot](mailto:schoolclosure@gov.scot) or to write to **School Infrastructure Unit, Learning Directorate, The Scottish Government, Area 2A South, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ by midnight on 16 July 2025**.
- 11.3 Until the outcome of the eight-week call-in process has been notified to Highland Council, it will not proceed to implement the Proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal, it will be referred to a School Closure Review Panel.

## **12.0 Legal issues**

- 12.1 Throughout this statutory consultation Highland Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.
- 12.2 As provided for in section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, it is the duty of the Council to ensure adequate and efficient provision of school education within Highland, such education to be directed towards the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of children or young persons to their fullest potential (Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000). As with all Council duties, the Council also has a duty to make arrangements to secure best value, and in securing best value the Council is required to maintain an appropriate balance between, inter alia, the quality of its performance of its functions and the cost to the authority of that performance (Local Government in Scotland Act 2002, section 1). Each of the above, and all other legislative requirements, have been taken into account in the preparation of this Report.

## **13.0 Financial Implications**

- 13.1 Advice on the financial implications of the proposal was issued as Appendix D to the Proposal Paper.

## **14.0 Integrated Impact Assessment**

- 14.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been prepared, covering Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Socioeconomic Effects, Climate Change, Data Protection, and a Mainland Rural Area Assessment.
- 14.2 As the school is already mothballed, the Impact Assessment did not identify any significant issues relating to the above. The main identified issue was around Early Years provision, as discussed at Response 10 above.

### **15.0 Effects on School Transport**

- 15.1 The effects on school transport were considered at Section 13 of the Proposal Paper. As there are no pupils currently attending Kinlochewe Primary School, there are no differing school transport arrangements to take into account.

### **16.0 Mitigation of Adverse Effects**

- 16.1 Adverse effects were considered at S.18 of the proposal Paper, and as part of Integrated Impact Assessment and none were identified. These assessments were based on the fact that there are currently no pupils attending Kinlochewe Primary School.
- 16.2 Although no adverse effects can be identified for current pupils, a number of the consultation responses highlighted that the closure of the school would mean it would be difficult for pre-school children in Kinlochewe to access early years education and childcare, as compared with a hypothetical scenario in which Kinlochewe Primary was re-opened, with the Early Years facility that once operated there.
- 16.3 The Council held further informal discussions with local parents over this issue, following the completion of the consultation exercise. Various suggestions were made around mitigation and the Council will be actively pursuing these in consultation with parents.
- 16.4 Appropriate school transport is and will continue to be provided for any children travelling from Kinlochewe to Gairloch for school. Some concerns were raised about the suitability of the school transport. These are addressed at Response 9 above.

### **17.0 Conclusion**

- 17.1 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 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 above. For the reasons set out in detail in sections 5-8 above, Highland Council considers that implementation of the closure proposal is the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal.
- 17.2 The most significant reason for closure is that firstly, there is general agreement that there is no possibility of re-opening Kinlochewe Primary School, due to the lack of children willing to attend. There is, additionally no evidence to suggest



that the number of children in the catchment in the future would be enough to make the school viable, and that there would consequently be educational disadvantages arising from such a decision. Furthermore, the school has now been mothballed for 3 years, and it is time to come to decision on the permanent future of the school. Lastly, the alternative provision, Gairloch Primary School is itself a rural school.

- 17.3 Education Scotland staff visited Gairloch Primary and Shieldaig Primary School, to speak to parents, pupils and staff. They also had the opportunity to review in detail the proposal document and all written responses. They agree that the Highland Council's proposal will result in educational benefits for the children of the Kinlochewe Primary School catchment area.
- 17.4 The Assistant Chief Executive (People), on reviewing all of the submissions, the note of the meeting, and the Education Scotland report; and having had special regard to alternatives to closure, to the community impact and to the impact of travelling arrangements; concludes that the proposal offers educational benefits and that implementation of the Proposal in full is the most appropriate response to the reason for formulating the Proposal. The reasons for this conclusion are set out at Sections 5-10 above.

## **18.0 Recommendation**

- 18.1 It is therefore recommended that Highland Council approves the proposal to discontinue education provision at Kinlochewe Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Gairloch Primary School.

Kate Lackie  
Assistant Chief Executive (People)  
8 May 2025

## **CONSULTATION MEETING – PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AT KINLOCHEWE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**HELD AT KINLOCHEWE VILLAGE HALL – 28 JANUARY 2025 – 6.30pm**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING**

#### **Panel**

Cllr. Liz Kraft - Chairperson  
Ian Jackson, Education Officer, Resources  
Mhairi MacDonald, Area Education Manager

#### **In Attendance**

Andrea McMillan, Education Scotland  
Thomas O'Halloran, HT, Shieldaig and Applecross Primary Schools  
14 members of the public

**The Chairperson – Cllr. Liz Kraft** introduced herself as an elected councillor and a member of the Council's Education Committee; and welcomed everyone to the consultation meeting.

She continued as follows:

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the proposal to formally close Kinlochewe Primary School, (as set out in the recommendation to the proposal Paper). The proposed change, if approved, will take place at the conclusion of the statutory consultation process.

Other options identified in the proposal paper are keeping the school open, or continuing to "mothball" it. We can also discuss any other options or alternatives to closure which those present would like to raise.

The Council officials present tonight are Mhairi MacDonald, Area Education Manager, and Ian Jackson, Education Officer, (Resources).

Mr Jackson and Mrs MacDonald will shortly make a couple of quick presentations, and following these, I will open to the meeting for questions and observations.

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

**Ian** - The permanent closure of a school, which is what the Council is proposing for Kinlochewe PS, is subject to a statutory consultation process, of which this meeting is part. We are currently in the initial phase of that consultation, which is due to end on Friday 28 February, and I would urge anyone who wants to submit views in writing to 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.

My colleague Mhairi MacDonald will shortly set out the educational basis for the Council's proposal to formally close Kinlochewe PS, but before that I will briefly describe the rest of the consultation process.

Since July 2022 Kinlochewe PS has been "mothballed", which means it is not operational, but neither is it permanently closed. The Council held some informal discussions about the future of the school in December 2023/January 2024 and again in the summer of 2024. There was though limited engagement from the community, and we felt it was appropriate to advance this formal proposal in the expectation that it might generate a wider range of views.

The formal process has a number of stages. Once the public consultation ends on 28 February, Education Scotland becomes involved. They will look at the Proposal Paper, the note of the meeting tonight, and any written representations, and will form their own view on the educational benefits of the proposal. Education Scotland will contact Ullapool Primary School, 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.

After all that, there would still be a further opportunity for representations to be made to Scottish Ministers. All school closures in Scotland have to be ratified by Ministers, and they have 8 weeks from the date of the Council's decision to themselves decide whether to ratify the proposal or to refer it to what's called a school closure review panel. During the first 3 weeks of that 8-week period, Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person on whether the decision should be called in, or not called in, for review by a panel. Advice about how to make those representations will be provided at the relevant time.

In summary, I would say that the consultation process provides multiple opportunities for views to be expressed to the Council before any final decision is made.

**The Chairperson** then invited Mhairi MacDonald to outline the educational benefits that would arise from the Proposal.

**Mhairi** commented that Ian's presentation had demonstrated how a school closure consultation was a serious matter, taken very seriously by both Council officials and elected councillors.

The Proposal Paper sets out, at page 11, the indicators that the Council uses in reviewing its school estate. The school environment should be of a quality that sustains and improves the education of children.

The evidence we have suggests that there is no realistic prospect of a viable roll at Kinlochewe Primary, and that's why we are at this stage in our consultation process. The Council believes there are educational benefits to children being able to attend a school with a larger roll than that on offer at Kinlochewe.

Working with others across a wide range of curriculum areas is important for young people's development, getting opportunities to share and to develop responsibilities. There are also issues such as team sports and other recreational or cultural activities. Language learning also benefits considerably from having greater numbers. All of that is to the benefit of young people. Socialisation is a very important part of school attendance.

In summary, closing Kinlochewe PS would provide educational benefits through increased opportunities for young people.

**The Chairperson** opened the meeting to the floor.

**Q1** – I've been vociferous over the years, as Ian knows, about the school closures here. We've lost Achnasheen and we've lost Torrison, which is a good solid building at the centre of the community of Fasaig, to give it its proper name. Why has common sense not prevailed? You are closing Kinlochewe, you have left Shieldaig open. The kids from here could have had a half-hour journey to Torrison, the kids from Diabaig a 10-15 minute one, and the kids from Shieldaig a 10-15 minute one. You've closed down the wrong place. Torrison should have been kept as a school.

**A1 (Ian)** – Torrison is obviously more central to this part of Wester Ross than either Kinlochewe or Shieldaig. Realistically though, the Council is not going to re-open Torrison School.

**Q2 (Follow-up)**– Had it been looked after in the first place, and had the Council thrown out the person that was in there, the person responsible for all the parents leaving,

then the school would not have been closed. Ian knows exactly what I am talking about.

**The Chairperson** commented that we should try to avoid comments about individuals who might not be present, but who might be identified.

**A2 (Ian)** – Yes, you will appreciate I can't say too much about that.

**Q3 (Follow-up)** – I take it the school building in Torridon has now been completely handed over?

**The Chairperson** said she believed the building had gone for community transfer.

**Q4 (Follow-up)** – Well, that should be stopped, and Highland Council should look at centralising education in the area in a purpose-built school. Torridon is the central location and the children should be brought there to save on excessive travelling. There is a small child here tonight, who will have to travel 35-45 minutes just to get to school, and the same coming back. Children in Highland have always had to travel, but let's not exacerbate the problem.

**A4 – (Ian)** – The purpose of tonight's meeting is to record views and consider them, but I would be misleading you if I said there was much prospect of Torridon School re-opening. I am just trying to be honest about that, though we are obliged to consider any comments made tonight. The bigger picture is the decline in the number of children in the area. We've talked about the closures of Achnasheen and Torridon and now possibly Kinlochewe, and even Garve has a very low roll. They are down to about 8 pupils. It's no secret that we have had informal discussions with the Garve parents about the future of their school. They have said they want to retain their school and we've respected that, but we have a huge swathe of the Highlands, from Garve all the way to Torridon, with very few children.

**Q5** – There are some new children in this community.

**A5 – (Ian)** – Well, that's the type of thing we need to hear about, but I had been in touch with all the local parents I could identify, before we started on this formal process, about the future of the school, and there didn't seem to be many parents enthused about re-opening it. This is a consultation though, and if there are young families here who want the school re-opened, we need to hear about that.

**Q6** – [from a couple with a young child]. When we moved up here, we thought the school was still open, and we were devastated when we moved here and found it wasn't. We attended a small school ourselves, but it wasn't 20 miles from the house. Our son is going to have excessive travel time to get to school and nursery. His day is going to be too long.

**Q7 (follow-up)** – We also think that small schools can be good. I have read what you say about larger schools, but we think there are advantages to small schools.

**A7 (Mhairi)** – It’s all relative though. What are termed bigger schools in Highland would be considered very small schools in most other parts of the country. Schools like Shieldaig and Gairloch are in the range of 30-60 pupils. When we talk about small schools in the Highland context, we are usually talking about schools with 2-5 children.

