

# The Highland Council

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	EDU/13/25

**Committee:** Education Committee

**Date:** 4 June 2025

**Report Title:** Review of Statutory Consultation – Creation of Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Craighill Primary School and Tain Royal Academy

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

## 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following conclusion of the statutory consultation process, this report and accompanying information sets out a recommendation to formally establish Gaelic Medium (GM) catchment areas for Craighill Primary School (soon to become part of the new merged Tain Primary School) and for Tain Royal Academy.
- 1.2 The proposal was advanced in line with statutory guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which recommends that local authorities create catchment areas for Gaelic Medium education (GME). The original proposal suggested that the new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of all the primary schools within the Associated School groups of Tain Royal Academy, Invergordon Academy, and Dornoch Academy. Having reviewed the results of the consultation exercise, the original proposal has been amended to include the catchment area of Golspie High School within the new GM catchment.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:

Agree to recommend to the Council the creation of Gaelic Medium catchment areas in line with the proposal set out at paragraph 1.2 above, namely, overlaying the current English Medium catchments of all primary schools within the Associated School Groups of Tain Royal Academy, Invergordon Academy, Dornoch Academy and Golspie High School.

## 3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource - The Proposal seeks to maximise access to Gaelic Medium Education (GME) whilst still considering and balancing financial implications, particularly with regard to school transport. The proposal largely confirms existing “custom and practice” arrangements, but the revision to the catchment proposed as a result of the consultation exercise could lead to minor additional transport costs.

- 3.2 Legal - The Proposal has been taken forward under the provisions of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010; and the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, issued in 2017.
- 3.3 Risk – No significant risks have been identified.
- 3.4 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people) – None.
- 3.5 Gaelic - The Proposal will provide clarity to local parents, in respect of entitlement to GME.

#### 4. Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies, or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary**
- 4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening was undertaken on 22 April 2025. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.
- 4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded that the impact of the proposal is limited, and mainly positive. 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>Positive impact</i></li> <li>Children affected by disability – <i>No impact</i></li> <li><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 impact</i>
Data Rights	<i>No significant impact</i>

#### 5. Overview

- 5.1 Appendix 2 is the Proposal for decision. The original Proposal issued for consultation, and relevant documents for consideration by the Committee, are all also circulated as

appendices to this paper. They provide details of all consultation comments received, the note of the public meeting, the report from Education Scotland, and the Council's response to comments arising from the consultation.

- 5.2 The proposal was widely circulated to parents, pupils, and other stakeholders. There were 9 written responses received during the consultation period. These are addressed in the "Responses" section of Appendix 2. The note of the public meeting can be found at **Appendix 3**.
- 5.4 The overwhelming majority of the comments received related to a desire to see the proposed catchment area widened. The Council has responded to these comments by agreeing to widen the GM catchment.
- 5.5 The other main concern expressed was around the future provision of school transport. The review report confirms that no changes are planned to the current arrangements.

## **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 7 May 2025. Any further representations that are received will be tabled at the Committee for consideration by Members.
- 6.2 As this report relates to a statutory consultation, any decision taken by this Committee will be considered by the full Highland Council before being implemented.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - People

Date: 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  
Appendices 4i-4x – Copies of Individual Responses\*  
Appendix 5 – Education Scotland Report  
Appendix 5A- Education Scotland Report (Gàidhlig version)  
Appendix 6 – Proposed Map of new GM catchments  
Appendix A – Proposal Paper  
Appendix B – Catchment area originally proposed in consultation

\* Appendices 4ix and 4x are restricted to Elected Members and Council Officers, at the respondents' request.

# 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 creating GM catchment areas for Tain, Dornoch and Invergordon ASGs (with a change proposed from the consultation)

**High level summary of the proposal:** We will formally define catchment areas for pupils accessing GME, clarifying existing HC practice which is inconsistently applied.

**Who may be affected by the proposal?** Children accessing GME; and their parents; and parents of pre-school children interested in GME. Staff of the schools affected.

**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 creating GM catchment areas for Tain, Dornoch and Invergordon ASGs - as described above.

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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:** Colette Macklin

**Job title:** Head of Service, Education & Learning

**Email address:** Colette.Macklin@highland.gov.uk

**Sign off date:** 2025-04-22

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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 relates to schools and therefore, primarily affects the 3-18 age group. However, 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:** The proposal clarifies existing "Custom and Practice" around access to GME.

## 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:** No human rights will be impacted,

## 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?** The proposal is intended to clarify access to GME, which parents can opt for on a voluntary basis, but where there is no compulsion. The proposal gives effect to the principle of equality between Gaelic and English.

The review of the proposal has led to a widening of the proposed GM catchment, over what was originally proposed.

**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 revised Proposal widens access to GME for children in east Ross and east Sutherland. Children's views were sought and considered as part of the formal consultation.

## 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, phone numbers or signatures). All respondents were offered to opportunity to request that their response is not published and some have taken advantage of that offer.

**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?** No

## 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:** The proposal could result in some very minor changes to school transport, with pupils travelling to access GME in Tain.

## 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 ESTABLISH GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREAS FOR CRAIGHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND TAIN ROYAL ACADEMY**

This report has been prepared following a review of the proposal to establish Gaelic Medium (GM) catchment area for Craighill Primary School (soon to become part of the new merged Tain Primary School) and Tain Royal Academy

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period.
- Oral representations made to it (by any persons) at the public meeting held online on 11 February 2025.
- The report from Education Scotland.

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

The report proposes an amendment to the original proposal, to include the Golspie ASG within the new Gaelic Medium catchment. Further details are set out at Section 4.0 and 11.0 below.

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## **Appendices**

**Appendix 2** - Minute of public meeting held at Craighill Primary School on 11 February 2025

**Appendix 3** - List of Respondents to Statutory Consultation

**Appendix 3i-3x** – Copies of individual responses

**Appendix 4** - Report from Education Scotland (English language version)

**Appendix 5** - Report from Education Scotland (Gàidhlig language version)

**Appendix 6** – Revised GM catchment for Craighill PS and Tain RA

**Appendix A** - The proposal document

**Appendix B** – Original Proposed GM catchment for Craighill PS and Tain RA

## **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 establish a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Craighill Primary School, soon to be part of the new merged Tain Primary School, and for Tain Royal Academy.
- 1.2 The Proposal Paper suggested that the new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of all the primary schools within the Associated School groups of Tain Royal Academy, Invergordon Academy and Dornoch Academy.
- 1.3 **Appendix A** is the original consultative paper and provides full details of the above proposal. **Appendix B** is the appendix to the original proposal.
- 1.4 Having reviewed the results of the consultation exercise, the original proposal has been amended to include the catchment area of Golspie High School within the new GM catchment.

## **2.0 Consultation process**

- 2.1 The formal consultation period ran from Monday 20 January 2025 to Friday 7 March 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 of pupils attending the schools in the Tain, Dornoch and Invergordon ASGs above, including parents of pre-school pupils.
  - (ii) The Parent Councils of each of the above schools.
  - (iii) All staff of the schools listed above.
  - (iv) Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.
  - (v) Trade union representatives.
  - (vi) All Community Councils for the areas covered by the Proposal.
  - (vii) Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
  - (viii) Comann nam Pàrant.
  - (ix) Education Scotland.
- 2.3 The proposal document was advertised on the Highland Council website.
- 2.4 A public meeting was held at Craighill Primary School on 11 February 2025. The meeting was advertised in advance on the Highland Council website and in the *Ross-shire Journal*. The note of the meeting is at **Appendix 2**.
- 2.5 Following receipt of written representations received by Highland Council and consideration of oral representations made at the public meeting, officials reviewed the proposals.
- 2.6 The outcome of this review process is reflected in the response, conclusion and recommendations outlined below.
- 3.0 Responses received**
- 3.1 A list of those who responded in writing during the public consultation is at **Appendix 3**. There were 9 written responses received during the consultation period (not including the responses from the children). Copies of these responses can also be found at **Appendices 3i-3x**. Two respondents exercised their rights under Data Protection legislation not to have their responses published online.
- 3.2 Two responses were submitted on behalf of organisations (Comann nam Pàrant, and Bòrd na Gàidhlig), and another from the Lairg Primary School Parent Council. The remaining six responses were from local parents, school staff, or local residents.
- 4.0 Issues raised during public consultation**
- 4.1 The issues raised in writing during the consultation exercise are summarised below, together with the responses from the Council. Where different responses raise similar issues, these have been “grouped” for the purposes of the response.

<p><b>Issue 1</b></p>
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<p>I think the catchment should be wider. It's not fair to stop people coming to Gaelic just because they live a wee while away.</p>
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The more people we include in the area the more people can learn Gaelic.

There should be more Gaelic in other schools.

It's not fair on people that live outwith the catchment.

It's not fair that the Highland Council gets to choose where pupils go.

I think that it isn't fair if some kids get the opportunity to learn in Gaelic but others outside the catchment won't.

I think Lairg, Golspie and Brora should be included.

It is not fair if other people in their families speak Gaelic but they won't be able to go to a Gaelic school.

Restricting pupils from Gaelic Medium education (GME) goes against articles 28 and 30 of the UNCRC Rights of the Child.

There should be no restrictions on parents looking to send their children to Gaelic Medium Education, East Sutherland a once stronghold of the Gaelic language is severely lacking in opportunities for GME.

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed Tain GME catchment area and how this will affect children from Sutherland.

Whilst I'm not necessarily against a catchment area, how can it work when the children from areas of Sutherland previously able to attend now won't be able to if this goes ahead, but they also won't be able to access GME in another catchment area as there isn't one! In reality there will be no option for them at all, and I do know of families from these excluded areas who had hoped to put their child(ren) to GME in Tain.

There is currently no Gaelic Medium Education in Sutherland at all and only Gaelic for Learners S1-S4 in one of the 4 secondary schools, so young people here are severely disadvantaged. This proposed catchment area will now exclude even more of Sutherland that previously could actually access Gaelic.

These might not seem like huge numbers but every child is important. It doesn't feel like anytime since my own children were in GME, but recently they have all been passing on Gaelic to our communities through Gaelic song workshops, Gaelic wreath making and as musicians in a Sutherland Seachdain na Gàidhlig concert. If children here can't access the language then how can it be passed on?

I would be in favour of adding Golspie to the catchment area, until such time as Golspie may have its own GME provision (analogous to Bonar Bridge), so as not to hinder the development of Gaelic in the area, and to enable the creation of new Gaelic speakers to fill jobs (including teaching) and serve the growing Gaelic community further down the line in many ways, volunteering, care, culture, community work etc. The awareness of investment by HC in such provision will undoubtedly be seen as encouraging to Gaelic in general, providing a signal, and also foster among parents and children a sense of loyalty to both the language and to the HC area in terms of giving back, formally or informally.

GME should be accessible to all and the catchment should not cause obstacles for those who are within a reasonable position to travel.

The main thrust of this proposal is to do something about the "lack of clarity for parents in respect of entitlement to GME" and, to a lesser extent, saving money on transport costs.

Any lack of clarity must in some part (maybe a large part) be to do with the paucity of GME provision in the areas covered by this proposal and the areas on its borders.

I would argue that this militates against having too tightly drawn a catchment area - doing so directly impedes Highland Council's other, more important in my opinion, duty, "to promote and support Gaelic education".

The fact is that for children in the bordering parishes and areas outwith the catchment area - parts of Creich & Kincardine, Lairg and Rogart – there is no other access to GME primary education, or even Gaelic as a second or third option, and precious little secondary school opportunity to learn Gaelic (only at Dornoch to some extent). So in cutting off access to Craighill and Tain Royal Academy, HC is actually removing access to and support for the language, and all the benefits of bilingualism, in one of its most critically endangered areas.

I have nothing against the principle of catchment areas in general and I understand the reasoning behind Bòrd na Gàidhlig's guidance on the issue, but in this case there needs to be a different interpretation to the one proposed in this consultation. Highland Council should continue to allow children from the bordering districts in Sutherland to access GME in Tain, in the absence of absolutely any other alternative for them.

Which brings me to transport. It seems mean in the extreme to allow younger siblings of children already enrolled at Craighill, but who are outwith the proposed catchment area, to also enrol and use the school transport – but then to deprive them of transport once their older sibling(s) leave the primary school. Based on the pupil numbers quoted in the consultation document, the cost to HC would be negligible in the grand scheme of things. Indeed the prospect of this happening might make parents decide not to enrol the younger children in GME. Craighill's roll might actually fall from what it could currently be forecast to be. So this is yet another way in which the proposal could have the opposite effect to the stated intention of increasing the percentage of HC pupils in GME.

I find it very hard to believe that Bòrd na Gàidhlig would prefer Highland Council to stick to the strict letter of their guidance re catchment areas, rather than being flexible enough to allow families who really want GME for their children to have access to it, thereby supporting the language and benefiting the children.

The Scottish government has just announced £5.7 million of funding to support Gaelic. I sincerely hope Highland Council will be able to use some of this funding to improve access to GME in this area.

We are writing to provide feedback to address the proposed Gaelic Medium Catchment for Craighill Primary and Tain Royal Academy. We are

disappointed to hear that this proposal excludes Lairg Primary School. While Lairg may be considered rural on a national level, each child in Scotland deserves the same access to educational opportunities, including Gaelic language education.

By excluding Lairg and Golspie schools, the Highland Council would be adding an additional barrier of a catchment area where there is no other alternative for Sutherland families, effectively blocking children from accessing Gaelic language education. This provides a hurdle to educational access that will rob Sutherland families from the choice to access Gaelic language education, which is vital to engaging with the area's historical language and culture. In addition, it has been made aware to us that several families in Lairg remained unaware of Gaelic education being a resource available to their children, due to lack of advertisement.

A proposed solution to this issue is to not have the catchment area or to expand it to include Lairg and Golspie schools and all other related feeder Primary Schools.

Please do not neglect the educational rights of the children of Sutherland within the Lairg, Golspie, and all other related feeder primary schools by refusing their access to Gaelic education.

Comann nam Pàrant (Nàiseanta) (CnP) welcomes the formalisation of school catchment areas for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) for the Tain Campus. We also appreciate the complexities around these catchments due to the geography of the area and the current lack of Gaelic medium education in Sutherland.

We welcome the inclusion of the Bonar Bridge Primary School catchment in the new catchment for Tain, whilst the provision at Bonar Bridge remains mothballed.

We agree that the GM catchment for Tain should overlay the English Medium catchments of the schools in the Tain, Dornoch and Invergordon ASGs.

We support the request from parents and others in the community that the catchment be extended to include the Golspie High School English medium catchment, for the following reasons:

There are some pupils currently accessing GME from Invershin, which lies between Lairg and Tain, but within the Lairg catchment. This is an indication that families are of the opinion that the travelling distance from this area is reasonable and until alternative GME provision is established within the Lairg area other families in a similar position in the future should be supported to access GME in Tain.