**Q8 (follow-up)** – There are quite a few children in the village now.

**A8 (Ian)** - There are 3 outcomes possible here. We could re-open the school, if there are enough children, we could close it for good, which is what the Council is proposing and which is what happened to Torridon, or we could continue to mothball and see if the population recovers. If there are parents in the community and they have small children that they want to send to the school, then they need to let us know. If enough parents came to us and said “I have children aged X and Y and I want them to attend Kinlochewe Primary”, that would be the thing to swing the decision.

**Q9** – We have had a complete change in the local demographics. How many children attended here in the past?

**(follow-up from the floor)** – The roll at one point went down to six. At another point it went up to twenty-eight. I was involved in this school for 34 years so I know a bit about peaks and troughs. The people who have taken their children away, I feel there must have been a compelling reason to do that. There is no-one in their right mind who wouldn’t want their children to attend a small village school. I worked in the school and didn’t find it lonely. Small is beautiful. Highland Council has such an abysmal record on attainment, you would think that the smaller the unit, the better chance of raising attainment. I was a pupil here myself before becoming a member of staff, and I can tell you we didn’t miss out in much. If there’s a will, there’s a way. We went to sports meetings, the Mòd, music festivals, concerts. I don’t think the parents who are present felt their children were disadvantaged.

**A9 (Ian)** – Schools rolls can go up and down, but when the last parents moved their children, there were only two pupils left.

**Q10** – When you get placing requests, do you ask the parents why they are moving their children?

**A10 (Ian)** – We don’t. Sometimes people tell us, but we have no power to ask why. Councils can only do what they have a legal power to do, and parents who want to move their children don’t have to justify their choice to the Council.

Without discussing specific instances, I do think that a lot of parents feel that children are better off being with other children their own age. When a school gets down to 2 or 3 children, and they might be widely spread, so maybe with one in P1, one in P4

and one in P7, parents sometimes feel their children aren't getting enough social interaction.

**Q12** – It wouldn't be two or three if all the parents in Kinlochewe had kept their children in the local school

**A12 (Ian)** – That's their choice though.

**The Chairperson** commented that the number of school closures in her ward in recent years was heartbreaking. What sometimes happens is a self-fulfilling prophecy, parents think the Council is going to shut the school and so they move their children to another school. I tell parents that we are not planning to close the school, but if they remove their children, they may leave the Council with no option. Only communities themselves can turn the tide with that.

**(Ian)** – Although I would add that parents should not be pressurised into changing their choices. Parents need to do what's best for their children.

**Q13** – I would just like to say that at the time the mothballing happened, it was during the COVID time, when there were not the opportunities for the children to visit other schools for the sorts of activities mentioned earlier, and that had an impact. Children were not getting the social interaction they had prior to COVID, at that particular point in time. Over the period however, the families who took their children out of Kinlochewe did so for a host of different reasons.

**Q14** – It's a sad day, when we see the number of schools that have closed, and a bit of foresight should have been applied. I return to my argument that Torridon should have been kept open. That school was closed because the Council failed to deal with the problems there. Torridon should be opened up again as a school, and Kinlochewe and Shieldaig should be closed instead. If there is only going to be one school in the area it should be located in Torridon.

**Comment from the floor** – You wouldn't get agreement from the parents in Shieldaig for that.

**A14 (Ian)** – Shieldaig also has a healthy roll.

**The Chairperson** commented that, realistically, she could not see Torridon re-opening as a school. It was important to look to the future. What potential does the community see in terms of young families coming forward?

**Q15** – All of the houses in this area are being sold off to coffin-dodgers! (Laughter)

**A15 (Ian)** – The crucial question for tonight is the future of Kinlochewe Primary.

**Q16** – To be fair, I'm not sure the Council has much option, if children aren't coming here.

**Comment from the floor** – There are other small children in the village, and other people are pregnant. There could be houses being built as well.

**Comment from the floor** – There are a lot of Estate workers locally about to retire, and younger blood due to come in.

**Comment from the floor** – Not having a school will be a hindrance to new families coming here. People will see there is no local school and that their children will need to travel 30 minutes to school and 30 minutes back.

**A16 (Ian)** – Although there do seem have been some families that have moved here even though the school is not operational.

**Q17** – We can say that two families with young children have moved in since the school was mothballed, but one of those families thought there was a school.

**Comment from the floor** – There are some houses for sale.

**Comment from the floor** – There are always houses for sale and there is always the potential for families to move in. However, I feel it is unlikely that any of the parents of children who go to other schools, would bring them back to Kinlochewe. That means we are looking at the next generation wave. Schools do not generally operate nursery classes without a primary school, we are told, which means the children would have to attend pre-school nursery elsewhere, whether Gairloch or Shildaig or anywhere else. They would then have been already attending that facility, and they would need to agree to come back to Kinlochewe, and you would need enough of them at the same time to re-open a new P1, unless other parents chose to bring their children back. That, for me, is the challenge. Somebody has to decide “I don’t mind my child being 1 of 2 children in the school” for enough years as it takes for the school to build the roll again.

**A17 (Mhairi)** – Ian and I met with parents at another remote school last autumn, where we were considering re-opening a school for 2 pupils, because of the location. It’s not just a numbers game. However, at that location the parents eventually came to the view that it was going to be better for their child to make a long journey and be with other children. The make-up of the school roll is another factor. You might have 3 pupils but all from a single family, so socialisation at school would be no different from that at home. As Ian said, parents must decide what is best for their child, and sometimes that can be in a larger school with other children. We are finding this more and more, that parents themselves are making that decision, and moving their children to slightly bigger schools. We are not talking about schools with 200 pupils here, more like schools with 40-60 pupils.

**Q18** – Can I ask about pre-school?



**A18 (Ian)** – It’s enough of a journey to go from here to either Gairloch or Shieldaig if you are a primary school pupil. It’s even more an issue for pre-school. Although P1-7 children are entitled to free school transport beyond a certain distance, that doesn’t extend to pre-school children. There are a couple of possibilities. One would be if there was somebody in the area interested in being a childminder, they could deliver the early years’ service on behalf of the Council, under contract. There usually has to be enough children in the area for that to happen though, and to make a viable childminding business. Another option might be for us to make a payment to parents to deliver that service at home, but that doesn’t get round the socialisation problem. We might also look at some form of parental recompense to parents for transporting pre-school children, given the geography in this case.

**Q19** – Would you not create a nursery at the school, even without the P1-7 classes?

**A19 (Ian)** – We don’t normally operate school nurseries without a school being attached. It raises a lot of issues around ensuring there are enough staff, and having a Head Teacher responsible for the nursery.

**(Mhairi)** – As a council we are keen to recruit childminders, but part of the issue is that I believe you are not allowed to count your own children towards the total for funding.

**The Chairperson** commented that this was a depopulation issue. She referred to a community initiative in NW Sutherland that was working with the Scottish Government and the Council to address some of the issues around rural depopulation. It would be worth this community finding out more about that.

**Q20** – Why are you proposing to permanently close the school, rather than continuing to mothball it?

**A20 (Ian)** – There is national Guidance around this, and it suggests that schools should not normally be mothballed for 3 years unless the area is very remote. This area would meet the “very remote” definition, but nevertheless I don’t think it’s good practice to keep schools mothballed for years on end. Doing so might be seen as a sort of “back door closure”. One of the advantages of a statutory consultation is that it allows everyone in the community to have their say. Mothballing arrangements are subject to review, but the people contacted tend to be parents and the CC, rather than the community as a whole.

**Q21** – Could there be some technological solutions, using modern technology? In Australia, children in remote areas used to be given school lessons over the radio.

**Thomas O’Halloran** commented that lessons were delivered over the Internet in the spring and early summer of 2020, during the first phase of the COVID pandemic. As a Head Teacher, he didn’t feel teaching via the web was as effective as in-person teaching in a classroom.

**(Ian)** – The drawback with remote teaching for primary school children is that you need parents to fully commit to the process. Parents need to ensure their child shows up for scheduled lessons and that children do the work assigned to them. Without that, it just doesn't work. So things are all very well if parents are committed to education, but not all parents are. It's often children of less committed parents who have the poorest attainment, and remote education therefore tends to exacerbate the attainment gap.

**Q22** – I would like to raise the issue of the catchment area, if the school closes. Most of the children from here are currently attending Gairloch Primary, but that's only happened because the transport is laid on to that school. Can there be an option of choice between the two?

**A22 (Ian)** – The Council operates to a principle under which every address in Highland is allocated to a catchment area. I don't think we would want to allow Kinlochewe children the choice of two schools. That would potentially mean doubling up on transport costs as well.

**Comments from the floor followed**, highlighting that attending Gairloch Primary had an advantage as the school was co-located with Gairloch High, to which the children would transfer in due course. In addition, Gairloch Primary offers GME. Shieldaig does not.

**Q23** – I think you need to take account of the situation with early years. Effectively you are asking parents to drive 80 miles a day to allow their children to attend a pre-pre-school nursery. Parents who don't work simply can't afford that. Parents who do work probably can't afford the time. Is there any appetite within the Council for nursery children to be provided with proper transport to and from their nearest school nursery?

**Comment from the floor** – Torridon has the same issue.

**Response from the floor** – Nursery transport is an issue for every community where there is no local nursery in place.

**Comment from the floor** – The distances are even worse for children in Kinlochewe and Achnasheen though.

**A23 (Ian)** – There would be a number of issues with transport for pre-school children. For example children of that age would almost certainly need an escort in the vehicle. Also if nursery transport were provided here, then it would have to be provided in other areas, with associated costs.

**Q24** – I can't imagine there are many places located so far from their nearest pre-school provision.

**Q25** – One effect of the lack of nursery provision will be that parents will be deterred from taking up a deferment year for pre-school children. They will enrol them in P1 as soon as possible, because they can then access school transport.

**A25 (Ian)** – We will have to consider the points raised tonight.

**Q26** – Can I ask what has happened to the Kinlochewe Primary School Fund? Also what will happen to it if the school closes?

**A26 (Ian)** – At the moment it's probably just frozen, awaiting a possible re-opening of the school. If the school closes, I imagine the funds will be redistributed to Shieldaig and Gairloch, on the basis that these are the schools now attended by children from the Kinlochewe catchment.

There being no further questions, the Chairperson thanked everyone for coming, reminded everyone that representations should be sent to Ian Jackson, email [Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk](mailto:Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk) (address circulated in the letter), or via the online form, to arrive **no later than Friday 28 February 2025**. She 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  
Discontinue Education at Kinlochewe Primary School**

1. Susan MacDonald
2. Kenneth Maclean
3. Gairloch Primary School Pupils
4. Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council
5. Shieldaig Primary School pupil (living in Kinlochewe)
6. Graham Phillips and Eleanor Kennedy

To whom it may concern,

I have read the proposal for Kinlochewe Primary School and am writing to you as a former student of Kinlochewe Primary and former resident of Kinlochewe village, with a child who also attended Kinlochewe Pre-School before it closed. This news is extremely disheartening. I understand the reasoning, essentially to save money really. Particularly as the school needs some maintenance. But there are currently at least 8 families with young children in Kinlochewe itself, of which around 7 are primary school age and 6 are pre-school age or younger. This is more children than Poolewe Primary currently has. We also saw Sheildaig Primary go from around 7 kids to almost 27 in the last few years, which shows how quickly things can change. Currently, there is also currently enough teachers in the ASG to cover Kinlochewe Primary re-opening. I think you should re-consider closing Kinlochewe Primary School, it would be a huge loss to the future of the community.

Regards,

Susan Macdonald

**Name of consultation:** Kinlochewe Primary School

**Your comments:** I would suggest that as Achnasheen is nearer to Strathgarve Primary than Gairloch Primary, then the catchment area should be split in two with Achnasheen going to Strathgarve and Kinlochewe going to Gairloch. This would mean no school transport has to try and get up and down Glen Docharty safely in the winter months and children in Achnasheen will have less travel to/from school.

**Upload documents or letters :**

**I am commenting as:** Local resident

**I am commenting on behalf of:**

**Name:**

Title	First name	Last name
Mr	Kenneth	Maclean

**Address:**

Enter a postcode to search for the address	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
iv22 2eg	4 Bignold Place, Achnasheen, IV22 2EG	Yes

**Email address:**

**HELLO EVERYONE!****CAN YOU HELP HIGHLAND COUNCIL WITH AN IMPORTANT DECISION?**

For a while Highland Council has been trying out an idea for pupils from the Kinlochewe area to go to Gairloch Primary, or Shieldaig Primary, instead of Kinlochewe Primary.

Now we have to decide what to do for the future. We have 3 choices:

1. **Close Kinlochewe Primary for good, with children from Kinlochewe going to Gairloch Primary instead.**
2. **Close Kinlochewe Primary for good, with children from Kinlochewe going to Shieldaig Primary instead**
3. **Re-open Kinlochewe Primary, so any children from there would go to that school and not to either Gairloch or Shieldaig.**
4. **Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Kinlochewe Primary for good, with children going to Gairloch Primary instead.	<b>13</b>  (includes all children from Kinlochewe)
Idea No. 2 – Close Kinlochewe Primary for good, with children going to Shieldaig Primary instead.	<b>1</b>
Idea No. 3 – Re-open Kinlochewe Primary.	<b>3</b>



Idea No.4 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	4
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Why did you give the answer above?

**Idea 1**

- So the children from Kinlochewe can still be with their friends.
- **\*I enjoy Gairloch Primary and I don't want to leave. Kinlochewe Primary had way less people.**
- I put to go to Gairloch because some people want to stay at Gairloch and like playing with their friends,
- I think that if people from Kinlochewe come to Gairloch Primary it would give people an opportunity to meet new people, especially for people going to the High School because they can meet more people who they are going to High School with.
- Because all the teachers are really good in Gairloch.
- Because there is no point in opening another school of like 5 people.
- **\*Because I'm good friends with them.**
- I think that if the Kinlochewe Primary opens it might not be has much people.
- So there is more people to play.
- So there is more people.

**Idea 2**

No comment

**Idea 3**

- I think they should reopen Kinlochewe Primary because it will save petrol.
- I think it's a good idea because people who go to Gairloch have to get the bus and their parents have to pay the bus so they go to school so I think it's easier not to pay.
- Because it would be extra work if you change what the building is used for and everyone really enjoyed going there for school and nursery. I really hope you can do that.

**Idea 4**

- Kinlochewe Primary is a beautiful place but it's not worth it probably change it.

- I think we should think about it more because Kinlochewe School could turn into another thing like a creative thing or a Sunday School and Kinlochewe kids could come to Gairloch Primary.

**Bold** denotes the comments made by children from Kinlochewe. Not all chose to comment.

Highland Council Consultation on Proposed Closure of Kinlochewe Primary School

On behalf of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC) please see below, for consideration, the following comments to Highland Council's (HC) consultation on the proposed closure of Kinlochewe Primary School.

(1) TKCC would refer you to TKCC's previous email dated 3 February 2024 to Ian Jackson and cc'd to Mhairi MacDonald (copy attached). Many of the points made remain relevant and should be taken cognisance of in HC's consideration of the future of Kinlochewe Primary School.

(2) TKCC draws to your attention that some local parents have raised the issue of catchment sharing and would request that HC investigates the possibility of permitting parents to choose whether to send their children to Shieldaig Primary School or Gairloch Primary School with the introduction of a shared catchment. This is also relevant for pre-school nursery education choice.

(3) TKCC reiterates the concern of local parents regarding school transport and the current unsatisfactory situation of four year olds requiring to share school transport with secondary school aged pupils. A separate arrangement for primary school pupils should be investigated whether they are travelling to or from Shieldaig or Gairloch.

(4) No Pre-school nursery provision is available for Kinlochewe children without travelling to either Gairloch or Shieldaig. Therefore, if there was a proven need to re-open Kinlochewe Primary School, it would be key to also provide pre-school nursery education within Kinlochewe.

(5) TKCC asks HC to investigate where the school fund monies from Kinlochewe Primary School are held. These monies had been fundraised by Kinlochewe Primary School and the local community and it is right that HC returns the funds so that they can be shared between Shieldaig and Gairloch Primary Schools.

(6) There is a general concern that there is no accommodation for key education workers in this area, eg for pre-school, primary and secondary school teaching staff. This is a matter which needs addressed to maintain an adequate complement of education staff within our local schools.

Torridon & Kinlochewe Community Council  
26 February 2025

**From:** Caroline Hamilton <[chair@tkcc.scot](mailto:chair@tkcc.scot)>  
**Date:** Saturday, 3 February 2024 at 11:32  
**To:** "Ian Jackson (Resources)" <[ian.jackson@highland.gov.uk](mailto:ian.jackson@highland.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** "Mhairi MacDonald (Area Education West)" <[Mhairi.MacDonald3@highland.gov.uk](mailto:Mhairi.MacDonald3@highland.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Re: Kinlochewe Primary School

Dear Ian,

I refer to your e-mail below of 4<sup>th</sup> December regarding the future of Kinlochewe Primary School. This was discussed by Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC) at our meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> January. Present at the meeting (held by Zoom) were 3 parents of primary and pre-primary school age children. The following reflects the views they expressed and those of TKCC.

A school is a vital part of a community and without a school it is very difficult to attract young people to live there. However, it was acknowledged that this consultation is happening because over the last few years parents have taken their children out of the school and sent them to school elsewhere. For the school to have a viable future would depend, in part, on parents bringing their children back to the school, which they may not want to do. It would also depend on the parents of children approaching school age choosing to place their children in the school. TKCC understands that there are currently around 12-13 children, toddlers and babies in Kinlochewe. The parents of school age children are being consulted about the future of the school, but the parents of pre-school children, and those thinking of having children, should be too. In the past Kinlochewe Primary School has taken pupils from as far afield as Achnasheen and Badavanich, Letterewe Estate, Loch Maree Hotel and Talladale. In its consultation, HC should also seek the views of residents in those areas.

TKCC understands that the condition of the buildings at Kinlochewe Primary is poor and that they are unlikely to last long in their mothballed state. While some attending the meeting suggested that no decision should be taken on the future of the school for some time, a delay is likely to lead to a significant deterioration in the state of the buildings. On balance, TKCC consider that Highland Council should come to a decision sooner than later, always allowing for proper consultation. If the decision is to re-open the school, this will limit the extent of remedial work needed. If the decision is to move towards closure and disposal of the site, it will maintain the value of the buildings.

As regards re-zoning, TKCC acknowledges that this is a contentious issue and that Kinlochewe looks to both Gairloch and Torridon/Shieldaig. The village is in the historic parish of Gairloch and children of secondary school age attend Gairloch High School. On the other hand, medical cover is provided by Torridon Medical Practice which also covers Shieldaig and the surrounding area and TKCC's own boundaries reflect the connections between the village and the communities to the west of it. In considering how the catchment should be re-zoned (should this become necessary), Highland Council should remember that this is a matter that will affect the whole community and will have a bearing on whether the village leans more to Gairloch or to Torridon and Shieldaig. Any consultation on re-zoning should therefore involve the community as a whole. The potential receiving schools should also be

consulted. TKCC understands that Shieldaig has been approached, but it is unclear if a similar approach has been made to Gairloch Primary.

The catchment of Shieldaig Primary now extends from Diabaig round Loch Torridon to north Applecross. While it has a good number of pupils at present, that may not always be the case and it would be disastrous for many communities if Shieldaig Primary were to close. To include Kinlochewe in its catchment may help secure the position of Shieldaig, this would make a significant difference for Shieldaig Primary and avoid the risk that pupils from outlying areas such as Diabaig would have to travel even further than they do at present. Gairloch Primary is unlikely to face such risks.

Travel arrangements should also be considered. Although Shieldaig Primary is a little closer to Kinlochewe than Gairloch, the travel times are similar. Highland Council should also remember that it may not be appropriate for a child of as young as four to share transport with teenagers. Separate arrangements for primary school pupils may be required whether they are travelling to Shieldaig or to Gairloch.

I should add that TKCC welcomes the fact the Highland Council is having this conversation at an early stage and has invited the community to comment.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Hamilton  
Chair – Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council

**From:** Caroline Hamilton <chair@tkcc.scot>  
**Sent on:** Saturday, February 3, 2024 11:32:55 AM  
**To:** Ian Jackson (Resources) <ian.jackson@highland.gov.uk>  
**CC:** Mhairi MacDonald (Area Education West) <Mhairi.MacDonald3@highland.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Re: Kinlochewe Primary School

**CAUTION:** This email was sent from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

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I should add that TKCC welcomes the fact the Highland Council is having this conversation at an early stage and has invited the community to comment.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Hamilton

Chair – Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council

HELLO EVERYONE!

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4. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

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Idea No. 2 – Close Kinlochewe Primary for good, with children going to Shieldaig Primary instead.	
Idea No. 3 – Re-open Kinlochewe Primary.	✓



Idea No.4 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.



Why did you give the answer above?

I would really like Kinlochewe to re-open, but I do like all the friends I have made at Shieldaig Primary.

I wish all the kids in Kinlochewe would just go to Kinlochewe school, that would make it much better.

I really like the playground and the school and want people to look after the building too. It would save money to have the school in Kinlochewe, from the transport.

**Name of consultation:** Kinlochewe Primary closure

**Your comments:** We would like to reiterate our comments from the meeting on 28th January:

Whilst we are upset about the loss of the school, we accept that the likelihood of a viable school roll in the next five years is very low, and especially given the condition of the building that closure is the sensible option.

There are still several primary aged and younger children in the village, and families that may go on to have children. We feel that consideration needs to be given to the alternative provision that is given to those children. Many children whose parents chose to put them to Gairloch did so because that was the only option with transport. If they had been given the option of Shieldaig with transport they may have chosen differently. We chose Shieldaig for many reasons including the fact that it was our cluster school, and has more of the small community school feel that we moved here for.

We are also concerned about the challenges of accessing nursery and the impact this will have on families living in our village. Whether it was Shieldaig or Gairloch nursery parents would need to do two hours of driving a day to drop their child off. This is prohibitive to those who don't have a car or cannot afford the time or expense. This disproportionately discriminates against lower income families, which in turn has obvious implications for our community. The significant transport burden becomes a factor in parents' decisions on whether to take the advantage year at nursery or not. Parents should not be put in a position where they have to put their transport costs ahead of their child's developmental readiness for school.