The new catchment area should be responsive to the situation within Sutherland where there is currently no provision for GME. This would also support the council's stated aim, "The Council is sympathetic to the idea that Gàidhlig Medium Education should be accessible as many pupils Highland as possible, provided it is practical and reasonable to provide access."

One of the aims of the formalising the catchment is to increase the uptake of GME by providing reassurance to parents that their transport is secure in legislation. In this instance, the exclusion of areas that have previously been included has potential to result in declining numbers of pupils in GME.

We welcome the council's commitment to continue to promote the opportunity for parents to submit a request for GMPE in line with the Education Act (Scotland) 2016.

We will continue to support early years activities and promotion of GME within the Sutherland area with a view to seeing such a request from parents at some point in the near future.

In principle Bòrd na Gàidhlig supports the establishment of a clear catchment area for the GME provision in Craighill Primary School / Tain 3-18 Campus, both Secondary and Primary provision, as proposed by the Highland Council.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig note that parents have raised concerns that Golspie ASG has not been included in the catchment area when historically, families from this ASG have previously accessed GME at Craighill Primary School.

We note that the consultation document indicated families are currently accessing GME from Invershin, which is in the Lairg Primary School catchment area and part of Golspie ASG. The proposal that these families will continue to receive transport, until they complete GME, is welcome.

Highland Council should give due consideration on whether it is appropriate to remove transport to GME from any future families living within the Golspie ASG. While we appreciate that travel time from some areas within the Golspie ASG may be prohibitive, other areas are accessible with parents opting for GME currently and in the past.

We welcome the proposal that should the mothballed GME provision at Bonar Bridge re-open due to increased demand, that the GME catchment for Tain would require to be amended, and new GME catchment published for Bonar Bridge Primary School.

In reference to the recent proposal to establish Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Craighill Primary School and Tain Royal Academy suggested by Highland Council, we are incredibly concerned that Sutherland families will be at a huge cultural disadvantage, and consequently be excluded from future provision of Gaelic medium education due to the proposed change of catchment area.

In addition to this, as there no immediate GME alternative proposed for Sutherland families at present, this leaves future families at a huge loss and significantly adds to the current barriers and concerns around the decline of Gaelic in Sutherland and the community's relationship with its native tongue. Again, this has great ramifications for future parents wanting their children to access a Gaelic education and the potential benefits provided from such a bilingual education.

Gaelic has strong cultural roots in Sutherland, and parents have aspirations for our children, current and future, to access their native language and the benefits of bilingualism. Understandably, we are hugely concerned by current decline and lack of provision in Sutherland. If provision isn't made accessible to all, we are in danger of losing the language and a life-long skill set that a Gaelic Medium Education can provide.

### **Response 1**

The number of comments received in connection with this issue far exceeded those on any other subject.

In drawing up its proposal, the Council sought to strike a balance between making access to GME as wide as possible and the additional transport costs to the taxpayer. We were also mindful of the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, which suggests that GM catchment areas should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school, and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME provision for their children.

Having reviewed the responses submitted during consultation, the Council is minded to widen the proposed catchment to include the area served by Golspie High School.

### **Issue 2**

There is virtually no advertising by Highland Council in Sutherland communities that GME could be a possibility in their schools. I really feel Sutherland has been forgotten about.

### **Response 2**

The above issue is not directly connected to the establishment of a GM catchment for the area, but will be referred to the Council's Gaelic Team for further consideration.

### **Issue 3**

Future transport arrangements for Gaelic education should be suitable for the safety of all ages. While there are parents at Lairg Primary School and Nursery who have expressed interest in enrolling their children into Gaelic education, many families would be unwilling to send their primary school aged children on buses filled with those who are old enough to attend high school.

### **Response 3**

At the present time separate transport is provided to Tain for pupils who live outwith the town itself but who wish to access GME. There are no plans to change the current school transport arrangements. The comment in the Proposal Paper was made because it is impossible to provide commitments about what transport arrangements will be made in the distant future. In hindsight, the comment was unnecessary and caused needless alarm to parents. The transport arrangements for GM pupils will continue as they are for the foreseeable future.

- 4.2 The note of the public meeting is at Appendix 2. There was a lively discussion at the meeting, with comments focused on the same 3 areas of concern were set out in the written representations. Participants thought that the proposed GM catchment should be widened to include the Golspie ASG; that the Council should provide guarantees around separate transport provision for primary school children, and that not enough was being done to promote Gaelic generally. These issues are addressed at Responses 1-3 above.

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

- 5.1 In line with legislative requirements, Education Scotland was invited to submit comments on the Council's proposals. An English language copy of the report from Education Scotland is at **Appendix 5**. A Gaelic language copy is at **Appendix 5A**.
- 5.2 In their report, HM Inspectors agree that the Council's proposal is of educational benefit to children and parents who reside within the catchment areas for Craighill Primary School and Tain Royal Academy (soon to be the Tain 3-18 campus). There are also educational benefits for children within the Invergordon and Dornoch areas. The proposal gives clarity to parents on how to access Gàidhlig Medium Education and a catchment area should be established. HM Inspectors noted that almost all stakeholders who met with them support the proposal, should the catchment be extended to include a wider geographical area. They also expressed their pride in and success in developing fluency in Gàidhlig and are clear about the benefits of bilingualism. HM Inspectors agree with stakeholders that the catchment area should be extended to ensure Gàidhlig Medium Education is accessible to as many children as possible. In taking forward the proposal, the Council should continue working with stakeholders to ensure and resource high-quality 3-18 Gàidhlig Medium Education curriculum and immersion environments in the existing and new Gàidhlig Medium establishments. There are omissions in the proposal regarding transport arrangements for children and young people from Invergordon and Dornoch. It will be important that the Council provide transport arrangements that are safe, feasible, long-term and attractive to realise the educational benefits of the proposal.
- 5.3 The issues raised by Education Scotland are the same as those raised in the public consultation, addressed at Responses 1-3 above.

## **6.0 Effects on the Community**

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

## **7.0 Effects on School Transport**

- 7.1 Travel arrangements are already in place for journeys to the designated GM provision. The proposal will clarify entitlement to this travel, but no changes are planned to the current arrangements.

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

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

## **9.0 Alleged omissions or inaccuracies**

- 9.1 The Report from Education Scotland commented that there was an omission in the report regarding transport arrangements for children and young people from Invergordon and Dornoch. The matter is addressed at Response 3 above.

## **10.0 Overall Review of Consultation Exercise**

- 10.1 The overwhelming majority of the comments received related to a desire to see the proposed catchment area widened. The Council has responded to these comments by agreeing to widen the GM catchment.
- 10.2 The other main concern expressed was around the future provision of school transport. This report confirms that no changes are planned to the current arrangements.

## **11.0 Conclusion**

- 11.1 The consultation process has complied fully with legislative requirements and has provided an opportunity for all parties to identify key issues of concern. These issues have been fully considered and the Council's response detailed in sections 4 and 5 above.
- 11.2 The Education Scotland Inspector met with parents, pupils and staff, and gathered a range of views. Education Scotland also had the opportunity to review in detail the proposal document, all written responses, and the note of the public meeting.
- 11.3 On reviewing all of the submissions, the note of the meeting, and the Education Scotland report; officials conclude that the Proposal to create the new GM catchment areas offers educational benefits and should be implemented, with the amendment that the Golspie High School catchment should included within the new GM catchment.

## **12.0 Recommendation**

- 12.1 It is therefore recommended that Highland Council proceeds with the course of action set out at Paragraph 11.3 above.

**Kate Lackie**

**Assistant Chief Executive, Education**

**7 May 2025**



## **CONSULTATION MEETING – PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREAS FOR CRAIGHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL, AND TAIN ROYAL ACADEMY**

**HELD AT CRAIGHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL – 11 FEBRUARY 2025 – 6.30pm**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING**

#### **Panel**

Cllr. Maureen Ross - Chairperson  
Ian Jackson, Education Officer, Resources  
Lena Walker, Gaelic Education Support Officer  
Pauline Pearson, Education Support Officer

#### **In Attendance**

Eileen Henderson, Head Teacher, Craighill Primary School  
Barbara Daly, Education Scotland  
Dolina Grant, Gaelic Community Officer, Highland Council  
3 class teachers from Craighill Primary School (Lesley Hayes, Sheena MacAskill and Morven Sanderson)  
13 members of the public

**The Chairperson – Cllr. Maureen Ross** introduced herself as Vice-Chair of the Local Area Committee and welcomed everyone to the consultation meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposal to formally establish a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Craighill Primary School, and Tain Royal Academy, as set out in the recommendation to the proposal Paper.

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

The Council officials present tonight were Ian Jackson, Education Officer, (Resources); Lena Walker, Gaelic Education Manager; and Pauline Pearson, Education Support Officer (North)

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

**Ian** commented the Council is required to introduce GM catchment areas under the terms of Statutory Guidance issued by BnaG. The setting up of a catchment area involves a statutory consultation, of which this meeting was part. We are currently in the initial phase of that consultation, which is due to end on Friday 7 March, and

anyone who wants to submit views in writing should do so by that date. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to gather views, and we will try to answer any questions that are raised.

The formal process has a number of stages and gives ample opportunity for views to be expressed to the Council before any final decision is made. Once the public consultation ends on 7 March, Education Scotland becomes involved. They will look at the Proposal Paper, the note of the meeting tonight, and any written representations, and will form a view on the educational benefits of the proposal. Education Scotland will contact Craighill Primary and Tain Royal Academy, and they will be keen to hear from any parents who wish to make their views known. The Council has to take account of Education Scotland's view on the educational benefits and respond to any points raised by their report, as well as any representations received as a result of the consultation process. Following the completion of that stage, the Council will prepare a Report reviewing the consultation exercise and present it to the Council's Education Committee. The Review Report will be published at least 3 weeks before it is submitted to Committee, and anyone who responded in writing to the initial consultation will be invited to make "further representations" during those 3 weeks. Any further representations that are made are submitted to the members of the Committee, either in advance or tabled on the day, so that members are fully informed of any issues that may have arisen. Members will also see copies of the original responses and the note of this meeting.

Because of the Statutory Guidance we mentioned earlier, the Council has to set up Gaelic Medium catchments. What is up for debate is its extent of that catchment. The GM catchment we are proposing for Craighill and TRA encompasses all the schools within the Tain, Dornoch and Invergordon ASGs, meaning that children from these areas will be eligible to enrol in GME at Craighill/TRA if they live within the relevant EM catchments. Up to now there has been a "custom and practice" arrangement in respect of any children who wanted to attend Gaelic Medium education, and there are children from outwith Tain who attend Craighill and TRA, in order to access GME. To an extent therefore, this Proposal is simply formalising arrangements which have already been operating in practice.

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

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

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

**Lena** advised that the Highland Council had been offering GME now for about 40 years, and that within Highland, the presumption is that children are entitled to have their education through the medium of Gaelic. Historically we have not had catchment area for GME, although we have always had regular enquiries for parents about their nearest GM provision. The GM catchment areas help to define which school children have the right to attend when accessing GME. It also provides equity, because there have always been catchment areas for English medium education, but not for GME. The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic education requests that local authorities set up GM catchments, and Highland Council has led the way in Scotland on the creation of these. We have 20 primary schools offering GME, and this is the last to have its GM catchment decided.

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

**Q1** – I understand why GM catchment areas are being proposed, but I would have to challenge the equity issue, as we are effectively blocking the entire county of Sutherland out of GME. It would be useful to understand whether there is a plan to reinstate GME somewhere in Sutherland, and why there was a decision not to include the Golspie ASG as part of the GM catchment area. The ASG includes the villages of Lairg, Rosehall, Rogart, Golspie, and Brora, from where historically we have had a number of children coming to GME.

**A1 (Ian)** – The first thing is to say that if there are any existing children coming from the outwith the proposed catchment, we won't disrupt their existing education. On the wider point, there's a judgment call here in terms of balancing reasonable access to GME and distance. This is a consultation and we need to listen to people's opinions, and if there is an opinion tonight that the Golspie ASG should be included in this GM catchment, then we need to go away and think about that. I can't give promises about what the final decision will be, but we need to consider it. We sought to define what we thought was a reasonable travelling distance. There's always an issue of where you draw the line, and if you include the Golspie ASG you are potentially going all the way up to Helmsdale.

**Q2** – Theoretically yes, but the likelihood of someone putting a 5 year-old to travel in a taxi from Kinbrace to Tain is unrealistic. We have had pupils though from Golspie, from Rogart and from Lairg. If you are talking "custom and practice" there is absolutely a history of children from those villages attending GM at Craighill successfully. Some of those have gone on to GME at TRA, other have gone on to attend their local secondary school in Golspie. It would strike me that the sensible thing to do would be to include the Golspie ASG.

**A2 (Ian)** - In answer to the other part of your question about reinstating GME in Sutherland, as you know there was formerly GME at Bonar Bridge PS and at Tongue PS, but for various reasons those provisions fell away. The same Statutory Guidance that introduced GM catchments specified a process under which families with pre-

school children can approach the Council with a request to introduce GME in a school, and if there are enough children there is an onus on the Council to respond positively to such requests. So, if there was sufficient demand, we would look again at those provisions, which have never been formally closed, they are only mothballed.

**(Lena)** – As Ian says, these provisions are not permanently closed, so if parents have an interest in starting them up again, there is an open door for that. There is ongoing action at present with opening new GM provision at Applecross and at Lochaline.

**Q3** – Most people in those communities who have young children will have no idea that opportunity is available. I was involved in getting the GME at Bonar Bridge up and running. You have to get a big enough group of parents together, it takes time and the clock is always running, with children getting older, so a wider GM catchment might be a more effective way of giving children access.

**(Comment from the floor)** – Most parents don't start thinking about English or Gaelic medium education before their children are about two or three years old, and then they have 18 months to 2 years to have provision set up. You need to demonstrate demand and get staff in place before their child hits school age. This is very difficult where no provision currently exists and where there is no communication from Highland Council about the opportunities that exist.

**A3 (Ian)** – Lena can maybe talk in a minute about what we have on our website about GME. As a counterpoint to some of the issues raised about Golspie, when we started this process and we were having discussions with our colleagues at Bòrd na Gàidhlig, we were proposing some very wide catchment areas, and they were taking the opposite approach. They argued that the catchment areas were too wide and that we making them so to avoid opening GME in other locations. Rather than having people travel long distances, they argued we should be creating provision more locally.

**Q4** – So why not just create GME more locally?

**A4 (Ian)** - If there was a demand, we would.

**Q5** – But if the Council are going to close off access to GME for certain communities, surely there is an onus on you to actually lead the development of more local provision? It's too much to ask from parents, in too short a window of time, when people are already busy, to ask parents to lead. It feels like the barriers are insurmountable.