Based on our comments, we would suggest the following:

Catchment zoning to Shieldaig to future-proof its numbers, or parents to have the choice as travel time is more or less the same to either.

Dedicated primary/nursery transport with adequate supervision.

If that is not possible then a peripetetic play worker to run toddler/nursery sessions in the village.

We look forward to seeing the feedback from this consultation,

Thanks

Graham Phillips and Eleanor Kennedy

**Upload documents or letters :**


**I am commenting as:** Parent

**I am commenting on behalf of:**

**Name:**

<b>Title</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Last name</b>
Mr	Graham	Phillips

**Address:**

<b>Enter a postcode to search for the address</b>	<b>Choose address</b>	<b>Did you find the address on the list above?</b>
IV22 2PA		Yes

# **Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The Highland Council to discontinue education provision at Kinlochewe Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Gairloch Primary School.**

March 2025

## 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 a proposal by The Highland Council to discontinue education provision at Kinlochewe Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Gairloch Primary School. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' view. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it alongside any relevant considerations the council received and then prepare its consultation report. The council's 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 consultation report at least three weeks before it takes its final decision. With all proposals the council needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act. Where a council is proposing to close a school, there are specific additional obligations. These include notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers. There are special provisions that apply to close a rural school.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

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

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

- attendance at the public meeting held on 28 January 2025 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;
- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal and;
- visits to the site of Gairloch Primary School, Gairloch High School and Shieldaig Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

1.4 As the proposal, if implemented, will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of any reasonable alternatives to closure of Kinlochewe Primary School, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements of the proposed closure.

## 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 proposal for Kinlochewe Primary School also includes closure of the related early years provision. The school was mothballed in the summer of 2022, after the roll fell to zero. Children currently attend either Gairloch Primary School or Shieldaig Primary School. Most parents have opted to send their children to Gairloch Primary School. Transport to Gairloch is already in place and includes children attending Gairloch High School. In December 2023, The Highland Council contacted local parents and the community council to gather their views informally. The council then decided to move to a formal consultation on permanent closure of the school.

2.3 The consultation ran from 13 January to 28 February 2025. The proposal was made available online and distributed to relevant stakeholders. Consultees were invited to submit their views to the council via an online form or by email. A public meeting was held on 28 January 2025, attended by 14 members of the public. The council received four submissions from local people, including the community council. These raised concerns about the loss of pre-school provision in the village and transport arrangements to alternative schools in the area. Consultees asked the council to consider splitting the catchment area to give parents a choice of school, with transport provided, where necessary. Attendees at the public meeting, raised similar issues, including that not having a school may make it a less attractive place for families to settle. They also pointed out that there are a few children in the area and that school rolls can change. Children from Gairloch and Shieldaig Primary Schools were also consulted. The majority of children opted for the closure of Kinlochewe Primary School. Children from Kinlochewe would prefer to continue at their current school with their friends. A minority of children, who live in the area, wanted Kinlochewe to reopen as they would prefer not to have to travel.

## 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits outlined by The Highland Council. At the moment, based on the council's projections, there is little chance of a stable school roll within the catchment area. Children from Kinlochewe have the opportunity to work in wider cooperative learning groups across year groups at both Gairloch and Shieldaig Primary Schools. This supports them to develop their skills in sharing and working with others. They also have access to a range of social activities at the alternative schools. Children and young people, who met with HM Inspectors are happy and settled at their current schools and do not wish to change. Both schools also have associated early years classes which can support a smooth transition from nursery to primary one.

3.2 Almost all parents and community members who met with HM Inspectors are disappointed by the proposal but understand the difficulty if there are no children currently attending. They point out that numbers of children in the area fluctuate and there may be a need for the school in the future. Staff who met with HM Inspectors, agree with the proposal. However, they are concerned that falling school rolls are an issue across the area and are keen to ensure that rural schools continue to be maintained and staffed appropriately. They agree that there is capacity within Gairloch and Shieldaig Primary Schools to accommodate more children in the future, if needed.

3.3 Parents who engaged with HM Inspectors are concerned about the lack of early years provision in the area. While provision is available at Shieldaig and Gairloch Primary Schools, they point out that transport is not provided and that the distance involved could make it difficult for parents to take this up. Parents are concerned that these issues may prevent local children from accessing important early learning.

3.4 With regards to the catchment area, stakeholders would like the council to consider allowing parents to have a choice between Shieldaig Primary School and Gairloch Primary School and to provide transport for both options. This also has the potential to protect the future rolls of both schools. If this proposal is agreed, the council should engage further with stakeholders to mitigate any negative effect on access to early years provision and transport arrangements to Gairloch and Shieldaig Primary Schools.

3.5 As the proposal, if implemented, will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of the factors to which it should have special regard. The council has considered the alternatives to closing Kinlochewe Primary School permanently. They do not feel that continued mothballing is viable, in part due to the ongoing cost of maintaining the building. Kinlochewe Primary School is rated as 'C' for condition and is beginning to deteriorate further. Alternative schools at Shieldaig and Gairloch are both rated as 'B'. Based on school roll projections and other demographic data, the council do not believe there is a reasonable case for the school to reopen. Consideration of widening the catchment area, does not significantly change the school roll. The Highland Council also gave consideration to reopening Kinlochewe school offering Gaelic Medium Education. Children from Kinlochewe wishing to attend Gaelic Medium Education are already zoned to Gairloch Primary School, with transport provided, and no such request has been received for the Kinlochewe area. Were Kinlochewe Primary School to reopen, children from the catchment area would have shorter journey times. However, children are now used to the time required to go to Gairloch or Shieldaig Primary Schools.

3.6 Local people, including children, who met with HM Inspectors would like to ensure that there continues to be a playground in the village as the one attached to the school is the only one currently. The community council have not yet considered any alternative use for the building. They would support the reopening of the school, if that is what local parents want. The community council would like to know more about the strategic approach that The Highland Council is taking to protect schools across the area. A few stakeholders would like the council to consider a further period of mothballing. However, the majority of stakeholders recognised that the building would continue to deteriorate if not used. If this proposal is agreed, the council should engage further with stakeholders to consider future uses of the school site, including the playground.

## 4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits outlined by The Highland Council in their proposal to permanently close Kinlochewe Primary School. Children currently in the catchment area are happy and settled at alternative primary schools, with most opting for Gairloch Primary School, which has transport provided. Both Shieldaig and Gairloch Primary Schools are able to offer appropriate learning environments, with the opportunity for group learning and team activities. Since it was mothballed, the existing Kinlochewe Primary School building has begun to deteriorate and may require investment to bring it into use. Stakeholders were concerned at the loss of pre-school provision in Kinlochewe. They are worried that families may not be able to access the provision at Shieldaig and Gairloch due to the distance and time involved and a lack of transport. Local people, in the village do not want to lose the only playground. Stakeholders would like the council to consider giving parents the choice of both Shieldaig and Gairloch Primary Schools instead of making the catchment area, Gairloch Primary School only. If this proposal is agreed the council should engage further with the local community to address the issues they have raised.

**HM Inspectors**  
**March 2025**

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**The proposal is to discontinue education provision at Kinlochewe Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Gairloch Primary School.**

**EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT**

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

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

- To discontinue education provision at Kinlochewe Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Gairloch Primary School.
- For the avoidance of doubt, it should be assumed that the related Pre-School provision is included within any reference below to a Primary School. In particular, any reference to Kinlochewe Primary School should be taken as a reference to both the primary and nursery classes.
- The proposed change, if approved, will take place immediately after the conclusion of the statutory process relating to school closures.



## SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

### PUBLICATION INFORMATION

#### Proposal Paper Published

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

Gairloch Primary School, Gairloch, IV21 2BP  
Shieldaig Primary School, Shieldaig, IV54 8XN

and published on the Highland Council website:

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

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

Education Business Support Team,  
Highland Council,  
Charles Kennedy Building,  
Fort William  
PH33 6RQ  
Email: [Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk](mailto:Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk)

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, audio formats, or suitable language, please contact the Education Business Support Team, Highland Council,  
Charles Kennedy Building, Fort William PH33 6RQ  
Email: [Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk](mailto: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/carers of pupils attending Gairloch Primary School; including parents/carers of pre-school pupils.
- (ii) Parents/carers of pupils attending Shieldaig Primary School; including parents/carers of pre-school pupils.
- (iii) The Parent Council of Gairloch Primary School.
- (iv) The Parent Council of Shieldaig Primary School
- (v) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.
- (vi) Staff of Gairloch Primary School.
- (vii) Staff of Shieldaig Primary School
- (viii) Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council
- (ix) Gairloch Community Council
- (x) Shieldaig Community Council
- (xi) Garve and District Community Council
- (xii) Trade Union representatives.

## **Advertisement in Local Media**

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

## **Consultation Period**

The consultation for this Proposal will run from 13 January 2025 and will end on 28 February 2025. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

## **Public Meeting**

A public meeting will be held at 6.30pm on 28 January 2025 at Kinlochewe Village Hall. Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council, will be chaired by a senior elected councillor, and will be addressed by officers of the Education Service.

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

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

## **Meetings with Pupils and Staff**

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

## **Responses to the Proposals**

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

Education Business Support Team,  
Highland Council,  
Charles Kennedy Building,  
Fort William  
PH33 6RQ

Email: [Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk](mailto:Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk)

Or via an online form, to be found at:

<https://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.

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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, 28 February 2025 at 5.00pm.

### **Involvement of Education Scotland**

When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will be sent to Education Scotland by the Council. Education Scotland will also be sent, by 10 March 2025, a copy of any written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period. Education Scotland will also receive the summary note of the public meeting that will be held and so far as is practicable a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 28 March 2025. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may visit the affected schools and make such enquiries of people there as they consider appropriate.

### **Review of Consultation Exercise**

Highland Council will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland Report, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made at the public meeting. It will then prepare a Consultation Report. This Report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be sent to anyone who submitted a written representation during consultation. It will be available on the Council website and at the affected school and local library, free of charge. The Report will include a summary of the written and oral representations made during consultation and a copy of the Education Scotland Report, together with the Council's considered response to the issues raised. The Report will include details of any alleged inaccuracies and/or omissions and how these have been handled. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to being submitted to the Education Committee of Highland Council, who will make a recommendation to the full Highland Council.

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

At the present time the Council intends to publish its Report in August 2025, prior to submission to the Education Committee in September 2025. 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 at the Education Committee would require to be confirmed by a subsequent meeting of the full Highland Council.

As the proposal involves the closure of a school, Highland Council would be required

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to notify Scottish Ministers of its decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Paper and Consultation Report. The Scottish Ministers would have an eight-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Within the first three weeks of that eight-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person.

### **Note on Corrections**

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

## **DETAILS OF THE 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); and to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education in schools that are managed by them (S.3 of The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000).
- 1.2 Kinlochewe Primary School is a rural school within the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (the school is classed as "very remote rural") and the Council has had regard to the provisions of that Act, in particular the special regard required for rural school closures. The Council has considered the school roll projections for Kinlochewe PS, taking into account the current pattern of enrolments, has given detailed consideration to the viable alternatives to closure (Sections 6-10 below); to the effect of closure on the community (Section 15 below) and to the impact of travel arrangements on children who are not yet of school age but who live in the Kinlochewe catchment (Section 13 below).