**A5 (Ian)** – Lena has already mentioned the examples of Applecross and Lochaline, where parents came to the Council to request GME.

**Q6** – And how did the recruitment go in Applecross, because I heard it took a long time, so presumably children had to start their education in English, even though the parents had done all the work necessary?

**A6 (Lena)** – The timeline is very strict once we receive a request. The Highland Council has only 6 weeks, or 12 weeks depending on what assessment we follow. We have to establish whether there is a need for GME, and in that case we moved very quickly to an advertisement. The recruitment process itself is outwith our control, in that we are dependent on teachers applying.

**Q7** – We all know there is a finite number of Gaelic speaking teachers in the country, and that the recruitment process is almost always glacial. It's not news that it takes a while to find a teacher for new GM provision in a rural community. Knowing that, doesn't the Council have an obligation to lead, rather than putting the onus on parents?

**A7 (Ian)** – There's an issue there with respect to a place like Applecross, where, if the Council took the lead in trying to establish GME, and then we couldn't recruit, then we've led people up the garden path. There's probably more of an opportunity in somewhere like Golspie, as opposed to Applecross, where, if anyone knows that community, residential accommodation is very hard to find, and it's not really possible to commute from elsewhere. We don't always find it possible to recruit GM teachers, but what we have done is responded very positively when parents have come to us.

**Q8** – Does it make sense to have a catchment area where there are no other GM units in the area, or just include the Golspie ASG until such time as a community in Lairg or Golspie or wherever comes to the Council and says they want their own provision?

**A8 (Ian)** – OK, well we can think about that.

**Q9** - I don't see the distance issue as that relevant as there is a limit to how far someone will send their child for GME. I don't think you will get people from 40 or 50 miles away. That hasn't happened yet, so if it hasn't happened before, it's unlikely to do so now. I think you are just putting up barriers, and if you do that you are deterring the teachers of tomorrow. In 10-15 years you are not going to have teachers, because you are putting people off from coming here by excluding them from the catchment, and not providing transport.

**A9 (Ian)** – We are including Dornoch and Invergordon in the GM catchment.

**Q10** – The furthest points of those catchments are a similar distance as Rosehall, so the proposed limit is quite arbitrary.

**Q11** – Can I ask a hypothetical question? If someone were to apply to Craighill Primary School, living in Golspie, would they be refused entry into Craighill because they are outwith the catchment area – transport is not part of this question.

**A11 (Ian)** – They would be classed as what we call a placing request. The Highland Council's enrolment system is based on a default principle, where every address in Highland is allocated to a school catchment, and you are by default enrolled in the dedicated school for your home address. Parents can if they want, submit a placing request for another school. Usually these are granted although there are some circumstances where we are obliged to refuse them. In this case we would be talking about a designated GM school, and if you were outwith the catchment you could still put in a placing request but you wouldn't get transport.

**Q12** – What would happen in a situation where the Unit became full or at capacity for the number of teachers there?

**A12 (Ian)** – That's the most common situation in which placing requests are refused. Essentially placing requests are granted as long as they don't result in what is termed an "unreasonable burden on the taxpayer". So for example, you can only have 25 children in a P1 class, so if there were 25 children in a class and someone put in a placing request, we would refuse the placing request as it would mean employing an additional teacher, and that would be deemed an unreasonable burden on the taxpayer.

**Q13** – If someone in Tain wanted that place, would they get it?

**A13 (Ian)** – Yes, because they would be in catchment.

**Q14** – My family lives in Fearn, in the village itself. We have previously had transport to GME in Tain. We don't use it just now because I'm taking our son to nursery so I'm doing the run anyway. How would that work with the new transport arrangements? Would my children have to use the public bus, which is not specifically for school use, or would there be a taxi?

**A14 (Ian)** – The first thing to say is, we have no current plans to change the current transport arrangements for children attending GME. The second thing is, I probably worded that section rather badly – Eileen Henderson actually picked this up with me, in internal correspondence. In the final report, I will re-word that section. We have a team within the Council, the Passenger Transport Unit, who organise the school transport. The Education Department basically says, "we have X number of pupils at this location, and they need to be taken to Y school for a specified start time, and then returned at the end of the day." The details are then organised by the PTU, who will take a variety of things into account when organising transport. We do have some children who travel on public buses, not from Fearn, but I think from Scotsburn. I didn't want to make a promise that the current arrangements would always continue, because I felt I couldn't promise what might be the case in 10

years' time, but I worded it too strongly in the paper and will change that when we review the consultation.

**Q15** – So are you saying a 5-year-old might have to travel on a public bus by themselves?

**A15 (Ian)** – That's one of the factors that the PTU would take into account. It's maybe not unreasonable though to expect a P5-7 pupil to catch a bus like that.

**Q16** – I think that *is* unreasonable.

**A16 (Ian)** – OK. Well, I think the Council has a different view, and there are children from Scotsburn who travel on the High School bus at present.

**Q17** – But it's a very small bus. It's not a big bus at all.

**Comment from the floor** – We stay in Inver, and I wouldn't be happy with primary school kids going on the bus with the Academy kids.

**Comment from the floor** – No. The language, the behaviour, there are drugs on that bus, there are mobile phones.

**Comment from the floor** – The idea of putting primary school pupils on that bus is a big "no" for me.

**Comment from the floor** – A lot of the children are accessing public buses, so there are safeguarding issues, with potentially, children aged four-and-a-half travelling by themselves on a bus with members of the public.

**A17 (Ian)** – I mentioned earlier that the PTU would take that sort of factor into account.

**Q18** – I still think it's a massive safeguarding issue for a P5 pupil, or for P6 or P7 for that matter.

**Comment from the floor** – There's a big difference in maturity levels. I have a P4, a P7 and an S1, and the difference between P7 and S1 is huge. My oldest boy would not have been as confident going on the bus this time last year. He has to walk 10 minutes across the village to get to the bus stop, which is a whole other issue. He is thriving now at the Academy, but there is a big difference between secondary kids and even older primary kids, and you are talking about putting them on a public bus, not even just a school bus.

**Comment from the floor** – Look at the times that the bus leaves at. The bus leaves so much earlier for the secondary school pupils, and leaves much later at the other end. Who takes responsibility for a child at the primary who finishes at 3.00pm, when the secondary doesn't finish until 3.40pm? In the mornings pupils arrive at 8.20am, and they are not supervised until school starts at 9.00am.

**Comment from the floor** – The school claims they are not insured to look after the children until 9 o'clock, so who is responsible for our children?

**(Ian)** – Can I just clarify? Did you say that children are arriving at Craighill on school transport at twenty past eight, and school starts at nine?

**Comment from the floor** – Some do, because there are different times of services and the bus many have another run to do.

**(Ian)** – I will need to check on that, as the normal policy, as I understood it, was that children should not be dropped off more than 20 minutes before school starts.

It would obviously be easy for me to say here tonight that children will never be put on the public bus, but the truth is that happens across Highland. We're not planning to change things at the moment.

**Comment from the floor** – I don't like the "at the moment" bit at the end of that. If people live outwith Tain, and they have a choice of GM or EM, if they knew that their children had to catch a bus alongside the Academy pupils, that's going to decide them against GME.

**(Ian)** – I don't like to make promises that I might not be able to keep. I can't say what might happen with school transport in 10 years' time.

**Comment from the floor** – None of us expect you to give promises about 10 years' time, but it would provide significant reassurance to know that in the short term, the transport is not going to be changing.

**(Ian)** - I have spoken to the PTU about this, and they did give me the assurance that they had no plans at present to change the existing arrangement, so when the review report is written I will change that wording. The review report will be issued to anyone who makes a written representation at this stage of the consultation.

**Q19** – My house lies near Invershin, which is in a little corner of the Golspie High catchment, wedged between those of TRA and Dornoch, so you have excluded it from the GM catchment. I have 2 boys, one of whom will be going to S1 in August, the other will be going into P6. Will my younger boy, who will still be coming here, get transport put on just for him?

**A19 (Ian)** – Yes, he will, because he is already in receipt of school transport. We wouldn't disrupt his schooling by suddenly pulling the plug.

**Q20** – I think the move to the new campus increases the risk of changes to transport.

**Comment from the floor** – It's a real concern, and I actually don't believe that the Council will keep the transport the same. There will be too many opportunities to save money.

**Comment from the floor** – I know that on the west coast, primary and secondary school children do share transport, but whilst that might work for those very rural locations, I don't think it will necessarily work here.

**A20 (Ian)** – The PTU obviously has a balance to strike here. Everyone who works for the Council has a duty towards the Council taxpayer. Now, some might claim we don't carry out that duty very well, but it exists, so there is a balance between providing the service that parents want and protecting the taxpayer. So, for example, the view that primary age children should not have to travel with secondary age children has to be balanced against the cost reductions that might arise.

**Q21** – You can't compromise on children's safety – you can't put a price on that. Some teenagers act like thugs.

**Comment from the floor** – The PTU needs to assess the behaviour on these buses before they even consider putting primary children on them.

**Comment from the floor** – I'm sure they will already be aware of the problems that exist. It doesn't strike me as appropriate to put a P5 child on a bus where we know there have been historic issues with behaviour.

**The Chairperson** commented that these various points were well made, and she had taken a note of them all.

**Q22** – Does Highland Council have any plans to support the growth of the Gaelic Department in Tain, and how would that become manifest?

**Q23** – There will be a change locally when Craighill and Knockbreck combine. Historically parents in the Craighill catchment have tried to get their children into Knockbreck, but that won't be an option anymore, so I think many people will head for the Gaelic Unit. There could be so many from within Tain that people from the outlying areas will not be able to get in. What is the future of the Unit? Have you got money for an extension?

**A23 (Lena)** – The Council has a Gaelic Language Plan, and part of the commitment within that is to grow Gaelic Medium education. I know that the staff of the school work hard to promote GME, and Dolly Grant, who is here tonight, supports that activity, ensuring that the ELC has sustainable numbers, and you can keep going as you are. We report to the Scottish Government on the numbers in each area, and consequently keep an eye on those.

**Comment from the floor** – There is a small amount of work going on in Tain, certainly, but I'm not aware of any in the Dornoch or Invergordon areas. Even the work that is going on is limited just to the town of Tain. It's not happening in the wider TRA catchment, in places like Balintore, Portnahommack or Milton. Whilst I appreciate the comments made about the work the teaching staff do to promote GME, it's not really their job to that, and we are asking people do this on top of their

own jobs, in which they are already working more hours than they should. We are not asking the same from teachers in English medium.

**(Lena)** – There’s certainly no expectation on staff to do that, and we have the Community Learning Team carrying out that development work. You mentioned that you expect the numbers enrolling in GME to increase?

**Comment from the floor** – Yes, I do, once Knockbreck is no longer an option. GME will come to the attention of more people, which is great, but it will limit the number of places available to people from beyond the town of Tain.

**(Lena)** - Gaelic Medium is not capped, in the way that some English Medium schools are. We don’t have an alternative GM provision in this area. For the new school, we will provide the number of teachers that is appropriate for the number of pupils enrolled in GME.

**(Ian)** – To provide an example, in 2016 we created a new GM school in Fort William – Bun-sgoil Gàidhlig Loch Abar. There had previously been GM provision in Fort William, in a school that also offered English medium education. When there was EM and GM provision in the same school, there were 60-odd children in the GM department. When we built the new school we initially built a 4-classroom school, which allows a capacity of up to 100, which I thought was a reasonable increase on 60 odd. The roll is now at about 150, and we have built on two extensions to the original school. It’s as Lena said, we will respond to increases in demand for GME.

**(Lena)** – A comment was also made earlier about access to 0-3 provision in areas that traditionally have not had GME in the local schools – Lochaline would be an example of that. You have talked about raising the profile of GME. That comes in different ways – for example promotion of enrolment week through our Corporate Comms Team, GM Awareness Days. There are different pathways, but not necessarily targeted to particular geographic areas. There is a 0-3 project with BnaG that is run annually, and Lochaline is an example of a community where there is enough demand. Those children were not ready to move into P1 at the time parents made the request. They made it 2 years in advance, which is why we are only implementing it now. Those communities that do not have GME at present are not closed off from opening a provision in future.

**Q24** – I’m still concerned that, if people don’t know somebody with an interest in Gaelic, they will be unaware that GME is even an option. When my children were little, I didn’t even know there was GM available here, and I certainly didn’t know it was something that could be set up. Could the Council put something in the Bounty Bags that are given to mothers of new babies? Just now I know of someone in Rogart who wants GME, but with this catchment proposal they won’t be able to come.

**Comment from the floor** – There's a family in Lairg as well, with a toddler who wants to come here.

**Comment from the floor** – Parents like that need to meet up and take the initiative to get local provision, but it's a lot of effort, and they probably don't know of each other.

**Comment from the floor** – The Highland Council are great at GME up to a point, but they are just not pro-active enough.

**(Ian)** – Could I just say that, if people know others in Lairg or Rogart who are interested in GME, and who would like this catchment to be wider, the best thing they can do is to write in and say "I live in X and am interested in GME. This catchment needs to be wider."

**Comment from the floor** – On the flip side of that, say this catchment did take in a wider area, and a group of people wanted GME in Lairg, would that mean it couldn't happen?

**(Ian)** – No, it doesn't. There is a requirement in the Statutory Guidance that says people can still request local provision even if they are within an existing catchment, although what you have just described was exactly what Bòrd na Gàidhlig were worried about when we started creating these catchments.

**The Chairperson** asked whether Highland Council had run a Gaelic Awareness Week at any time.

**(Lena)** – We have concentrated our activities around enrolment week. We run a campaign through Highland Council social media and promote it on our website. In areas where there is existing GME, our Community Team will promote it, and often Comann nam Pàrant do so as well.

Just to go back to the Bounty Pack, I think that's a good idea.

**Comment from the floor** – The Health Visitors have refused to deal with that. The Group that run 0-3 provision in Tain have approached numerous people in the Health Centre about promoting GME, but the health staff don't see it as their role.

I have visited numerous toddler groups in Tain and outwith Tain, and people have no idea that there's a Gaelic Unit in Tain. Even people who live in our catchment don't know we are here.

**Comment from the floor** – I'm not sure the Bounty Packs are produced any more.

**Comment from the floor** – I registered my son for sgoil-araich today, and I've seen nothing about GME. I have 3 older children so I have been through this, and I'm on the HC Facebook page, I'm on various Gaelic pages, and the only thing I saw was in

the drop down enrolment menu where it says “Craighill Nursery – GM”. It doesn’t even say the word Gaelic. There is nothing to encourage parents into GME.

**(Lena)** – There is a section about Gaelic on the Council website.

**Comment from the floor** – I have been on the MyGaelic website and it doesn’t even say the word Gaelic when enrolling. There is no promotion within the community. Nothing from any health visitor, or any toddler group. I am committed to Gaelic education and am more likely to see any material. I worked in the Gaelic nursery for a few years and we visited toddler groups, and it frightening the amount of people in our community who don’t know it is available.