### **Reasons for the Proposal**

- 2.1 This proposal is being advanced for the following reasons:
  - Kinlochewe PS has been mothballed since the summer of 2022, after the school roll fell to zero. There are currently no children within the catchment who are within the P1-7 age group, excepting a small number who attend other schools voluntarily, either on placing requests or to attend Gaelic Medium Education. (Kinlochewe Primary School has never offered GME).
  - Consequently, no children have attended the school since the end of June 2022.
  - The Council has explored alternatives in arriving at this proposal, explained further below.
- 2.2 In December 2023 the Highland Council contacted local parents and the local community council to gather views about the future of the school. These were informal views gathered as part of pre-consultation. The only views received in response suggested that it would be appropriate to move to a full closure consultation to gain the views of the wider community.
- 2.3 The Community Council expressed the view that a school is a vital part of a community and without a school it is very difficult to attract young people to live there. However, they also acknowledged that over the last few years parents have taken their children out of the school and sent them to school elsewhere. For the school to have a viable future would depend, in part, on parents bringing their children back to the school, which they may not want to do. The community council recognized that the condition of the buildings at Kinlochewe Primary is poor and that they are unlikely to last long in their mothballed state.

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While some members suggested that no decision should be taken on the future of the school for some time, a delay would likely to lead to a significant deterioration in the state of the buildings. On balance, the community council considered that Highland Council should come to a decision sooner than later, always allowing for proper consultation. If the decision is to re-open the school, this will limit the extent of remedial work needed. If the decision is to move towards closure and disposal of the site, it will maintain the value of the buildings.

- 2.4 Only one parent responded to the pre-consultation contacts, suggesting that the beginning of any formal consultation should be put on hold for six months and then reviewed. The reason was that there are a number of houses in the village that were either on the market or will shortly be on the market. This delay was agreed, but since there has been no evidence of any new demand to re-open Kinlochewe Primary School

### **Current Details – Kinlochewe Primary School**

- 3.1 Kinlochewe Primary School is located in the village of the same name, which has a resident population of about 60. The school's catchment covers a wide but very rural area, which also encompasses the village of Achnasheen, (resident population about 30).

When last in operation Kinlochewe PS was managed by a Head Teacher who oversaw both Kinlochewe and Shieldaig Primary Schools. The cluster arrangements have since been revised and would require to be reviewed again in the event that Kinlochewe Primary were to re-open.

- 3.2 The school has been mothballed since the end of June 2022 after placing requests reduced the school roll to zero. Most of the children from the catchment area now attend Gairloch Primary School, though a small number attend Shieldaig Primary.
- 3.3 There were no nursery children at Kinlochewe PS prior to mothballing, but the school did operate a nursery class when there were children to attend it. As mentioned above, this closure proposal encompasses both the primary school and nursery class stages.
- 3.4 The school has a registered permanent capacity of 25, based on the availability of one classroom.
- 3.5 The Highland Council assesses all of its schools for Suitability and Condition, in line with the Scottish Government's School Estate Management guidelines. Schools are assessed on a scale with the ratings "A" (good) "B" (satisfactory), "C" (poor) and "D" (bad). Prior to mothballing, Kinlochewe Primary School was rated as "C" for the educational suitability of the building and "C" for building condition.

### **Current Details – Gairloch Primary School**

- 4.1 Gairloch Primary School is located in the village of the same name, and is co-located with Gairloch High School. It is classed as a "very remote" rural

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school. It provides education in both English (EM) and Gàidhlig (GM). Its English Medium catchment encompasses a wide area of Wester Ross, including communities along the coast from Redpoint to Melvaig. The Gàidhlig Medium catchment covers a still wider area, including the EM catchments of Poolewe Primary, Bualnaluib Primary and Kinlochewe Primary.

- 4.2 The school has a school hall, a library, a garden with vegetable beds, playgrounds with soft surfaces and tarmac, as well as access to the Gairloch High School playing field. There is no kitchen, but children eat lunch in the High School canteen.
- 4.3 The 2024-25 roll is 49 pupils within P1-7. There are 36 pupils in English Medium education, in two classes, and 13 in Gàidhlig Medium education, in a single class. There are a further 13 children across the two nursery classes.
- 4.4 The school (excluding the nursery) has a registered capacity of 124. The 2022-23 roll of 49 therefore represents 40% use of capacity.
- 4.5 The Council publishes roll projections for each of its currently operational schools. The latest forecast for Gairloch PS is contained within the document attached at **Appendix B**, whilst a copy of the Council's methodology for calculating the forecasts can be found at **Appendix C**.
- 4.6 It can be seen from Appendix B that the roll at Gairloch Primary School is forecast to remain at roughly the current figure for the next decade.
- 4.7 The present Gairloch Primary School building is rated as "B" for educational suitability and "B" for Condition.
- 4.8 In the last 3 school sessions, there were 8 placing requests to join Gairloch Primary School, and 0 requests to leave.

### **Current Details – Shieldaig Primary School**

- 5.1 Shieldaig Primary School is also a "very remote" rural school. It has a large catchment which now extends across both sides of Loch Torridon.
- 5.2 The school building dates from well over one hundred years ago, but in 2022 the conversion of the School House into a purpose built Nursery accommodation was completed. There are two classrooms, a Nursery room, a school kitchen, an office and several toilets. Within the classrooms and nursery there are interactive whiteboards. Adjacent to the school, there is an enclosed grassy playground, plus the Community Association football pitch and multi-use games area, which are located directly behind the school. These areas are all used by the children during outdoor breaks and P.E. The local church hall is also used for P.E. and as a performance venue.
- 5.3 The 2024-25 roll is 26 pupils within P1-7. There are a further 6 children in the nursery class.
- 5.4 The school (excluding the nursery) has a registered capacity of 46. The 2024-25 roll of 26 therefore represents 57% use of capacity.

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- 5.5 The Council publishes roll projections for each of its currently operational schools. The latest forecast for Shieldaig PS is contained within the document attached at **Appendix B**.
- 5.6 In recent years Shieldaig Primary has experienced a markedly rising roll. This is expected to decline to 13 pupils in 2030 and thereafter to rise slightly to 17.
- 5.7 The Shieldaig Primary School building is rated as “B” for educational suitability and “B” for Condition.
- 5.8 In the last three school sessions, there were 2 placing requests to join Shieldaig Primary School, and none to leave.

### Examination of Alternatives

- 6.1 In bringing forward this proposal for closure, the Council must give due consideration of alternative courses of action that could be considered. The following reasonable alternatives to closure have been considered:
- i. To continue with the current “mothballing” arrangement.
  - ii. To re-open Kinlochewe PS with its current catchment area.
  - iii. To re-open Kinlochewe PS with an expanded catchment area.
  - iv. To re-open Kinlochewe PS as a school offering Gaelic Medium Education.
- 6.2 There are no forecast housing deliveries in the Council’s current Housing Land Audit (which contains sites of 4 or more either with planning permission or housing land allocations). In the last 5 years, planning permissions for 4 individual houses have been permitted.
- 6.3 The detail of the Council’s consideration of the reasonable alternatives is set out throughout this proposal paper and its appendices.

### Option 1 – Continued Mothballing

- 7.1 Although it would be possible to continue with the current “mothballing” arrangement, Highland Council does not consider that would represent the best option for the taxpayer or the community. The low number of children in the Kinlochewe PS catchment, combined with the low level of parental demand for a school in the community, indicates strongly that the school is no longer viable. “Mothballing” would mean the continuation of the current lack of clarity regarding the future status of the school, would lead to a deterioration in the building, and would prevent the community from developing options for the future use of the accommodation. The Council would also be burdened with the costs of maintaining a “mothballed” building.
- 7.2 Scottish Government guidance relating to the mothballing of schools makes it clear that mothballing is a temporary measure and should not be used to undermine the requirements to undertake a statutory school closure consultation. The status of mothballed schools should be regularly reviewed. Having undertaken such a review, Highland Council does not see mothballing



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as a realistic alternative to closure.

- 7.3 Current school transport arrangements would not be affected by a continuation of mothballing.

### **Option 2 - Re-Opening of Kinlochewe Primary School with its Current Catchment Area**

- 8.1 For the 2024-25 school session, the Council is not aware of any children of P1-7 age living within the catchment area of the school, whose parents would wish them to attend a re-opened Kinlochewe Primary. The issue of GME is considered at Option 4 below.
- 8.2 Taking all of the above into account, the Council's review suggests there is no possibility of re-opening the school at the present time. Longer-term projections suggest there is no prospect of the roll recovering to a level that would justify re-opening the school.

### **Option 3 - Re-Opening of Kinlochewe Primary School with an Expanded Catchment Area**

- 9.1 The Kinlochewe PS catchment covers a wide area, just over 161 square miles in total. To the east, its nearest neighbour is Strathgarve Primary (part of the Dingwall ASG), but Strathgarve is itself a tiny rural school with a total roll in single figures. To the west the nearest schools are Gairloch Primary and Shieldaig Primary, but although both schools have wide catchment areas, there is no significant population in either catchment beyond the two central communities. Widening the Kinlochewe PS catchment would not solve the issues around low roll that led to the school being mothballed.

### **Option 4 – Re-opening Kinlochewe PS as a School offering Gaelic Medium Education**

- 10.1 As mentioned above, Kinlochewe Primary School has never offered Gaelic Medium education. Children from the area may attend Gairloch PS in order to access GME. However, the number of children concerned does not meet the criteria of five that would require a GMPE assessment under the terms of the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, and no such request has ever been received.
- 10.2 There is a well-known national shortage of Gaelic Medium teachers at the present time. A recent attempt by Highland to introduce GME at Applecross Primary in Wester Ross foundered due to a lack of applicants for the post, and in general Highland Council struggles to staff its already extensive provision of GME. In terms of expanding GME, Highland Council intends to prioritize schools where parents have actively requested a GMPE assessment.
- 10.3 Lack of pupil numbers would however be a significant barrier to re-opening Kinlochewe Primary as a school offering GME.

## Educational Benefits

- 11.1 Highland Council is of the view that the school environment should be of a quality that sustains and improves education provision, pupil performance and outcomes for the young people of Highland.
- 11.2 Highland Council has adopted the following indicators in reviewing its' school estate:
- Pupils should be educated in facilities which are rated at least category B for each of Condition and Suitability.
  - Pupils should be members of an age-appropriate peer group.
  - Pupils should have the opportunity to engage in the widest possible range of activities beyond the core curriculum, including music, sports, drama and art.
  - Pupils with Additional Support Needs should be educated in the most appropriate local setting.
  - Pupils should not ordinarily be required to travel for longer than 30 minutes from the nearest classified road pick-up point to school (primary) although it is recognised that this may not always be possible in a rural council area such as Highland.
  - School facilities should be of a size appropriate to the delineated area that they serve, paying due regard to demographic trends.
  - School delineated areas should reflect geography, travel routes and population distribution.
  - Safe school transport should be provided and safe traffic management in and around school sites should be implemented.
  - Teachers should be members of a professional learning community comprising at least 3 members located in the same facility.
  - The implications of school location to local communities should be considered.
  - Schools, wherever possible, should be located where there is a recognised village or other built-up community.
- 11.3 As mentioned above, evidence gathered by Highland Council to date suggests that there is no realistic prospect of a viable roll at Kinlochewe PS. Currently there are no pupils in the P1-7 age group within the Kinlochewe catchment, excepting those who attend other schools voluntarily. Any individual pupils who might be in the area would suffer educational detriment from attending a school by themselves or perhaps with one other pupil.
- 11.4 Children at both Gairloch PS and Shieldaig PS regularly work in co-operative learning groups of various sizes. The very small roll of a re-opened Kinlochewe PS would mean that the groups would not only be limited in size but also static, since there would be no possibility of changing the membership of learning groups. A very small roll would also limit the variety of skills that pupils could bring to the groups, and there would be a smaller range of work to use in terms of sharing standards.
- 11.5 A larger school roll makes it easier for the school to attract visiting speakers, tutors and other external partners to work with the children. In many cases external partners look for a certain threshold in the number of children they will be working with.