**Comment from the floor** – Another example was a PC meeting with the Parent Councils from Knockbreck and the TRA, and one of the parents from the Knockbreck PC had no clue that GME was available in Tain.

**Comment from the floor** – Currently the Gaelic group is a clique. It’s not meant to be, but people just don’t know it’s there.

**Comment from the floor** – The only reason I heard about GME is that I’m an islander and Gaelic is my first language, so people mentioned it to me. There are people younger than me who haven’t been brought up with Gaelic in the same way, and people won’t know to say, “Come to the Gaelic group, or the Gaelic toddler group, or whatever.”

**Q25** – Can I raise secondary school provision? Is there any plan to expand it further in Tain, and introduce it in any other school? In recent years the provision at TRA has diminished rather than expanded, which is disappointing.

**A25 (Lena)** – There are no current plans that I’m aware of to expand secondary provision. I can’t speak on behalf of TRA, but the models do vary. The guidance allows for that variation. Obviously the core subject of Gàidhlig needs to be available, but there should also be a proportion of Gaelic Medium activity, and subjects through the medium of Gaelic as well. An individual school decides exactly how that is delivered within their curriculum.

**Q26** – My understanding is that there is a fluent Gaelic-speaking teacher who was delivering through the medium of Gaelic to some pupils but who is no longer doing so, as she’s been told not to.

**Comment from the floor** – The Academy has had so many changes to leadership that the Gaelic Medium had just fallen away. It’s very disappointing, because as the GM in the primary school grows, and more children are moving up, they are getting less support in secondary. If these changes go ahead, does that mean you have to provide transport for secondary school children going to GME? At the moment they have to go to the secondary school in their catchment area.

**A26 (Ian)**– If these proposals go ahead, any pupils from within the TRA’s new GM catchment, which includes the EM catchments for Invergordon and Dornoch, will be entitled to transport to TRA as long as they are accessing GME at Tain. To be honest I’m surprised to hear that this isn’t happening already.

**Comment from the floor** – In the past we have had children attend GME at Craighill, but they have then had to attend their local secondary school because there is no provision to bring them to Tain.

**(Ian)** – Sometimes in other areas, not in Tain, we have had problems with pupils getting transport on the basis of attending GME, but then not actually studying it. So for example, a pupil gets transport to Inverness Royal Academy because they are a GM pupil, but then they don’t study Gaelic, so some parents have sought to “work the system” that way. However, if this proposal is implemented, Tain Royal Academy will be the designated GM school for pupils from within the Dornoch and Invergordon ASGs. There would be no sense in pupils attending GME at Craighill Primary, only for us to deny them to transport to TRA, so they can continue studying Gaelic. I will pick this issue up internally.

In terms of extending GME in secondary schools, you have to start with the primary schools. If we were going to say, for the sake of argument, that we wanted GME in the Golspie ASG, we would have to start with Golspie Primary, or one of the other feeder primary schools, and 7 years later we would have to have a plan for secondary GME. You can’t start by just throwing non-Gaelic speakers into a secondary school curriculum in Gaelic.

[Discussion followed about the extent of GME offered at TRA, and how it had declined in recent years].

**Q27** – I would just like to emphasise that the most important point discussed tonight has been the school transport. You are saying there are no current plans to change it, but we don’t want people to think “I’m alright Jack”, and that any changes will only affect future pupils. Putting primary school children on the public bus will deter parents from GME. What will the Council do to ensure that barrier is not there? There is a new Scottish Languages Act coming out later this year, and the Council will need to make sure it is really providing for Gaelic. The other important thing is about Sutherland, and making sure there is some sort of provision there. It seems that the Council’s policies are turning Gaelic into an elite, urban phenomenon dominated by middle class families.

**Q28** - Thank you for answering our questions though. I think you answered them very well.

**Q29** – What do you need from us now. Is the consultation online?

**The Chairperson** commented that there was information at the back of the Proposal Paper [copies of which had been distributed] on how to reply. Ian also explained how to find the consultation proposal on the website.

**Q30** – When will these new catchments take effect?

**A30 (Ian)** – Later this year.

**Q31** – Enrolment is going on at the moment for primary school next year, so if someone wants to enrol now, they wouldn't yet be subject to the new catchment. We need to get as many people as possible to enrol from outside the catchment!

There being no other comments on the Proposal Paper, the **Chairperson** reminded those present of the closing date for responses – 7 March 2025 – and of where responses should be sent, either via letter or via email, or by using the online form. A record of this meeting would be made available at least 3 weeks before the meeting of the Education Committee that considered the results of consultation. The members of the Committee would have a chance to see the note and all other representations before the meeting.

**List of Respondents to Statutory Consultation Exercise – Proposal to establish GM catchment areas for Craighill Primary School and Tain Royal Academy**

1. Ewen Jappy
2. Fiona MacLeod
3. Davine Sutherland
4. Nicole Jappy
5. Collated Pupil Responses Craighill Primary School
6. Lairg Primary School Parent Council
7. Comann nam Pàrant
8. Bòrd na Gàidhlig
9. Confidential – restricted to Elected Members and Council Officers, at the respondent's request
10. Confidential – restricted to Elected Members and Council Officers, at the respondent's request

**Subject:** Catchment areas for GME consultation comments

**Name of consultation:** Catchment areas for GME

**Your comments:** There should be no restrictions on parents looking to send their children to Gaelic Medium Education, East Sutherland a once stronghold of the Gaelic language is severely lacking in opportunities for GME.

**Upload documents or letters :**

**I am commenting as:** Parent

**I am commenting on behalf of:** Member of the community

**Name:**

Title	First name	Last name
Mr	Ewen	Jappy

**Address:**

Enter a postcode to search for the address	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
IV25 3qh	Annat House Skelbo Muir, Dornoch, IV25 3QH	Yes

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed Tain GME catchment area and how this will affect children from Sutherland.

Whilst I'm not necessarily against a catchment area, how can it work when the children from areas of Sutherland previously able to attend now won't be able to if this goes ahead, but they also won't be able to access GME in another catchment area as there isn't one! In reality there will be no option for them at all, and I do know of families from these excluded areas who had hoped to put their child(ren) to GME in Tain.

There is currently no Gaelic Medium Education in Sutherland at all and only Gaelic for Learners S1-S4 in one of the 4 secondary schools, so young people here are severely disadvantaged. This proposed catchment area will now exclude even more of Sutherland that previously could actually access Gaelic.

I also know of a family in the north who had a child in GME in Thurso a few years ago, but they moved further west (no further than some of the children in the proposed catchment area here) but they were refused transport and had to remove their P3 child from GME. Highland Council promised them he could take up Gaelic at secondary level in Farr Primary School, but by the time he'd reached S1 there was no longer Gaelic available there, resulting in him and his two younger siblings never being able to access Gaelic. So it seems that whether there is or isn't a catchment area Sutherland children are suffering.

These might not seem like huge numbers but every child is important. It doesn't feel like anytime since my own children were in GME, but recently they have all been passing on Gaelic to our communities through Gaelic song workshops, Gaelic wreath making and as musicians in a Sutherland Seachdain na Gàidhlig concert. If children here can't access the language then how can it be passed on?

Also, there is virtually no advertising by Highland Council in Sutherland communities that GME could be a possibility in their schools. I really feel Sutherland has been forgotten about.

Please could you confirm receipt of my email.

Kind regards,

Fiona

**Name of consultation:** \_Tain\_Craighill\_proposed\_GM\_catchment

**Your comments:** I would be in favour of adding Golspie to the catchment area, until such time as Golspie may have its own GME provision (analogous to Bonar Bridge), so as not to hinder the development of Gaelic in the area, and to enable the creation of new Gaelic speakers to fill jobs (including teaching) and serve the growing Gaelic community further down the line in many ways, volunteering, care, culture, community work etc. The awareness of investment by HC in such provision will undoubtedly be seen as encouraging to Gaelic in general, providing a signal, and also foster among parents and children a sense of loyalty to both the language and to the HC area in terms of giving back, formally or informally.

**Upload documents or letters :**

**I am commenting as:** resident in catchment area, adult Gaelic teacher, writer of Gaelic column for Seaboard News, Easter Ross.

**I am commenting on behalf of:** Myself as a Gaelic speaker and supporter of GME for all, and as a friend of families with children in GME in proposed catchment area.

**Name:**

Title	First name	Last name
Ms	Davine	Sutherland

**Address:**

Enter a postcode to search for the address	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
IV18 0DD	4, Gordon Terrace, Invergordon, IV18 0DD	Yes

**Name of consultation:** Craighill catchment Gaelic education

**Your comments:** GME should be accessible to all and the catchment should not cause obstacles for those who are within a reasonable position to travel.

**Upload documents or letters :**

**I am commenting as:** Parent

**I am commenting on behalf of:**

**Name:**

Title	First name	Last name
Mrs	Nicole	Jappy

**Address:**

Enter a postcode to search for the address	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
lv25 3Qh	Annat House Skelbo Muir, Dornoch, IV25 3QH	Yes

Highland Council has to decide which schools children go to if they choose to learn Gaelic and would like to have all their classes taught in Gaelic.

At the moment, Craighill Primary School offers lessons in Gaelic. How far should other children travel to Craighill from, if they want to be taught in Gaelic?

1. There are 8 primary schools where children transfer to Tain Royal Academy when they go to high school – Craighill, Knockbreck, Inver, Tarbat Old, Hill of Fearn, Hilton of Cadboll, Edderton, and Gledfield. We think that children from any of these schools should be able to go to Craighill to be taught in Gaelic.
2. We think that children from Dornoch and Bonar Bridge should also be able to come to Craighill Primary, if they want to be taught in Gaelic.
3. We think that children from the schools in and around Invergordon - Park Primary, South Lodge Primary, Milton Primary and Newmore Primary, should also be able to come to Craighill Primary, if they want to be taught in Gaelic.
4. We think other places are too far from any other school for the children to be able to travel to learn in Gaelic.

The map shows where pupils would travel from, if they want to learn in Gaelic

Do you think our ideas are good ones? Please tick the answer below that you think is best.

YES	9
NO	20

### Can you tell us why you gave the answer above?

#### Comments from P4/5

- I think that Lairg should be included in the catchment for Craighill Primary because I come from Lairg and it is only half an hour which isn't too long to travel. It would be sad to stop people from Lairg coming to Craighill.

#### Comments from P6/7

- I think the catchment should be wider. It's not fair to stop people coming to Gaelic just because they live a wee while away.
- The more people we include in the area the more people can learn Gaelic.
- 1 pupil thinks the catchment is a good idea but is unsure with the current map.
- 3 pupils were unsure and could not vote. One suggested there should be more Gaelic in other schools.
- It's not fair on people that live out with the catchment.
- It's not fair that the Highland Council gets to choose where pupils go.
- I think that it isn't fair if some kids get the opportunity to learn in Gaelic but others outside the catchment won't.
- I think Lairg, Golspie and Brora should be included.
- It is not fair if other people in their families speak Gaelic but they won't be able to go to a Gaelic school.
- The class questioned whether restricting pupils from GME goes against articles 28 and 30 of the UNCRC Rights of the Child.



Lairg Primary School Parent Council  
Main Street  
Lairg IV27 4DD

14 February 2025

Re: Gaelic Medium Catchment for Craighill Primary and Tain Royal Academy

To the Highland Council:

We are writing to provide feedback to address the proposed Gaelic Medium Catchment for Craighill Primary and Tain Royal Academy. We are disappointed to hear that this proposal excludes Lairg Primary School. While Lairg may be considered rural on a national level, each child in Scotland deserves the same access to educational opportunities, including Gaelic language education.

By excluding Lairg and Golspie schools, the Highland Council would be adding an additional barrier of a catchment area where there is no other alternative for Sutherland families, effectively blocking children from accessing Gaelic language education. This provides a hurdle to educational access that will rob Sutherland families from the choice to access Gaelic language education, which is vital to engaging with the area's historical language and culture. In addition, it has been made aware to us that several families in Lairg remained unaware of Gaelic education being a resource available to their children, due to lack of advertisement.

A proposed solution to this issue is to not have the catchment area or to expand it to include Lairg and Golspie schools and all other related feeder Primary Schools. In addition, future transport arrangements for Gaelic education should also be suitable for the safety of all ages. While there are parents at Lairg Primary School and Nursery who have expressed interest in enrolling their children into Gaelic education, many families would be unwilling to send their primary school aged children on buses filled with those who are old enough to attend high school.

Please do not neglect the educational rights of the children of Sutherland within the Lairg, Golspie, and all other related feeder primary schools by refusing their access to Gaelic education.

Regards

Lairg Primary School Parent Council

**Gaelic Medium catchment area for (applying to both primary and secondary school education) for Craighill Primary School (soon to be part of the Tain 3-18 Campus).**

Comann nam Pàrant (Nàiseanta) (CnP) welcomes the formalisation of school catchment areas for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) for the Tain Campus. We also appreciate the complexities around these catchments due to the geography of the area and the current lack of Gaelic medium education in Sutherland.

We welcome the inclusion of the Bonar Bridge Primary School catchment in the new catchment for Tain, whilst the provision at Bonar Bridge remains mothballed.

We agree that the GM catchment for Tain should overlay the English Medium catchments of the schools in the Tain, Dornoch and Invergordon ASGs.

We support the request from parents and others in the community that the catchment be extended to include the Golspie High School English medium catchment, for the following reasons:

- There are some pupils currently accessing GME from Invershin, which lies between Lairg and Tain, but within the Lairg catchment. This is an indication that families are of the opinion that the travelling distance from this area is reasonable and until alternative GME provision is established within the Lairg area other families in a similar position in the future should be supported to access GME in Tain.
- The new catchment area should be responsive to the situation within Sutherland where there is currently no provision for GME. This would also support the council's stated aim, "The Council is sympathetic to the idea that Gàidhlig Medium Education should be accessible as many pupils Highland as possible, provided it is practical and reasonable to provide access."
- One of the aims of the formalising the catchment is to increase the uptake of GME by providing reassurance to parents that their transport is secure in legislation. In this instance, the exclusion of areas that have previously been included has potential to result in declining numbers of pupils in GME.

We welcome the council's commitment to continue to promote the opportunity for parents to submit a request for GMPE in line with the Education Act (Scotland) 2016. We will continue to support early years activities and promotion of GME within the Sutherland area with a view to seeing such a request from parents at some point in the near future.

## **Transport**

We note the proposal, for all catchments, that the default position will be for the council to utilise current secondary school transport for all provision. We are concerned that this may not always be appropriate for very young children. We recognise however that

the council are keen to grow Gaelic medium education, and we assume that transport provision will encourage parents to choose GME for their children and not be seen as a barrier to accessing GME.

### **Promotion and Information**

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

### **Tain 3-18 Campus**

We note that GME in Tain will be transferring from Craighill Primary and Tain Royal Academy to the new 3-18 campus.

We hope that this will be an opportunity to build on the excellent current provision in Craighill Primary, and that there will be no dilution of the immersion experience for primary GME pupils.

We also note from the consultation that there are currently 19 Pupils studying Gàidhlig for fluent speakers in Tain Royal Academy, a very small percentage within the school which has a roll of 511 pupils. There is no reference to any other curricular subjects through the medium of Gaelic and we hope that the council have plans to develop a more robust Gaelic curriculum within the new campus, as well as supporting extra-curricular activities for both primary and secondary pupils.

M. Wentworth  
07.02.25

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<b>Freagairt Bhòrd na Gàidhlig do Cho-chomhairle Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd air sgìrean-sgoile FtG airson Bun-sgoil Chnoc na Creige / Àrainn 3-18 Baile Dhubhthaich</b>	<b>Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Response on the Highland Council Consultation on GME Catchment Area for Craighill Primary School / Tain 3-18 Campus</b>
<p><b>1. Ro-ràdh</b></p> <p>Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' cur fàilte ann am prionnsapal, air an iomairt gus sgìrean-sgoile airson Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig (FtG) a stèidheachadh anns na sgoiltean a tha air an liostadh gu h-àrd. Tha am Bòrd ag aithneachadh gu bheil Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' gluasad a dh'ionnsaigh a bhith a' stèidheachadh sgìrean-sgoile far a bheil solar FtG ann an sgìre na Comhairle.</p> <p>Tha an Stiùireadh Reachdail air Foghlam Gàidhlig agus Plana Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig airson 2018-23 mar bhunait airson freagairt a' Bhùird dhan cho-chomhairle seo. Tha e mar bhunait dhan Stiùireadh Reachdail, gum bu chòir FtG a leasachadh agus gum bu chòir fàs a thoirt air agus tha barrachd mion-fhiosrachaidh air seo san stiùireadh.</p>	<p><b>1. Introduction</b></p> <p>Bòrd na Gàidhlig welcomes in principle, the initiative to establish school catchment areas for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in the above listed schools. The Bòrd recognises that Highland Council is moving to the establishment of catchment areas where there does exist GME provision in the Council's area.</p> <p>The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education and the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 form the basis for the Bòrd's response to this consultation. The Statutory Guidance, where there is further detail on the steps involved, has as its basis that GME should develop and grow.</p>
<p><b>2. Fiosrachadh Co-chomhairleachaidh</b></p> <p>Tha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd ag ràdh gu bheil iad airson sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh air na h-adhbharan a leanas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tha an Stiùireadh Reachdail air</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Consultation Information</b></p> <p>The Highland Council say they want to establish catchment areas for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Statutory Guidance on</li> </ul>

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<p>Foghlam Gàidhlig a’ moladh gun stèidhich Ùghdarrasan Ionadail sgìrean-sgoile airson FtG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tha dìth soilleireachd ann an-dràsta do phàrantan agus luchd-cùraim a tha ag iarraidh FtG dhan chuid chloinne anns na coimhearsnachdan a tha air am frithealadh leis an t-solar FtG a tha air a liostadh. Tha an t-Ùghdarras Ionadail a’ dèanamh na h-eacarsaich a rèir an dleistanais a bhith a’ toirt seachad Luach as Fheàrr ann an lìbhrigeadh sheirbheisean.</li> <li>• Tha an t-Ùghdarras Ionadail air an cleachdadh a chur an sàs de bhith a’ toirt seachad còmh-dhail taobh a-staigh astar siubhail reusanta, a thathar a’ mìneachadh sa chumantas mar taobh a-staigh 15 mìle bho sgoil a tha a’ lìbhrigeadh FtG.</li> </ul>	<p>Gaelic Education recommends that Local Authorities establish catchment areas for GME.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is currently a lack of clarity for parents and carers seeking to access GME in the communities served by the GME provision listed. The Local Authority is undertaking the exercise in line with the duty to provide Best Value in service delivery.</li> <li>• The Local Authority has used the practice of providing transport within a reasonable travelling distance, which has generally been understood to mean within 15 miles of a school delivering GME.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Molaidhean na Comhairle</b></p> <p><b>Solarachadh FtG aig Bun-sgoil Chnoc na Creige / Àrainn 3-18 Baile Dhubhthaich</b></p> <p>Ann am prionnsapal tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a’ toirt taic do stèidheachadh sgìre-sgoile soilleir airson solar FtG ann am Bun-sgoil Chnoc na Creige / Àrainn 3-18 Bhaile Dhubhthaich, an dà chuid solar Àrd-sgoile agus Bun-sgoile, mar a mhol Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd.</p>	<p><b>3. Council recommendations</b></p> <p><b>GME Provision in Craighill Primary School / Tain 3-18 Campus</b></p> <p>In principle Bòrd na Gàidhlig supports the establishment of a clear catchment area for the GME provision in Craighill Primary School / Tain 3-18 Campus, both Secondary and Primary provision, as proposed by the Highland Council.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig mothachail gu bheil pàrantan air draghan a thogail nach eil Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte (BSC) Ghoillspidh mar phàirt dhan sgìre-sgoile, nuair a tha teaghlaichean bhon BSC seo air FtG a fhrithealadh aig Bun-sgoil Chnoc na Creige roimhe.</li> <li>• Tha sinn a' toirt fa-near gu bheil am pàipear co-chomhairleachaidh ag ràdh gu bheil teaghlaichean à Inbhir Sin, a tha ann an sgìre-sgoile Bun-sgoil Luirg is na pàirt de BSC Ghoillspidh, a' frithealadh FtG an-dràsta. Tha sinn a' cur fàilte air a' mholadh gum faigh na teaghlaichean seo taic siubhail gus an cuir iad crìoch air FtG.</li> <li>• Bu chòir do Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd a bhith a' beachdachadh air a bheil e iomchaidh taic siubhail a thoirt air falbh bho theaghlaichean sam bith a tha a' fuireach taobh a-staigh BSC Ghoillspidh san àm ri teachd. Ged a tha sinn a' tuigsinn gum faodadh ùine siubhail bho chuid de sgìrean taobh a-staigh ASG Ghoillspidh a bhith dùbhlach, tha e soilleir gu bheil sgìrean eile ruigsinneach le pàrantan a' taghadh FtG an-dràsta agus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bòrd na Gàidhlig note that parents have raised concerns that Golspie ASG has not been included in the catchment area when historically, families from this ASG have previously accessed GME at Craighill Primary School.</li> <li>• We note that the consultation document indicated families are currently accessing GME from Invershin, which is in the Lairg Primary School catchment area and part of Golspie ASG. The proposal that these families will continue to receive transport, until they complete GME, is welcome.</li> <li>• Highland Council should give due consideration on whether it is appropriate to remove transport to GME from any future families living within the Golspie ASG. While we appreciate that travel time from some areas within the Golspie ASG may be prohibative, other areas are accessible with parents opting for GME currently and in the past.</li> <li>• We welcome the proposal that should the mothballed GME provision at Bonar Bridge re-open due to increased demand, that the GME catchment for Tain would require to be amended,</li> </ul>
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<p>roimhe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tha sinn a' cur fàilte air a' mholadh ma dh'fhosglas an t-solair FtG aig Drochaid a' Bhannath a-rithist ri linn barrachd iarrtais, gum feumadh sgìre FtG Bhaile Dhubhthaich atharrachadh, agus sgìre-sgoile ùr FtG fhoillseachadh airson Bun-sgoil Drochaid a' Bhannath.</li> </ul>	<p>and new GME catchment published for Bonar Bridge Primary School.</p>
<p><b>4. Stiùireadh Reachdail airson Foghlam Gàidhlig</b></p> <p>Tha an Stiùireadh Reachdail airson Foghlam Gàidhlig a' moladh gun tèid sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh airson sgoiltean far a bheil Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig (FtG) ri fhaighinn (Earrann 2.53 is 2.54).</p> <p><b>Sgìrean-sgoile is Stiùireadh airson Àiteachan a Ghleidheadh do Sgoilearan</b></p> <p>Bu chòir do dh'ùghdarrasan foghlaim sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh airson FtG, agus dh'fhaodadh gum bi iad ag iarraidh beachdachadh air an iarrtas a th' ann airson FtG nuair a tha iad a' stèidheachadh stiùireadh airson nan àiteachan a thèid a ghleidheadh do sgoilearan ann am FtG.</p> <p><b>A rèir 2.54:</b></p> <p>Bu chòir do sgìre-sgoile airson sgoil le FtG a bhith na sgìre far a bheil an t-</p>	<p><b>4. Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education</b></p> <p>The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education recommends that catchment areas be established for schools where Gaelic-medium education (GME) is provided (Section 2.53 &amp; 2.54).</p> <p><b>Catchment Areas and Placing Guidelines</b></p> <p>Education authorities should establish catchment areas for GME provision and may wish to consider demand for GME when setting guidelines for placing pupils in GME provision.</p> <p><b>2.54 states:</b></p> <p>A catchment area of GME provision should be an area in which the</p>

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ùghdarras foghlaim den bheachd gu bheil e reusanta do chloinn san sgìre sin, a tha airson a dhol gu FtG, siubhal dhan sgoil, agus bu chòir gum bi cothrom ann pàrantan a thàladh gu bhith cur an cuid chloinne gu FtG.

Mar sin, tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' cur fàilte ann am prionnsapal, air a' mholadh gun tèid sgìre-sgoile a stèidheachadh airson Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig san sgoil air a liostadh sa cho-chomhairle phoblaich seo.

education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME provision for their children.

Therefore, Bòrd na Gàidhlig welcomes in principle, the recommendation that a catchment area be established for Gaelic Medium Education in the listed school in this public consultation.

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

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The Highland Council to establish a Gàidhlig (Gaelic) Medium catchment area (applying to both primary and secondary school education) for Craighill Primary School (soon to be part of the Tain 3-18 campus).**

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 establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area. This will apply to both primary and secondary school education for Craighill Primary School and Tain Royal Academy. 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. On receipt of this report, the 2010 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.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

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

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

- attendance at the public meeting held on 11 February 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; and
- visits to the site of Bun-sgoil Cnoc na Creige - Craighill Primary School and Acadamaidh Rìoghail Bhaile Dhubhthaich - Tain Royal Academy, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## 2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The formal consultation ran from 20 January to 7 March 2025. The proposal, if it progresses, will apply to both primary and secondary school education for Bun-sgoil Cnoc na Creige - Craighill Primary School and Acadamaidh Rìoghail Bhaile Dhubhthaich - Tain Royal Academy. These schools are soon to be part of the Tain 3-18 campus. The new catchment will be the same for primary and secondary purposes. They will overlay the English Medium catchments of the schools in the Tain, Dornoch and Invergordon associated school group catchments. This

represents a total of 14 primary schools and 3 secondary schools. The proposal paper was distributed to staff, Parent Councils and parents of pupils attending the schools detailed within the proposal paper. It was also sent to members of the United Kingdom and Scottish Parliaments, trade unions, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comann nam Pàrant and community councils. A notice was placed in local press. Information was available on the council's website and on social media.

2.3 The council hosted a public meeting on 11 February 2025 where officers set a rationale for the proposals, discussed high-level educational benefits and invited attendee views. There were 18 people in attendance, including 13 members of the public and five members of The Highland Council staff. Attendees raised questions on the geographical area of the catchment. Almost all expressed a strong preference that the catchment be extended more widely to include schools within the Golspie area of Sutherland. They felt that this would ensure equity of access to Gàidhlig Medium Education in areas where it is not currently offered. This includes the area surrounding Bonar Bridge where Gàidhlig provision is currently mothballed. Attendees raised queries on how effectively the council promote Gàidhlig Medium Education, including at registration to start school. A few attendees raised the need for availability of a meaningful proportion of the secondary curriculum through the medium of Gàidhlig. They also expressed concern about the availability and suitability of school transport and how this may, in some cases, be prohibitive to children attending Gàidhlig Medium Education. Ten written responses were received. Almost all of these raised similar issues to those aired at the public meeting. Both Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Comann nam Pàrant expressed support for the proposal to establish a catchment area for Gàidhlig Medium Education, noting concerns about the geographical extent of the catchment.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 This proposal demonstrates The Highland Council's continued commitment to implementing the statutory Guidance for Gaelic Education, 2017 and their Gàidhlig Language Plan. The council detail their commitment to continue increasing the speakers of Gàidhlig, who also accrue all the benefits of bilingualism. The council feel that drawing up catchment areas clarifies for parents how they access Gàidhlig Medium Education. HM Inspectors agree that there are benefits to most of what the council is proposing. However, the council still need to take important actions to improve further the potential educational benefits resulting from their proposal.

3.2 The council is proposing catchment areas for Gàidhlig Medium Education at Bun-sgoil Cnoc na Creige - Craighill Primary School and Acadamaidh Rìoghail Bhaile Dhubhthaich - Tain Royal Academy (soon to be part of Tain campus 3-18). These will overlay the catchment areas of all primary schools associated with Tain Royal Academy, depending on the results of the consultation. The proposal also includes Invergordon and Dornoch secondary schools and associated primary schools. Approximately half of the pupils attending Gàidhlig Medium Education in P1-7 at present are from the town of Tain. The remainder are drawn from a wide range of locations in the Cromarty Firth and Dornoch Firth areas, as well as from further afield. Within the consultation report, the council should ensure clarity for transport provision for children and young people to allow them to attend Gàidhlig Medium Education from the Invergordon and Dornoch areas. HM Inspectors agree that the catchment area for Gàidhlig Medium Education should be extended to include the Golspie area of Sutherland. This would promote equitable access to Gàidhlig Medium Education to more children and young people where local provision is not currently available. The Highland Council should also confirm how they will use the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 to meet future requests and grow more local provision by adding Gàidhlig Medium Education classes to existing provision, as well as the need for all Gàidhlig schools.

3.3 There are far fewer schools that offer Gàidhlig Medium Education rather than English Medium. This necessitates more travel for children and young people accessing Gàidhlig Medium Education. A significant stakeholder concern is the appropriateness of school transport with shared arrangements for young children and secondary school pupils. Should the council extend the catchment area from that detailed in the proposal, they should ensure transport, travel and cost are not barriers to parents choosing Gàidhlig Medium Education. Children and young people, in accessing Gàidhlig Medium Education, need to experience excellence, equity, equality and fairness. The council should ensure that relevant impact assessments are undertaken, including equality and rural assessments. They should detail safeguarding arrangements for young children travelling on transport.