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- 11.6 Working with others across a wide range of settings is one of the core elements of the school curriculum. This includes planning and carrying out projects in small groups, sharing tasks and responsibilities, and being ready and willing to learn from and with others. Working with others also plays a part in the development of leadership skills, which become increasingly important to pupils as they move through their school years and beyond school education into adulthood.
- 11.7 The existence of pre-school classes at Gairloch PS and Shialdaig PS enables a strong transition process for children moving into P1.
- 11.8 The language programmes at Gairloch PS and Shialdaig PS aim to develop listening, talking, reading and writing skills. Listening is developed by games, stories, radio & television programmes, music, and use of ICT. The school aims to develop fluency and clarity of expression and to extend vocabulary. Talking is developed by role playing, mime, reporting, interviewing etc.
- 11.9 It is self-evident that an overall school roll in single figures restricts opportunities for team sports and other active recreational activities. It further applies to the health and wellbeing element of the curriculum which involves discussion between pupils about health lifestyle choices. Whilst these problems can be overcome by taking the pupils to participate in activities in neighbouring schools, that in itself involves time out of school in travelling.
- 11.9 As with sports, the larger rolls at Gairloch and Shialdaig provide a greater likelihood of pupils benefitting from a wider range of group musical and artistic opportunities, events that are more difficult to deliver with restricted numbers.
- 11.10 The level to which pupils are able to become skilled in social interaction will depend to an extent on the opportunities afforded to them. The forging of close friendships and the development of self-esteem is enhanced by each pupil being enabled to be part of an age-appropriate peer group of a sufficient size to allow a range of interactions and relationships to form and reform.
- 11.11 In summary, there are positive educational benefits to be derived from the closure of Kinlochewe Primary School, due to the significantly increased opportunities that can be provided at Gairloch and Shialdaig. Collaborative working within the classroom, language learning, and artistic and sports activities, and socialisation, can all benefit from the greater numbers that are available. Conversely, the roll of a re-opened Kinlochewe Primary School would be insufficient to keep the school viable.

### **Re-allocation of Kinlochewe PS Catchment**

- 12.1 A map of the current Kinlochewe PS catchment is attached as Appendix D.
- 12.2 In the event that Kinlochewe Primary School closes, there are 2 options for re-allocating school catchment:
- i. Transfer the catchment wholly to that of Gairloch Primary School
  - ii. Transfer the catchment wholly to that of Shialdaig Primary School

## Appendix A

- 12.3 The distances and travel times between the schools is:
- Kinlochewe PS – Gairloch Primary School – 20.3 miles, 31 minutes  
Kinlochewe PS – Shieldaig Primary School – 17.5 miles, 36 minutes
- 12.4 It can be seen from the above that the travel times are not dissimilar, with Shieldaig being slightly nearer in distance terms but slightly further in travel time, due to the nature of the route.
- 12.5 Pupils from Kinlochewe already travel to Gairloch High School when they transfer to secondary education, and the High School is co-located with Gairloch Primary. Merging the Kinlochewe PS catchment with that of Gairloch Primary would therefore be more efficient in transport terms, and would involve less cost to the taxpayer. Pupils might also have the opportunity to travel on the same transport as older siblings.
- 12.6 For Gaelic Medium purposes, the Kinlochewe PS catchment is included with the Gaelic Medium catchment of Gairloch Primary School. There would be merit in aligning the GM and EM catchments.
- 12.7 During informal consultation, the local community council argued it may be more appropriate for the Kinlochewe PS catchment to be merged with that of Shieldaig, should the school close. The village is in the historic parish of Gairloch and children of secondary school age attend Gairloch High School. On the other hand, medical cover is provided by Torridon Medical Practice which also covers Shieldaig and the surrounding area and TKCC's own boundaries reflect the connections between the village and the communities to the west of it. Since the closure of Torridon Primary, the catchment of Shieldaig Primary now extends from Diabaig round Loch Torridon to north Applecross. Whilst it has a good number of pupils at present, the community council argue that may not always be the case and it would be disastrous for many communities if Shieldaig Primary were to close. To include Kinlochewe in its catchment may help secure the position of Shieldaig, this would make a significant difference for Shieldaig Primary and avoid the risk that pupils from outlying areas would have to travel even further than they do at present. Gairloch Primary is unlikely to face such risks.
- 12.7 At present some children from Kinlochewe attending Gairloch Primary School where others attend Shieldaig. Parents seem to have different preferences on which school would be more appropriate for Kinlochewe children to attend.
- 12.8 Taking the above into account, Highland Council proposes that the Kinlochewe PS catchment should be transferred to that of Gairloch Primary School, upon the closure of Kinlochewe. The Council would however welcome views on this aspect of the proposal.
- 12.9 A map of the proposed merged catchment is at **Appendix E**, whilst **Appendix F** shows a map of the new catchment, should the Kinlochewe catchment be merged with that of Shieldaig rather than Gairloch.

## **Effect of Differing Transport Arrangements**

- 13.1 Currently, all of the pupils within the Kinlochewe PS catchment attend other schools. Therefore, no differing transport arrangements would need to be applied in the event Kinlochewe PS is formally closed.
- 13.2 The travel times between Kinlochewe Primary and its neighbouring schools are set out at paragraph 12.3 above.
- 13.3 The closure of the school would not at present result in any additional CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions arising from transport. Any that arise in the future would be negligible and would in any case be set against the annual emissions of over that could be expected from the Kinlochewe Primary School building itself were it operational.

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

- 14.1 As the school is already “mothballed” there will be no impact on school management arrangements at Gairloch PS or Shieldaig PS from a formal closure of Kinlochewe Primary School.
- 14.2 A continuation of the current mothballing arrangement will have no effect on current staffing arrangements.

## **Effect on the Local Community**

- 15.1 Kinlochewe has an existing village hall, and so will retain a public space even if the school were to close.
- 15.2 Subject to the Council not having any operational need for the building, Highland Council would be keen to work with the local community over the future use of the building and site. Any such proposal would however have to be progressed within the terms of the Council’s current asset management arrangements.
- 15.3 It is often argued that a school closure has a detrimental impact on the community in terms of attracting new families. This issue was considered by the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, set up by the Scottish Government, and which reported in 2014, The Commission noted that a school alone cannot sustain a rural community. Other issues are likely to be as critical to maintaining a working age population. The two most important were jobs and housing. As the Commission noted, without employment opportunities and affordable housing, families can neither move to an areanor remain there. While local schools are strongly desirable in a similar way to local healthcare and a local post office, it seems likely that rural communities generally manage to tolerate travelling a further distance to school. The Commission’s review of the scientific and other literature on school closures “found there was a lack of robust evidence on how pre-school, childcare and school proximity (and freedom from threat of closure) links to the sustainability of communities.”

## **Financial Consequences**

- 16.1 The Table at **Appendix G** sets out the Highland Council's assessment of the Financial Implications of the proposed merger. As the school is currently mothballed, the savings identified are already being made and no additional saving would arise to the Council from closure.
- 16.2 The table does not include property costs that would arise if Kinlochewe PS were to become operational once more. At the present time this figure can only be a very rough estimate.

## **Impact Assessments**

- 17.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached at **Appendix H**.

## **Mitigation of Adverse Effects**

- 18.1 As there are currently no pupils within the Kinlochewe Primary School catchment not already attending other schools on either placing requests or to attend GME, no adverse effects arise.

## **Recommendation**

- 19.1 Taking the above into account Highland Council recommends that Kinlochewe Primary School, currently "mothballed," is closed and the catchment area re-assigned to that of Gairloch Primary School.
- 19.2 This proposal 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**

School Roll Forecast  
 Gairloch High School  
 Gairloch High School

Appendix B.

5139120	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38	2038/39
S 1	13	22	19	13	20	22	12	12	13	11	10	6	9	14	15	15
S 2	17	13	22	19	13	20	22	12	12	13	11	10	6	9	15	15
S 3	20	17	13	22	19	13	20	22	12	12	13	11	10	6	9	15
S 4	16	20	17	13	22	19	13	20	22	12	12	13	11	10	6	9
S 5	11	14	17	15	11	19	17	11	17	19	11	11	12	10	9	5
S 6	12	7	9	12	10	8	13	11	8	12	13	7	7	8	6	6
<b>Total Roll</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-251	-247	-243	-246	-245	-239	-243	-252	-256	-261	-270	-282	-285	-283	-280	-275
<b>Tot Roll/Tot Cap %</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>19%</b>

**School Roll Forecast**  
 Gairloch High School  
 Bualnaluib Primary

5113725	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38	2038/39
P 1	2	3	2	0	0	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3
P 2	3	2	3	2	0	0	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2
P 3	5	3	2	3	2	0	0	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3
P 4	4	5	3	2	3	2	0	0	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	3
P 5	3	4	5	3	2	3	2	0	0	1	2	3	2	3	3	2
P 6	3	3	4	5	3	2	3	2	0	0	1	2	3	2	3	3
P 7	9	3	3	4	5	3	2	3	2	0	0	1	2	3	3	2
<b>Total Roll</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-21	-27	-28	-31	-35	-39	-40	-39	-40	-39	-37	-34	-33	-32	-31	-32
<b>Tot Roll/Tot Cap %</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>36%</b>



School Roll Forecast  
 Gairloch High School  
 Gairloch Primary

5153425	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38	2038/39
P 1	9	6	5	8	4	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
P 2	2	9	6	5	8	4	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	8	7	7
P 3	9	2	9	6	5	8	4	6	7	7	7	7	7	8	7	7
P 4	8	9	2	9	6	5	8	4	5	8	7	7	8	7	7	7
P 5	7	8	9	2	9	6	5	8	4	5	8	7	7	8	7	7
P 6	9	7	8	9	2	9	6	5	8	4	5	8	7	7	8	7
P 7	12	9	7	8	9	2	9	6	5	8	4	5	8	7	8	7
<b>Total Roll</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-68	-74	-78	-77	-81	-84	-79	-81	-81	-78	-79	-76	-73	-72	-73	-75
<b>Tot Roll/Tot Cap %</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>40%</b>

School Roll Forecast  
 Gairloch High School  
 Poolewe Primary

5117429	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38	2038/39
P 1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1
P 2	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	2
P 3	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	1
P 4	3	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2
P 5	2	3	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	1
P 6	2	2	3	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	2	1	2	2
P 7	0	2	2	3	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	2	1	2
<b>Total Roll</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-41	-41	-42	-43	-45	-45	-45	-44	-42	-41	-39	-40	-39	-39	-39	-39
<b>Tot Roll/Tot Cap %</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>22%</b>

School Roll Forecast  
 Gairloch High School  
 Shildaig Primary

5117828	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38	2038/39
P 1	1	4	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2
P 2	6	1	4	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2
P 3	7	6	1	4	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	3
P 4	4	7	6	1	4	2	1	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	3
P 5	0	4	7	6	1	4	2	1	2	1	3	2	2	2	3	2
P 6	5	0	4	7	6	1	4	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	2
P 7	1	5	0	4	7	6	2	3	3	1	1	2	2	2	2	3
<b>Total Roll</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-22	-19	-22	-21	-24	-29	-32	-33	-31	-35	-32	-30	-31	-31	-30	-29
<b>Tot Roll/Tot Cap %</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>37%</b>

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This background paper describes the high level approach taken in preparing school roll forecasts for primary and secondary schools in Highland. It describes the basic methodology used and changes introduced to the processes to improve transparency and ease of use of the forecasts.
- 1.2 The existing school roll forecasting methodology has been iteratively developed over several decades with improvements and adjustments to account for circumstances in Highland. Given the school capacity pressures experienced in recent years, Highland Council's Development and Infrastructure - Information and Research department, together with Care and Learning, took the opportunity to look afresh at the forecasting process. This research has informed the 2017/18 School Roll Forecasts and the preparation of the draft Developer Contributions Supplementary guidance (consultation 2018).
- 1.3 It has been recognised that there is a need for a simplified approach to determining the effect of residential development on the school estate. In preparing the forecasts, a key consideration was the usability of these forecasts to easily identify all anticipated residential developments which feed into the forecasts and undertake development scenario modelling. This information is critical for effective planning of the school estate and assessing Local Development Plan site allocations as well as individual development proposals.
- 1.4 An integrated primary and secondary school Excel spreadsheet based approach has been developed to give confidence in school roll forecasting. A baseline forecast is updated and published annually, which also acts as a template that can now be used for modelling future school rolls based on testing various potential development and school estate management scenarios.

## **2 Input Datasets and Factors**

- 2.1 A key factor in school roll forecasting is a detailed and accurate assessment of the likely residential build-out timescales for new developments. The annual Housing Land Audit (HLA) provides this base information. Since 2016, the HLA has been prepared in parallel with the creation of the annual School Roll Forecasts. In addition to programmed build out rates for Local Development Plan site allocations, allowance for smaller scale 'windfall' development sites is also applied to the forecasts. This windfall rate is based on the prevailing average for the primary school catchment in the previous two years. The build out and delivery of multiple residential developments, which often take place within a similar timeframe, contribute to cumulative pressures on the school estate.

- 2.2 The ratio of additional pupils expected to derive from newly constructed housing (the Pupil Product Ratio or PPR) is the major influence on increasing school rolls. The rates used in Highland are 0.3 primary pupils and 0.13 secondary per new home. These figures are comparable with those used across many Scottish Local Authorities and have been found to be accurate and reliable as recently assessed and reported in the School Pupil Product Ratio Review, prepared by The Highland Council - Information and Research, September 2017.
- 2.3 Forecasts are informed by an annual school pupil census, combined with information on current school capacities to provide the baseline and start point for forecasting and roll pressure analysis. These are provided by Care and Learning and are updated regularly to comply with the latest legislation and regulatory requirements.
- 2.4 Pre-school year group values are populated using GP registration figures supplied by the NHS, to identify children which are not yet of school age. These will be included in the calculation of future P1 intakes for Primary Schools.
- 2.5 A significant exercise was undertaken in 2017 to increase the accuracy of pupil flow modelling. We analyse the current flow of pupils attending schools outwith their catchment area school to determine future roll adjustments from Placing Request applications, as well as calculate intake numbers for Gaelic and Denominational schools.

### **3 Methodology**

- 3.1 Once the input datasets have been refreshed with the latest values, the spreadsheet can be used to forecast school rolls for the next 15 years. As a baseline, each projection sheet shows the number of pupils in each year group for the current school year.
- 3.2 For every additional year to be forecast, the number of pupils expected in each year group will be updated to take account of the influences from the various input datasets, including additional pupils from new housing development completions.
- 3.3 Using the residential development information, estimated build out rates are aggregated by primary catchment and an updated windfall contribution is added to give a year by year additional housing count for each. These values are combined with the Pupil Product Ratios to predict the number of additional pupils expected per school for each year forecast.



- 3.4 These anticipated new housing yields are combined with expected Placing Request numbers and are used to adjust the pupil numbers moving through the education system. Primary School P1 rolls are based on the Pre-school figures collected from the NHS and Secondary School S1 rolls use the product of last years Primary P7 pupils. All other Primary and Secondary year groups are based on the number of pupils expected to progress through from the previous school year. Adjusted year group figures for each projected year are displayed alongside baseline roll figures.
- 3.5 Total school rolls forecasted are reported against school capacities to highlight current and future school's capacity constraints or where schools have excess capacity.

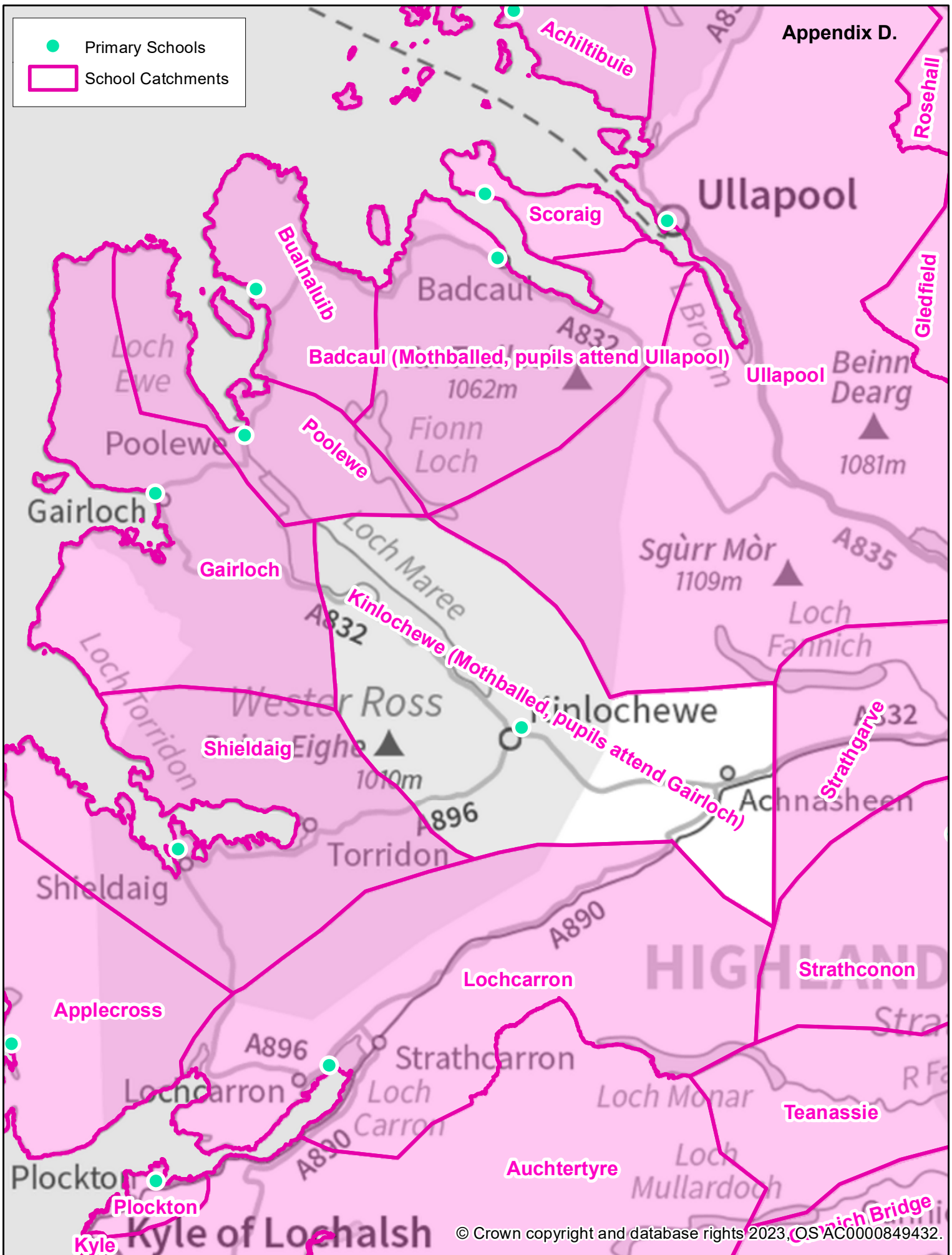
## **4 Outputs**

- 4.1 Forecasts are aggregated into a single summary sheet for each Associated School Group (ASG) and published annually via the Highland Council's Website. From 2018, we will also be publishing mid-year update sheets to reflect any significant changes to the school estate.
- 4.2 The published School Roll Forecast is used internally as a baseline to enable effective management of the school estate and forms an essential part of the Council's evidence base for informing planning decision making.

END

The Highland Council - Information and Research  
Development and Infrastructure  
September 2017

 Primary Schools  
 School Catchments



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# Kinlochewe Primary School Existing Catchment