3.4 The educational benefits statement proposes that the establishment of catchment demonstrates the commitment of The Highland Council to Gàidhlig Medium Education. The setting of a catchment area will help young people see how they can remain in Gàidhlig Medium Education as a continuous experience for their time in statutory education. A significant consideration to support continuation of study in Gàidhlig is access to a quality, consistent and equitable 3-18 curriculum that supports high levels of fluency in Gàidhlig. The educational benefit statement should expand further on the curricular benefits of the proposal. It would be helpful to specify how the proposal will help the council meet the targets they have set out as statutory in their Gàidhlig language planning for a 3-18 immersion curriculum. These duties are specified in the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017. The council's educational benefits statement acknowledges the benefits of bilingualism. The availability of Gàidhlig Medium Education within associated school groups will provide children and young people with opportunities to develop these skills for life. HM Inspectors reported on the strong immersion experiences at Bun-sgoil Cnoc na Creige - Craighill Primary School in September 2023. The council should detail further how they will maintain high quality immersion experiences in the new Tain 3-18 campus.

3.5 Bòrd na Gàidhlig is a statutory consultee for changes to arrangements for Gàidhlig Medium Education. They welcome that a catchment area is being proposed for Gàidhlig Medium Education and note the concerns from parents about the limited geographical extent of the catchment. Comann nam Pàrant welcome that the proposal enacts legislation. They agree that the catchment should be extended to include schools in the Golspie area and that parents should decide if travel distance is reasonable for their child. They also noted that the council should be responsive to parental requests for future expansion within local areas and that the availability and appropriateness of school transport should not be a barrier to children attending Gàidhlig Medium education.

## 4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the council's proposal is of educational benefit to children and parents who reside within the catchment areas for Craighill Primary School and Tain Royal Academy (soon to be the Tain 3-18 campus). There are also educational benefits for children within the Invergordon and Dornoch areas. The proposal gives clarity to parents on how to access Gàidhlig Medium Education and a catchment area should be established, subject to the actions that we recommend in Section 3 of this report. Almost all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors support the proposal, should the catchment be extended to include a wider geographical area. They also expressed their pride in and success in developing fluency in Gàidhlig and are clear about the benefits of bilingualism. HM Inspectors agree with stakeholders that the catchment area should be extended to ensure Gàidhlig Medium Education is accessible to as many children as possible. In taking forward the proposal, the council should continue working with stakeholders to ensure and resource high-quality 3-18 Gàidhlig Medium Education curriculum and immersion

environments in the existing and new Gàidhlig Medium establishments. There are omissions in the proposal regarding transport arrangements for children and young people from Invergordon and Dornoch. It will be important that the council provide transport arrangements that are safe, feasible, long-term and attractive to realise the educational benefits of the proposal.

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

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

Aithisg le Foghlam Alba a' dèiligeadh ri taobhan foghlaim den mholadh le Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd gus sgìre-foghlaim Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig (a thaobh an dà chuid foghlam bun-sgoile agus foghlam àrd-sgoile) a stèidheachadh airson Bun-sgoil Cnoc na Creige (a bhios ann an ùine nach bi fada na pàirt de champas Bhaile Dhubhthaich airson 3 gu 18).

Am Màrt 2025

## 1. Ro-ràdh

1.1 Chaidh an aithisg seo bho Fhoghlam Alba ullachadh le Luchd-sgrùdaidh Foghlaim an Rìgh (Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh) a rèir cumhaichean [Achd Sgoiltean \(Co-chomhairleachadh\) \(Alba\) 2010](#) (“Achd 2010”). 'S e adhbhar na h-aithisge seo beachdachadh neo-eisimeileach agus neo-phàirteach a lìbhrigeadh air moladh Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd gus sgìre-foghlaim a stèidheachadh airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Bidh seo a’ buntainn an dà chuid ri foghlam bun-sgoile agus ri foghlam àrd-sgoile airson Bun-sgoil Cnoc na Creige agus Acadamaidh Rìoghail Bhaile Dhubhthaich. Tha Roinn 2 den aithisg a’ cur an cèill geàrr-chunntas air pròiseas a’ cho-chomhairleachaidh. Tha Roinn 3 den aithisg a’ cur an cèill beachdachadh Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh air taobhan foghlaim a’ mholaidh, a’ gabhail a-steach beachdan cudromach a thugadh seachad le co-chomhairlichean. Tha Roinn 4 a’ toirt geàrr-chunntas air beachd Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh. Aon uair ’s gum faigh iad an aithisg seo, fo Achd 2010 feumaidh a’ chomhairle beachdachadh oirre, còmhla ri measaidhean buntainneach sam bith a fhuair a’ chomhairle, agus an uair sin aithisg a’ cho-chomhairleachaidh aca ullachadh. Bu chòir gum bi an aithisg seo ri faotainn an lùib aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannach na comhairle, còmhla ri mìneachadh air ciamar, ann a bhith a’ cur crìoch air a’ mholadh, a rinn iad lèirmheas air a’ mholadh thùsail, a’ gabhail a-steach geàrr-chunntas air puingean a chaidh a thogail ann am pròiseas a’ cho-chomhairleachaidh agus freagairt na comhairle riutha. Feumaidh a’ chomhairle aithisg a’ cho-chomhairleachaidh aca fhoillseachadh co-dhiù trì seachdainean mus gabh iad an co-dhùnadh mu dheireadh. A thaobh nam molaidhean air fad, feumaidh a’ chomhairle na dleastanasan reachdail air fad a leantainn a rèir is mar a tha iad air an cur an cèill ann an Achd 2010.

### 1.2 Bheachdaich Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh air:

- builean a’ mholaidh, a rèir coltais, air clann agus daoine òga sna sgoiltean; air luchd-cleachdaidh sam bith eile; air clann a bhios nan sgoilearan is dòcha taobh a-staigh dà bhliadhna bho chaidh am pàipear molaidh fhoillseachadh; agus air clann is daoine òga eile ann an sgìre na comhairle;
- builean sam bith eile as dòcha a thig bhon mholadh;
- ciamar a tha a’ chomhairle an dùil buaidhean dona sam bith a dh’fhaodadh tighinn am bàrr bhon mholadh a lùghdachadh no a sheachnadh; agus
- na buannachdan foghlaim a tha a’ chomhairle den bheachd a thig gu buil bho chur an gnìomh a’ mholaidh, agus adhbharan na comhairle airson nam beachdan seo a ruigsinn.

### 1.3 Ann a bhith ag ullachadh na h-aithisge seo, chaidh na gnìomhachdan a leanas a ghabhail os làimh le Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh:

- làthaireachd aig a’ choinneimh phoblaich a chaidh a chumail air 11 Gearran 2025 mu dheidhinn molaidhean na comhairle;
- beachdachadh air a h-uile sgrìobhainn iomchaidh a chaidh a sholarachadh leis a’ chomhairle a thaobh a’ mholaidh, gu h-àraid aithris nam buannachdan foghlaim agus sgrìobhainnean co-chomhairleachaidh co-cheangailte, freagairtean sgrìobhte agus labhairteach bho phàrantan is eile; agus
- tursan gu làrach Bun-sgoil Cnoc na Creige agus Acadamaidh Rìoghail Bhaile Dhubhthaich, a’ gabhail a-steach còmhraidhean le co-chomhairlichean iomchaidh.

## 2. Pròiseas Co-chomhairleachaidh

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

2.2 Ruith an co-chomhairleachadh foirmeil bho 20 Faoilleach 2025 gu 7 Màrt 2025. Bidh am moladh, ma thèid e air adhart, a' buntainn ris an dà chuid foghlam bun-sgoile agus foghlam àrd-sgoile airson Bun-sgoil Cnoc na Creige agus Acadamaidh Rìoghail Bhaile Dhubhthaich. Tha na sgoiltean seo gu bhith nam pàirt, ann an ùine nach bi fada, de champas Bhaile Dhubhthaich airson 3 gu 18. Bidh an aon sgìre-foghlaim ùr ann airson adhbharan bun-sgoile agus àrd-sgoile. Bidh iad a' tar-chòmhachadh nan sgìrean-foghlaim airson foghlam tro mheadhan na Beurla airson nan sgoiltean co-cheangailte ann am Baile Dhubhthaich, Dòrnach agus Inbhir Ghòrdain. Tha seo a' riochdachadh 14 bun-sgoiltean agus trì àrd-sgoiltean gu h-iomlan. Chaidh am pàipear co-chomhairleachaidh a sgaoileadh gu luchd-obrach, Comhairlean nam Pàrant agus pàrantan sgoilearan a tha a' frithealadh nan sgoiltean a tha air an ainmeachadh sa phàipear molaidh. Chaidh a chur cuideachd gu buill Phàrlamaidean na RA agus na h-Alba, aonaidhean-ciùird, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comann nam Pàrant agus comhairlean coimhearsnachd. Chaidh brath fhoillseachadh sna pàipearan naidheachd ionadail. Bha fiosrachadh ri fhaotainn air làrach-lìn na comhairle agus air na meadhanan sòisealta.

2.3 Chùm a' chomhairle coinneamh phoblach air 11 Gearran 2025, far an do chuir oifigearan an cèill feallsanachd airson nam molaidhean; bheachdaich iad air àrd-bhuannachdan foghlaim; agus dh'iarr iad beachdan bhon luchd-frithealaidh. Bha 18 daoine an làthair, a' gabhail a-steach 13 buill den phoball agus còignear luchd-obrach Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd. Thog luchd-frithealaidh ceistean air farsaingeachd cruinn-eòlasach na sgìre-foghlaim. Bha cha mhòr a h-uile duine a' cur an cèill gum b' fheàrr leotha gu làidir gun robh an sgìre-foghlaim ga leudachadh nas farsainge gus sgoiltean ann an sgìre Ghoillspidh ann an Cataibh a ghabhail a-steach. Bha iad den bheachd gum biodh seo a' dèanamh cinnteach gun robh cothromas ann a thaobh cothrom air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig ann an sgìrean far nach eilear ga thairgsinn an-dràsta. Tha seo a' gabhail a-steach an sgìre timcheall air Drochaid a' Bhannath, far a bheilear air dàil a chur air solar Gàidhlig an-dràsta. Thog luchd-frithealaidh ceistean mu dè cho èifeachdach 's a tha a' chomhairle a' cur air adhart Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig, a' gabhail a-steach nuair a thathar a' clàradh airson tòiseachadh ann an sgoil. Thog grunn luchd-frithealaidh gum feum co-chuid bhrìoghmhor de churraicealam na h-àrd-sgoile a bhith ri faotainn tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Chuir iad an cèill cuideachd gun robh iomagain orra a thaobh faotainneachd agus co-fhreagarrachd còmhdaidh sgoile agus mar a dh'fhaodadh seo, airson cuid, a bhith a' bacadh chlann bho dhol gu Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Fhuair deich freagairtean sgrìobhte. Bha a' mhòr-chuid dhiubh sin a' togail chùisean coltach ris an fheadhainn a chaidh a thogail aig a' choinneimh phoblach. Bha an dà chuid Bòrd na Gàidhlig agus Comann nam Pàrant a' cur an cèill taic airson a' mholaidh gus sgìre-foghlaim a stèidheachadh airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig, a' toirt fa-near cùisean-iomagain a thaobh farsaingeachd cruinn-eòlasach na sgìre-foghlaim.

## 3. Taobhan foghlaim a' mholaidh

3.1 Tha moladh na comhairle a' nochdadh gealltanais Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd gun lean iad orra a' cur an gnìomh Stiùireadh Reachdail air Foghlam Gàidhlig 2017 agus Plana na Gàidhlig aca. Tha a' chomhairle a' toirt seachad mion-fhiosrachadh air a' ghealltanais aca gum bi iad a' cumail orra a' cur am meud àireamh luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig, a gheibh cuideachd a h-uile buannachd a thig à dà-chànanachas. Tha a' chomhairle den bheachd gum bi iad, tro stèidheachadh sgìrean-foghlaim, a' soilleireachadh do phàrantan mar a gheibh iad cothrom air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Tha Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ag aontachadh gum bi buannachdan ann sa chuid as motha de na tha a' chomhairle a' moladh. Feumaidh a' chomhairle fhathast, ge-tà,

gnìomhan cudromach a ghabhail os làimh gus leasachadh a bharrachd a thoirt air na buannachdan foghlaim a dh'fhaodadh tighinn às a' mholadh aca.

3.2 Tha a' chomhairle a' moladh sgìrean-foghlaim airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig aig Bun-sgoil Cnoc na Creige agus Acadamaidh Rìoghail Bhaile Dhubhthaich (a tha gu bhith, ann an ùine nach bi fada, nam pàirt de champas Bhaile Dhubhthaich airson trì gu 18). Bidh iad seo a' tar-chòmhachadh sgìrean-foghlaim a h-uile sgoil a tha co-cheangailte ri Acadamaidh Rìoghail Bhaile Dhubhthaich, a rèir na thig às a' cho-chomhairleachadh. Tha am moladh cuideachd a' gabhail a-steach àrd-sgoiltean Inbhir Ghòrdain agus Dhòrnach agus na bun-sgoiltean co-cheangailte riutha. 'S ann à Baile Dhubhthaich a tha mu thuaiream an dàrna leth de na sgoilearan a tha a' frithealadh Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig ann am BS1-7 an-dràsta. Tha an còrr gan tarraing bho raon farsaing de dh'aitichean ann an sgìrean Caolas Chromba agus Caolas Dhòrnaich, a bharrachd air bho nas fhaide air falbh. Taobh a-staigh aithisg a' cho-chomhairleachaidh, bu chòir don chomhairle dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil soilleireachd ann a thaobh solarachadh còmhachadh airson chlann is daoine òga gus leigeil dhaibhsan bho sgìrean Inbhir Ghòrdain agus Dhòrnach Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a fhrithealadh. Tha Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ag aontachadh gum bu chòir an sgìre-foghlaim airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a leudachadh gus sgìre Ghoillspidh ann an Cataibh a ghabhail a-steach. Bhiodh seo a' cur air adhart cothrom air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig ann an dòigh chothromach airson barrachd chlann is daoine òga far nach eil solar ri fhaotainn gu h-ionadail an-dràsta. Bu chòir do Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd a ràdh cuideachd ciamar a bhios iad a' cleachdadh Achd Foghlam (Alba) 2016 gus iarrtasan a choileanadh san àm ri teachd agus fàs a thoirt air barrachd solair ionadail le bhith a' cur chlasaichean Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig ris an t-solar a th' ann an-dràsta, a bharrachd air an fheum airson sgoiltean uile-Ghàidhlig.

3.3 Tha an àireamh de sgoiltean a tha a' tairgsinn Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig fada nas lugha na an àireamh a tha a' tairgsinn foghlam tro Mheadhan na Beurla. Mar sin, feumaidh clann is daoine òga barrachd siubhail a dhèanamh gus cothrom fhaighinn air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. B' e cùis-iomagain chudromach airson luchd-ùidhe dè cho freagarrach 's a tha còmhachadh sgoile far am bi clann òga is sgoilearan àrd-sgoile a' cleachdadh ullachaidhean siubhail coitcheann. Ma tha a' chomhairle a' leudachadh na sgìre-foghlaim bho na thathar a' mineachadh sa mholadh, bu chòir dhaibh dèanamh cinnteach nach bi còmhachadh, siubhal is cosgais mar bhacadh do phàrantan a tha airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a thaghadh. Ann a bhith a' faighinn cothrom air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig, tha feum aig clann is daoine òga air sàr-mhathas, cothromas, co-ionannachd agus cothromachd. Bu chòir don chomhairle dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil na measaidhean buaidh buntainneach gan gabhail os làimh, a' gabhail a-steach measaidhean buaidh air co-ionannachd is air sgìrean dùthchail. Bu chòir dhaibh fiosrachadh a thoirt seachad air ullachaidhean dìon airson chlann òga agus iad a' siubhal air còmhachadh.

3.4 Tha an aithris air buannachdan foghlaim a' cur air adhart gum bi stèidheachadh sgìre-foghlaim a' nochdadh gealltanais Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Le bhith a' stèidheachadh sgìre-foghlaim, bithear a' cuideachadh dhaoine òga gus faicinn mar a dh'fhaodas iad cumail a' dol ann am Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig gu leantainneach. Tha seo rè na h-ùine a bhios iad ann am foghlam reachdail. Gus taic a thoirt do leantainneachd foghlam ann an Gàidhlig, 's e cùis chudromach gu bheil cothrom ann air curraicealam trì gu 18 a tha sàr-mhath, cunbhalach agus cothromach agus a bhios a' toirt taic do dh'ìrean àrda de dh'fhilteantachd ann an Gàidhlig. Bu chòir don aithris air buannachdan foghlaim leudachadh air na buannachdan curraicealair a thig bhon mholadh. Bhiodh e cuideachail nan robhar a' sònrachadh mar a bhios am moladh a' cuideachadh na comhairle gus na targaidean a choileanadh a chuir iad an cèill mar nithean reachdail sa phlanadh cànan aca airson curraicealam bogaidh airson trì gu 18. Tha na dleastanasan seo gan sònrachadh san Stiùireadh Reachdail air Foghlam Gàidhlig 2017. San aithris air buannachdan foghlaim, tha a' chomhairle ag aithneachadh nam buannachdan a thig à dà-chànanachas. Bidh an cothrom air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig taobh

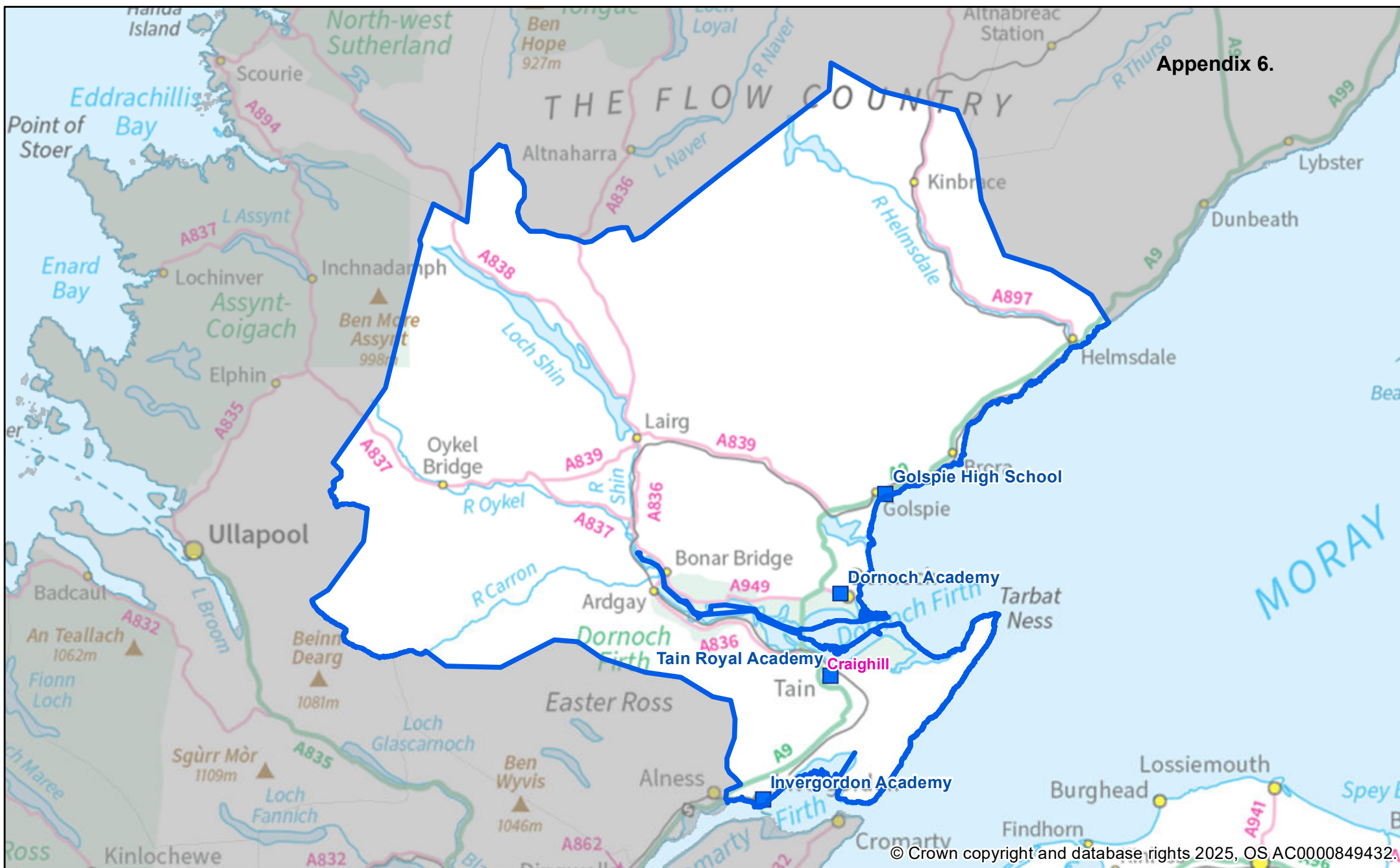
a-staigh bhuidhnean sgoiltean co-cheangailte a' toirt chothroman do chlann is daoine òga gus na sgilean seo a leasachadh fad am beatha. Dh'aithris Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh air na h-eòlasan bogaidh làidir aig Bun-sgoil Cnoc na Creige san t-Sultain 2023. Bu chòir don chomhairle barrachd fiosrachaidh a thoirt seachad air mar a chumas iad suas eòlasan bogaidh làidir ann an campas ùr Bhaile Dhubhthaich airson trì gu 18.

3.5 Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig mar cho-chomhairliche reachdail airson atharrachaidhean air na h-ullachaidhean airson solar Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Tha iad a' cur fàilte air gu bheilear a' moladh sgìre-foghlaim airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig agus tha iad a' toirt fa-near iomagain phàrantan a thaobh farsaingeachd chuibhrichte na sgìre-foghlaim a thathar a' moladh. Tha Comann nam Pàrant a' cur fàilte air gu bheil am moladh a' cur an reachdais an gnìomh. Tha iad ag aontachadh gum bu chòir an sgìre-foghlaim a leudachadh gus sgoiltean ann an sgìre Ghoillspidh a ghabhail a-steach agus gum bu chòir do phàrantan co-dhùnadh a bheil an t-astar siubhail reusanta airson a' phàiste aca. Thug iad fa-near cuideachd gum bu choir don chomhairle a bhith so-fhreagrach ri iarrtasan phàrantan airson leudachadh sgìrean-foghlaim san àm ri teachd taobh a-staigh sgìrean ionadail agus nach bu chòir gu bheil faotainneachd agus freagarrachd còmhdaile sgoile a bhith a' bacadh chlann bho bhith a' frithealadh Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig.

## 4. Geàrr-chunntas

Tha Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ag aontachadh gu bheil moladh na comhairle na bhuannachd foghlaim do chlann is pàrantan a tha a' còmhnaidh sna sgìrean-foghlaim airson Bun-sgoile Cnoc na Creige agus Acadamaidh Rìoghail Bhaile Dhubhthaich (a bhios, ann an ùine nach bi fada, nan campas Bhaile Dhubhthaich airson trì gu 18). Bidh buannachd foghlaim ann cuideachd do chlann ann an sgìre Inbhir Ghòrdain agus ann an sgìre Dhòrnach. Tha am moladh a' toirt seachad soilleireachd do phàrantan air mar a dh'fhaodas iad cothrom fhaighinn air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig, agus bu chòir sgìre-foghlaim a bhith air a stèidheachadh, air chumha nan gnìomhan a tha sinn a' moladh ann an Roinn 3 den aithisg seo. Bha cha mhòr a h-uile neach-ùidhe ris an do choinnich Luchd-sgrùdadh an Rìgh a' toirt taic don mholadh, ma thathar a' leudachadh na sgìre-foghlaim gus sgìre chruinn-eòlasach nas fharsainge a ghabhail a-steach. Chuir iad an cèill cuideachd gun robh moit aca às an t-soirbheas aca ann a bhith a' leasachadh fileantachd ann an Gàidhlig agus tha iad soilleir mu na buannachdan a thig à dà-chànanachas. Tha Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ag aontachadh le luchd-ùidhe gum bu chòir an sgìre-foghlaim a leudachadh gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil cothrom air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig aig an uimhir as motha 's a ghabhas de chlann. Ann a bhith a' toirt air adhart nam molaidhean, bu chòir don chomhairle cumail orra ag obair le luchd-ùidhe gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheilear a' goireasachadh curraicealaman sàr-mhath airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig airson trì gu 18 agus àrainneachdan bogaidh sàr-mhath Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a th' ann agus a thig. Tha dearmadan sa mholadh a thaobh ullachaidhean còmhdaile airson chlann is daoine òga à Inbhir Ghòrdain agus Dhòrnach. Bidh e cudromach gun toir a' chomhairle seachad ullachaidhean còmhdaile a tha sàbhailte, so-dhèanta, fad-ùineach agus tarraingeach gus buannachdan foghlaim a' mholaidh a thoirt gu buil.

## Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh Am Màrt 2025



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# Proposed Gaelic Medium Catchment for Craighill Primary and Tain Royal Academy

Ref: gis2998  
Date: 16 Apr 2025

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## **THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**The proposal is to establish a Gaelic Medium catchment area (applying to both primary and secondary school education) for Craighill Primary School (soon to be part of the Tain 3-18 Campus).**

### **EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT**

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

### **INTRODUCTION**

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

- To establish Gàidhlig Medium (GM) catchment areas for Craighill Primary School/the Tain 3-18 campus. The new catchment will be the same for primary and secondary purposes, and will overlay the English Medium (EM) catchments of the schools in the Tain, Dornoch and Invergordon ASGs catchments. This represents a total of 14 primary schools (at the time of writing) as well as the 3 secondary schools. Particular arrangements will apply for transport to Tain from the other EM catchment areas, and the proposal incorporates some continuing legacy arrangements.

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

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

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

Any identified parental demand for future local provision of GME from within any of the primary schools identified above, would be assessed in accordance with the

Education (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education (2017).

## **SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS**

### **PUBLICATION INFORMATION**

#### **Proposal Paper Published**

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

- ☐ Tain Royal Academy
- ☐ Craighill Primary School
- ☐ Edderton Primary School
- ☐ Gledfield Primary School
- ☐ Hill of Fearn Primary School
- ☐ Hilton of Cadboll Primary School
- ☐ Inver Primary School
- ☐ Knockbreck Primary School
- ☐ Tarbat Old Primary School
- ☐ Invergordon Academy
- ☐ Milton Primary School
- ☐ Newmore Primary School
- ☐ Park Primary School
- ☐ South Lodge Primary School
- ☐ Dornoch Primary School
- ☐ Bonar Bridge Primary School
- ☐ Bonar Bridge Library
- ☐ Dornoch Library
- ☐ Invergordon Library
- ☐ Tain Library

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:

Business Support Team

Education Service

County Buildings

High Street

Dingwall

IV159QN

E-mail: [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 also contact the Business Support Team, Education Service, County Buildings, High Street, Dingwall, IV15 9QN,

E-mail: [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 of pupils attending all of the schools listed above, including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (ii) The Parent Councils of each of the above schools.
- (iii) All staff of the schools listed above.
- (iv) Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.
- (v) Trade union representatives.
- (vi) All Community Councils for the areas covered by the Proposal.
- (vii) Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- (viii) Comann nam Pàrant.
- (ix) Education Scotland.

### **Advertisement in Local Media**

Notices announcing the public meetings will be placed in the *Northern Times*, and that *Ross-shire Journal*, as well as on the Highland Council's website and Facebook page.

### **Consultation Period**

The consultation for this Proposal will run from 20 January 2025 and will end on 7 March 2025. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

## **Public Meetings**

A public meeting will be held, the detail of which are set out below:

Craighill Primary School – 11 February 2025, 6.30pm

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

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

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

## **Responses to the Proposals**

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

Business Support Team

Education Service

County Buildings

High Street

Dingwall

IV159QN

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

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

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

When responding, you are invited to state your relationship with the school – for example, “pupil”, “parent”, “carer”, “relative”, “former pupil”, “teacher in school”, “member of the community” etc. However it is not compulsory to do so.

Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically should know that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be made

publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: “I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Councillors and Council Officers of Highland Council”. Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available. All written responses must be received by the last day of the consultation period, 7 March 2025 at 5.00pm.

### **Involvement of Education Scotland**

When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland by the Council. Education Scotland will also be sent, by 17 March 2025, a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period. Education Scotland will also receive summary notes of the public meetings that will be held and so far as is practicable a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 4 April 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 meetings. It will then prepare a Consultation Report. This Report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be sent to anyone who submitted a written representation during consultation. It will be available on the Council website as well as at the affected school and local library, free of charge. The Report will include a summary of the written and oral representations made during consultation and a copy of the Education Scotland Report, together with the Council’s considered response to the issues raised. The Report will include details of details of any alleged inaccuracies and/or omissions and how these have been handled. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to being submitted to the Council’s Education Committee, who will make a recommendation to the full Highland Council.

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

The Council intends to publish its Report in October 2025 prior to submission to the Council’s Education Committee in November 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 by the Education Committee would require to be confirmed by a subsequent meeting of the full Highland Council.

### **Note on Corrections**

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

## **PROPOSAL**

### **Legislative Background**

- 1.1 The proposal is advanced within the context of all applicable legislation. Amongst other duties, education authorities are required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (S.1 of the Education Act 1980); to publish or otherwise make available information as to their arrangements for the placing of children in schools under their management (S.28 of the 1980 Act) and to promote and support Gaelic Medium education and learning (S.15 of The Education (Scotland) Act 2016. Statutory Guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig in 2017 specifies that local authorities should establish catchment areas for Gàidhlig Medium education, and the Council must comply with this Guidance. A catchment area for GME provision should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school, and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME provision for their children. Catchment areas for GME will normally overlay a number of school catchment areas.
- 1.2 In common with all public bodies in Scotland, the Highland Council also has a duty to provide Best Value. This includes making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost; and, in making those arrangements and securing that balance, to have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities requirements and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

### **Reason for the Proposal**

- 2.1 This proposal is being advanced for the following reasons:
  - Bòrd na Gàidhlig has issued statutory guidance recommending that local authorities create catchment areas for GME.
  - Highland Council has not previously specified catchment areas for all of its schools offering GME. This has led to a lack of clarity for parents in respect of entitlement to GME (see paragraph 2.2 below).
- 2.2 Outwith our defined GM catchments, the criteria for providing transport to GME in Highland are not particularly well defined, and have evolved over time. The minimum distance and road safety criteria are the same as for English Medium education. The Council currently has an informal arrangement under which transport to GME can be provided “within

reasonable travelling distance”. This has been generally interpreted as meaning up to 15 miles, but there are numerous variations.

### **Informal Consultation**

- 3.1 Advance notification of the proposal has been provided to local elected councillors representing the wards in which the schools are located, as well as with the Head Teachers of the schools directly affected. Contact was also made with the Parent Councils of the affected schools. An explanation of the Proposal was provided and comments were invited.
- 3.2 There is no compulsion on pupils from any other catchment to attend GME. The catchment proposal merely seeks to clarify the opportunity to do so.

### **Current and Planned Provision of Gàidhlig Medium Education within the Tain, Invergordon, Dornoch and Golspie ASGs**

- 4.1 There are 8 primary schools within the Tain ASG, although that figure includes the current Craighill and Knockbreck Primary Schools, which are due to be merged as part of the new 3-18 campus. Craighill Primary is the only one to offer GME at the primary stage. Tain Royal Academy also offers GME.
- 4.2 There are 4 primary schools within the Invergordon ASG, none of which offer GME at present.
- 4.3 There are 2 primary schools within the Dornoch ASG. Bonar Bridge PS formerly offered GME, but this provision was “mothballed” around a decade ago.
- 4.4 The Gaelic medium class at Bonar Bridge PS was mothballed during school session 2015-16 when the GM roll fell to one, and the parents of the one remaining pupil asked that he transfer to Craighill PS to continue to access GME. Consequently, no children have attended GME at the school since 2016.
- 4.5 For the purposes of the current exercise, the Bonar Bridge PS catchment has been included within the proposed GM catchment for Craighill PS/new Tain Primary. Should the mothballed GM provision at re-open due to increased demand, the GM catchment for Tain would require to be amended, and new GM catchment published for Bonar Bridge Primary School.

### **Craighill Primary School**

- 5.1 The school’s official roll for the 2024-25 session is 56 pupils across P1-7 in Gàidhlig Medium and 137 pupils across P1-7 in English Medium. There are also 22 children in Sgoil-àraich (Gàidhlig Medium pre-school nursery).

- 5.2 Approximately half of the GM pupils in P1-7 at present are from the town of Tain. The remainder are drawn from a wide range of locations in the Cromarty Firth and Dornoch Firth areas, as well as from further afield. There are currently 3 Gaelic Medium classes and a further 7 mainstream English Medium classes in the school.

The school is due to be replaced by a new merged primary school with effect from August 2025. The new GM catchment will apply to the new merged primary school.

### **Tain Royal Academy**

- 6.1 For the 2023-24 school session, 19 pupils attending Tain Royal Academy are studying Gàidhlig for fluent speakers. The total roll of Tain Royal Academy for the 2024-25 school session is 511 pupils.

### **Proposed School Catchments for GME**

- 7.1 Approximate travel distances and times to Tain from the other schools in the affected ASGs are set out below:

Tain Campus – Edderton Primary – 5.7 miles, 8 minutes travel time.

Tain Campus – Gledfield Primary – 14.8 miles, 21 minutes travel time.

Tain Campus – Hill of Fearn Primary – 5.3 miles, 8 minutes travel time.

Tain Campus – Hilton of Cadboll Primary – 7.9 miles, 12 minutes travel time.

Tain Campus – Inver Primary – 6.2 miles, 11 minutes travel time.

Tain Campus – Tarbat Old Primary – 10.1 miles, 17 minutes travel time.

Tain Campus – Milton Primary – 7 miles, 11 minutes travel time.

Tain Campus – Newmore Primary – 11.5 miles, 15 minutes travel time.

Tain Campus – Park Primary/Invergordon Academy – 12.9 miles, 18 minutes travel time.

Tain Campus – South Lodge Primary – 12.3 miles, 16 minutes travel time.

Tain Campus - Bonar Bridge Primary – 15.5 miles, 23 minutes travel time.

Tain Campus – Dornoch Academy/Primary – 8.5 miles, 12 minutes travel time.

- 7.2 The statutory guidance specifies that a catchment area for GME provision should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school, and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME provision for their children.

- 7.3 The Council is sympathetic to the idea that Gàidhlig Medium Education should be accessible as many pupils Highland as possible, provided it is practical and reasonable to provide access.
- 7.4 In line with the criteria set out above, the Council therefore proposes that the GM catchment for the Tain Campus will overlay the English Medium catchments of the schools in the Tain, Dornoch and Invergordon ASGs
- 7.5 In considering the principles of Best Value – see paragraph 1.2 above - Highland Council has noted that to provide dedicated transport from the areas outwith Tain, but within the proposed GM catchment, could result in an unacceptably high level of additional cost to the taxpayer.
- 7.6 The Council therefore proposes that school transport to GME at Tain Campus will be on the basis of utilising the existing transport for Tain Royal Academy, wherever it is practicable to do so. Dedicated transport by taxi or minibus will not normally be provided.
- 7.7 The map at **Appendix B** shows the proposed GM catchment for Tain Campus with the existing EM catchments outlined in red.
- 7.8 No changes are proposed for these catchments in respect of English Medium education.
- 7.9 Lairg Primary is located 25.7 miles from Craighill Primary, approximately 35 minutes in travel time. The travel distances involved will be too long for most primary school pupils, and taking this into account, the Council does not propose to include the Lairg PS catchment within the GM catchment of Craighill PS/Tain Campus. There are however some pupils currently accessing GME from Invershin, which lies between Lairg and Tain, but within the Lairg catchment. The Council will continue to provide transport to Tain for these pupils, until they complete their school attendance (secondary and primary) and provided they continue to access GME. This would also apply to any younger siblings of the affected pupils.

### **Educational Benefits – Catchment Areas**

- 8.1 The Proposal forms part of Highland Council's overall approach to the promotion of Gàidhlig medium education. Up to now, Highland Council's admission arrangements to GME have been informal and based on a "reasonable distance" (often applied as a 15-mile radius) from each school offering GME. In some locations these radii have overlapped, and the "15 mile" principle has not always been applied consistently. The creation of GM catchment areas, extended throughout Highland, will mean that admissions to GME will in future be more formal and robust.

- 8.2 The Proposal therefore helps to consolidate our existing provision of GME and allows for the more efficient use of resources. It should be considered alongside other measures being undertaken to promote Gaelic and the benefits of bilingualism.
- 8.3 It is acknowledged that bilingualism has educational benefits as it provides the user with a better sense of the structure of language, and bilingual children often find it easier to pick up other languages. The continued availability of Gaelic medium education in schools within the relevant ASGs, as evidenced by the new catchments, will provide children with the opportunity to develop these skills for life.
- 8.4 The creation of GM catchment areas will demonstrate the Council's commitment to the long-term future of Gaelic Medium education. Evidence of this commitment may help with the known problem with "drop-out" from GME.
- 8.5 The Education section of the Council's Gaelic Language Plan sets out the following aims:
- That the Highland Council increases the percentage of pupils in GME from potential enrolment figures at key transition points.
  - That the Highland Council increases the percentage of pupils undertaking Gaelic through the Primary Language Learning programme, based on the 1+2 Language Learning Approach and subsequently through secondary Gaelic Learner Education across The Highland Council area.
  - That the Highland Council creates a Gaelic education transitions strategy for retaining children in 0–3/childcare to nursery, nursery to primary, primary to secondary 1, and the Broad General Education to senior phase.
  - That the Highland Council develops a curriculum and workforce plan for the delivery of Gaelic education at all levels (0–3, nursery, primary and secondary) including clear signposting to [www.teagasg.com](http://www.teagasg.com) and early years' recruitment via The Highland Council's website.
  - That the Highland Council undertakes a Highland-wide survey of existing Gaelic education staff to identify career-long professional learning needs, particularly in relation to Gaelic language skills, and develops a programme of training and support.
  - That the Highland Council ensures that Gaelic education is considered as part of the school estates capital development whenever possible.
- 8.6 The Proposal will raise the profile of Gaelic in the area and make it clear that the opportunity exists for children in the other primary school catchments to attend GME at Tain Campus

## **Effects on School Transport – Catchment Areas**

- 9.1 Pupils attending GME are offered school transport on the same basis as children attending English Medium education. Paragraphs 7.6, 7.9, and 10.3 above provide more details of how the Council proposes to provide school transport in the case of the schools featured in this Proposal.
- 9.2 Currently, there are pupils accessing GME at Craighill Primary, who receive transport but whose homes are outwith the newly defined catchments. Where pupils had enrolled in school prior to the creation of the GM catchments, and where they were already in receipt of school transport, the Council will continue to provide it. School transport will also be provided to any younger siblings of such pupils, provided their older siblings are still at the same school.

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

- 10.1 The Proposal is expected to have any direct effect on staff and management arrangements.

## **Effect on the Local Communities**

- 11.1 The proposal is expected to have any impact on the wider local communities.

## **Integrated Impact Assessment**

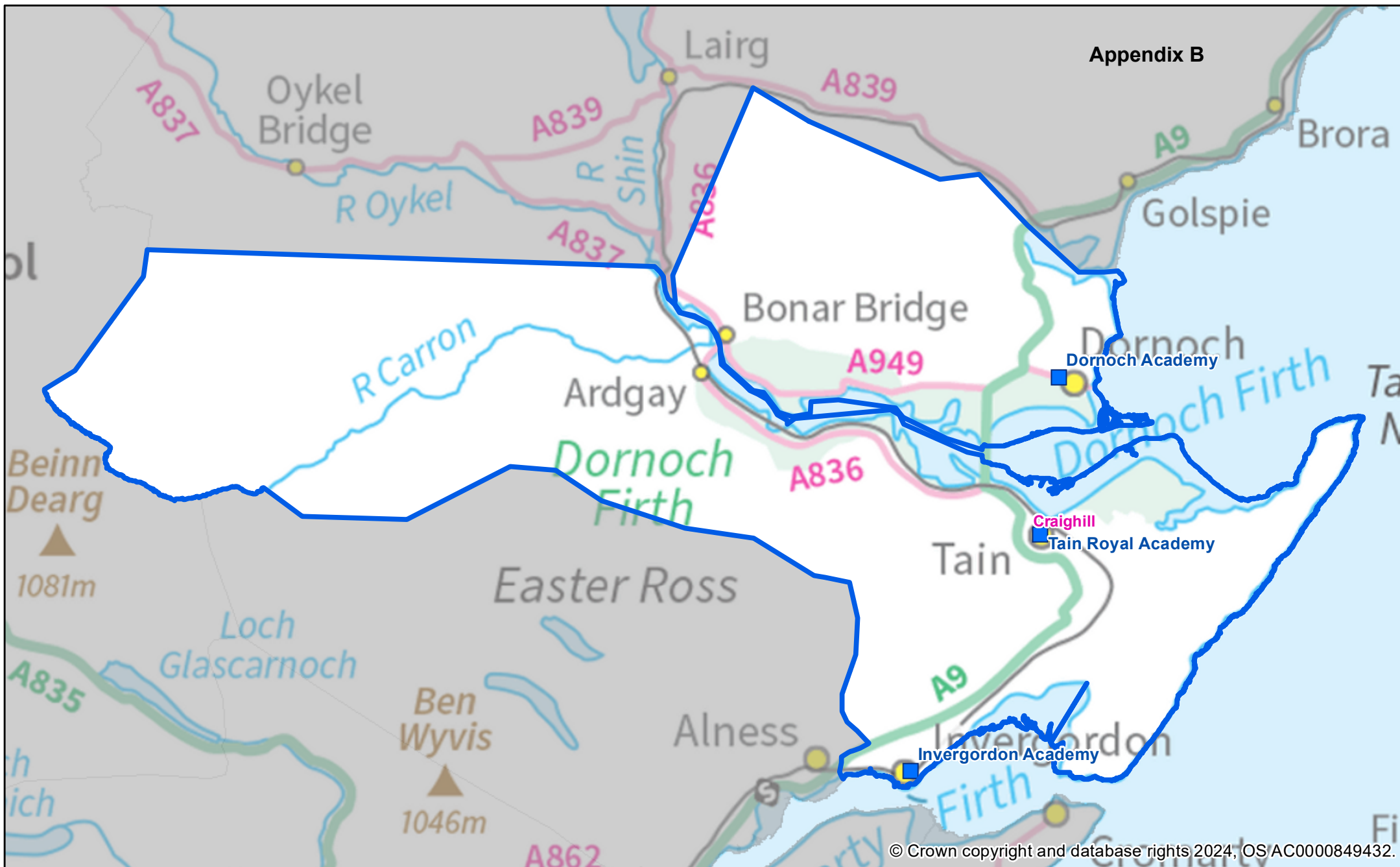
- 12.1 The proposal has been assessed as having no significant impacts on i. Equalities and Human Rights, ii. Children's Health and Wellbeing, iii. Data Handling, iv, Island and Rural Mainland Communities, and v. Climate Change.
- 12.2 In respect of age equality, the proposal relates to a primary school and as such primarily affects children in the 3-12 age group, and their parents. The proposal is advanced on the basis of educational benefit to the children in the area concerned. No negative age-related effects arise. Age is not a protected characteristic for the purposes of school provision.
- 12.3 The Proposal helps clarify access to Gàidhlig Medium education, and as such complies with the Council's principles of treating Gàidhlig on an equal basis with English.

## **Recommendation**

- 13.1 Highland Council recommends the adoption of Gàidhlig Medium catchment areas for Craighill Primary School/the Tain 3-18 campus, along the lines set out in this paper.
- 13.2 This consultation paper is issued in terms of the authority's procedures to meet the relevant statutory requirements. Following the consultation period, a

report and submissions received will be presented to the Education Committee of the Highland Council.

**END OF PROPOSAL PAPER**



# Proposed Gaelic Medium Catchment for Craighill Primary and Tain Royal Academy

Ref: gis2998  
Date: 03 Oct 2024

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