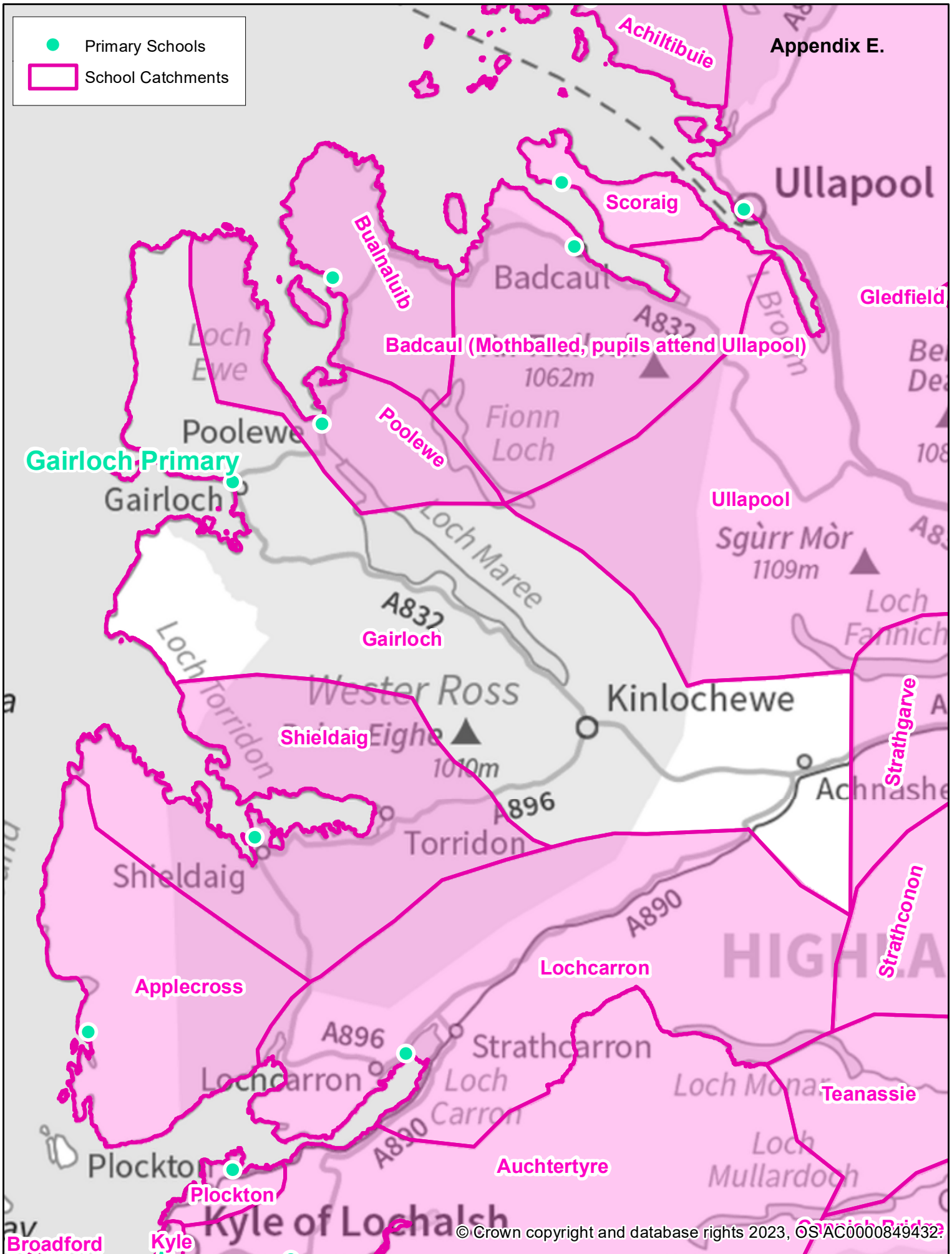


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Ref: gis2850  
Date: Dec2023

● Primary Schools  
 School Catchments



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# Kinlochewe Merged with Gairloch Primary School Catchment

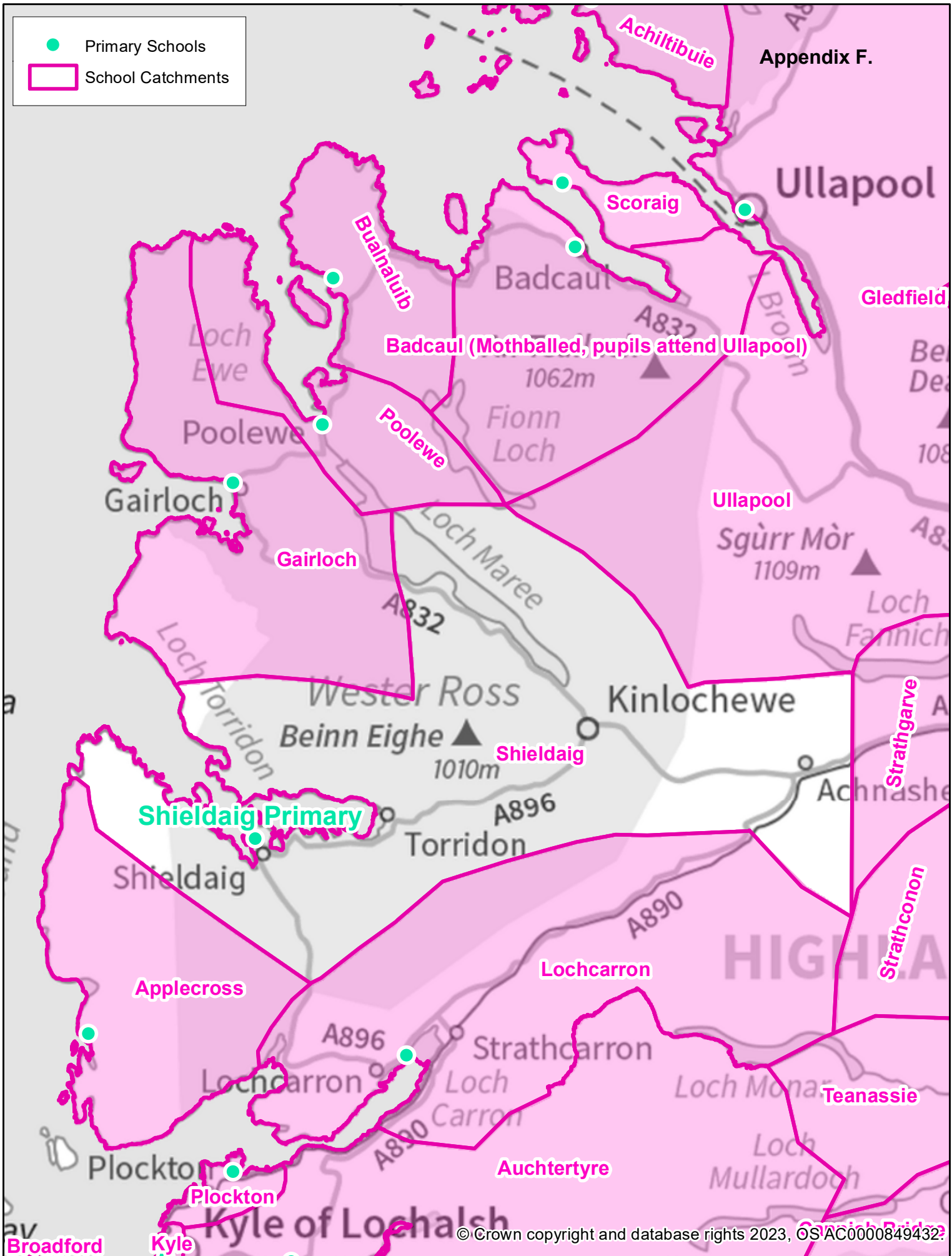
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● Primary Schools  
 □ School Catchments



## Kinlochewe Merged with Shildaig Primary School Catchment

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 Date: Dec2023

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## Appendix G.

### Financial Template

Table 1	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Row 1	<b>Current revenue costs for school proposed for closure</b>			
	<b>Name of School</b> Kinlochewe Primary School	<b>Costs for full financial year (projected annual costs)</b>	<b>Costs (during the period of Mothball)</b>	<b>Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)</b>
Row 2	<b>School costs</b>			
Row 3	<b>Employee costs</b>			
Row 5	teaching staff	£73,493	£0	£73,493
Row 6	support staff	£12,621	£0	£12,621
Row 7	teaching staff training (CPD etc)	£256	£0	£256
Row 8	support staff training	£0	£0	£0
Row 9	Supply costs	£1,035	£0	£1,035
Row 10	<b>Building costs:</b>			
Row 12	property insurance	£88	£88	£0
Row 13	non domestic rates	£0	£0	£0
Row 14	water & sewerage charges	£295	£295	£0
Row 15	energy costs	£14,242	£14,242	£0
Row 16	cleaning (contract or inhouse)	£0	£0	£0
Row 17	building repair & maintenance	£151	£151	£0
Row 18	grounds maintenance	£0	£0	£0
Row 19	facilities management costs - note 6	£0	£0	£0
Row 20	revenue costs arising from capital	£0	£0	£0
Row 21	other	£0	£0	£0
Row 22	<b>School operational costs:</b>			
Row 24	learning materials	£1,274	£0	£1,274
Row 25	catering (contract or inhouse)**see additic	£0	£0	£0
Row 26	SQA costs	£0	£0	£0
Row 27	other school operational costs (e.g. licence	£0	£0	£0
Row 28	<b>Transport costs: note 3</b>			
Row 30	home to school	£0	£0	£0
Row 31	other pupil transport costs	£0	£0	£0
Row 32	staff travel	£174	£0	£174
Row 33	<b>SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>£103,629</b>	<b>£14,776</b>	<b>£88,853</b>
Row 34	<b>Income:</b>			
Row 36	Sale of meals	£0	£0	£0
Row 37	Lets	£0	£0	£0
Row 38	External care provider	£0	£0	£0
Row 39	Other	£0	£0	£0
Row 40	<b>SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>£0</b>
Row 42	<b>TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOC</b>	<b>£103,629</b>	<b>£14,776</b>	<b>£88,853</b>
Row 44	<b>UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR</b>	<b>34,543</b>	<b>4,925</b>	<b>29,618</b>

Table 2	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7
<b>Capital costs</b>		<b>School proposed for closure</b>	<b>Receiving school</b>
Capital Life Cycle cost - note 7			
Third party contributions to capital costs			

Table 3	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7
<b>Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal</b>			
property insurance			£88
non domestic rates			£0
water & sewerage charges			£295
energy costs			£14,242
cleaning (contract or inhouse)			£0
security costs			£0
building repair & maintenance			£151
grounds maintenance			£0
facilities management costs			£0
other			£0
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL</b>			<b>£14,776</b>

Table 4	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7
<b>Non-recurring revenue costs</b>			
Catering Equipment			0
<b>TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS</b>			<b>-</b>

Table 5	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7
<b>Impact on GAE - note 5</b>			
<b>GAE IMPACT</b>			

#### Notes

1. The total costs incurred for teaching staff (row 5) and support staff (row 6) are required to be included. Column 2 should include the current costs for a full financial year for the school proposed for closure, and column 3 should include the *additional* cost to the receiving school as a result of staff transferring.

For teaching staff, this should include regular teachers, itinerant teachers, learning support teaching staff and special education (ASN) staff.

Itinerant teaching staff includes central support services such as English as additional language support, hearing, visually impaired services, educational psychology services.

For support staff, this should include classroom assistants, administration staff and janitorial staff.

For all staff the costs entered should include salary, NI and pension costs.

If the school proposed for closure has less than 3 staff members, then the cumulative staff costs only should be given in row 5 (for both teaching and support staff), so as to avoid possible disclosure of individual salaries.

Training costs should be identified separately in rows 7 and 8.

2. Supply costs to cover teaching and support staff. This may be held in a central budget, be devolved or shared across the budgets.

3. 'Home to school' pupil transport costs should include those school transport costs incurred in accordance with Council policy. 'Other pupil transport costs' will cover costs incurred for the transport of pupils for activities such as swimming etc

4. Row 30 of column 3 should include the additional transport costs related to the increased home to school transport arrangements that are put in place in accordance with Council policy. This figure is therefore likely to be considerably higher than current costs.

5. This table is to capture the impact on the revenue support grant as a result of changes to GAE. Impact on GAE should consider the issues covered in the GAE section of the guidance document that accompany this template.

6. Facilities management costs will include costs related to caretaking, janitorial and security.

7. The capital costs for the receiving school should be taken across the life cycle of the school in line with the life expectancy of that school. The capital costs for the school proposed for closure should be taken across the same life cycle period.

Note: As Kinlochewe PS is currently mothballed the costs in column 2 of table 1 above reflect the estimated costs of running the school if it were to reopen, as the school is currently mothballed these savings are already being realised.

Note: