

Agenda Item	5.
Report No	EDU/23/26

The Highland Council

Committee: Education

Date: 26 August 2026

Report Title: Statutory Consultation Exercise – Knockbreck Primary School (Skye): Request to Proceed to Consultation on Permanent Closure

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive – People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' agreement to proceed to a statutory consultation, in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, on a proposal to discontinue education provision at Knockbreck Primary School, Isle of Skye, and re-assign the school catchment area to Dunvegan Primary School. The Proposal Paper is attached as **Appendix 2** and maps of both catchment areas as **Appendix 3**.
- 1.2 Knockbreck Primary School (Skye) has been temporarily closed since April 2024, and no pupils currently attend the school. Six primary-aged children currently reside within the catchment area, and all attend alternative schools.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. Agree to proceed to statutory consultation, in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, on a proposal to discontinue education provision at Knockbreck Primary School (Skye) and re-assign the catchment area to Dunvegan Primary School, on the basis of the Proposal Paper attached as **Appendix 2**.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource
The financial implications of the proposal are set out in the Proposal Paper attached as **Appendix 2**.

Dunvegan Primary School currently has a roll of 54 pupils and a capacity for 100 pupils and is able to accommodate pupils residing within the Knockbreck Primary School (Skye) catchment area. A new Dunvegan Primary School is being designed and built as part of the Highland Investment Plan. The current design provides four primary classrooms with capacity for 100 pupils, together with expansion space for a further two classrooms should future demand require this.

This will provide modern fit for purpose facilities, with capacity for the expanded catchment area. No additional accommodation or capital investment at Dunvegan Primary School is anticipated as a consequence of the proposal.

As Knockbreck Primary School (Skye) has been temporarily closed since April 2024, the proposal is not expected to generate significant additional operational savings beyond those already realised through temporary closure, nor is it expected to result in significant additional transport expenditure. Dunvegan Primary School has sufficient existing capacity to accommodate pupils from the Knockbreck catchment area, and no additional accommodation requirements are anticipated as a consequence of the proposal.

3.2 Legal

The proposal has been developed in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. As Knockbreck Primary School (Skye) is classified as a rural school, the proposal has also been prepared having regard to the additional statutory requirements relating to rural school closures. If approved, the statutory consultation process will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the 2010 Act. Any subsequent decision to discontinue education provision at the school would be subject to the provisions of the 2010 Act, including referral to Scottish Ministers.

3.3 Risk

The principal risks associated with the proposal relate to the outcome of the statutory consultation process and the potential for objection to the proposal. These risks will be assessed through the consultation process and reported to Members following consultation. Should Members ultimately decide to discontinue education provision at Knockbreck Primary School (Skye), the proposal would be subject to the statutory call-in provisions of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and consideration by Scottish Ministers. The Council has sought to mitigate risk through informal community engagement, consideration of alternatives to closure and preparation of the Proposal Paper in accordance with the requirements of the 2010 Act.

3.4 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)

There are no known risks.

3.5 Gaelic

The proposal would have no adverse effect on Gaelic Medium Education. Children residing within the Knockbreck Primary School (Skye) catchment area would continue to access Gaelic Medium Education through existing arrangements at Dunvegan Primary School.

4. Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary**

4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken on 6 July 2026. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded that the proposal would have positive impacts for children and young people through continued access to sustainable educational provision and wider educational opportunities. A potential negative impact has been identified in relation to community sustainability within the Waternish area. No significant adverse impacts have been identified. The findings of the Integrated Impact Assessment Screening are set out in **Appendix 1** of the Proposal Paper.

4.3.3	Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening
	Equality	• Children and Young People – Positive impact • Children affected by disability – No significant impact identified • Older adults – No impact identified
	Socio-economic	No significant impact identified
	Human Rights	Positive impact
	Children’s Rights and Well-being	Positive impact
	Island and Mainland Rural	Potential negative impact identified in relation to community sustainability within the Waternish area
	Climate Change	No significant impact identified
	Data Rights	No impact identified

5. **Overview**

5.1 Knockbreck Primary School (Skye) has been temporarily closed since April 2024. Prior to temporary closure, the Council engaged with parents regarding a significant reduction in the school roll and the movement of pupils to alternative educational provision. Following those discussions, parents agreed that the school should be mothballed from the end of the Spring term 2024. The school has remained temporarily closed since that date.

- 5.2 In accordance with Highland Council procedures and Scottish Government Guidance, the school's temporary closure arrangements have been subject to review. As part of that process, community engagement was undertaken on 2 March 2026 to gather views on the future of the school.
- 5.3 The review process included consideration of current attendance patterns, historic school roll information, available demographic information and community feedback. At the time of publication of the Proposal Paper, no pupils attended Knockbreck Primary School (Skye) and children resident within the catchment area were already attending alternative schools.
- 5.4 Officers have considered a range of alternatives including continuation of the temporary closure arrangement, re-opening the school with its existing catchment area and re-opening the school with an expanded catchment area. The outcome of that assessment is set out in the Proposal Paper attached as **Appendix 2**.
- 5.5 Having considered the available information, officers consider that it is appropriate to proceed to statutory consultation on the future of Knockbreck Primary School (Skye). The proposal would discontinue education provision at the school and re-assign the catchment area to Dunvegan Primary School. Detailed information on the rationale for the proposal, educational benefits, alternatives appraisal and rural school closure considerations is contained within the Proposal Paper attached as **Appendix 2**.

6. Proposal

- 6.1 The Proposal Paper attached as **Appendix 2** sets out the detailed rationale for the proposal, including the Educational Benefits Statement, consideration of alternatives, assessment of community impacts, financial implications and the additional statutory considerations applicable to rural school closures.
- 6.2 Members are invited to consider the Proposal Paper and, if minded, approve commencement of the statutory consultation process in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The consultation will run from 2 September 2026 and will end on 30 October 2026. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - People

Date: 16 July 2026

Author: Derek Martin (Strategic Lead-Operations)

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 – Proposal Paper
Appendix 3 – Catchment Area Maps

Appendix 1

Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Summary

Proposal: Closure of Knockbreck Primary School and reassignment of the catchment area to Dunvegan Primary School.

Overview

The proposal seeks to formally discontinue education provision at Knockbreck Primary School, which has been temporarily closed since April 2024. No pupils currently attend the school. The proposal would formally reassign the catchment area to Dunvegan Primary School and provide long-term certainty regarding future educational provision.

Equalities and Human Rights

The screening identified an overall positive impact. Children and young people are expected to benefit from access to larger peer groups, broader curricular opportunities, enhanced social interaction and wider extra-curricular activities. No significant adverse impacts were identified across protected characteristics. Access to education and support services would continue through receiving schools.

Poverty and Socio-Economic Impact

Positive impacts were identified in relation to educational opportunities and wellbeing. A potential negative impact was identified for the local community through the loss of the school as a community asset. Mitigation includes statutory consultation, community engagement and consideration of future community use of the building.

Children's Rights and Wellbeing

The assessment concluded that the proposal is likely to have a positive impact on children and young people through access to broader educational, social and extra-curricular opportunities.

Data Protection

No significant change to current personal data processing arrangements was identified and a full Data Protection Impact Assessment is not required.

Island and Rural Communities

Potential impacts relate to community identity and perceptions of sustainability. Existing education and transport arrangements are already established and no significant additional travel impacts are anticipated.

Climate Change

No significant direct climate impacts were identified. Existing transport arrangements are already in place and no material change in emissions is anticipated.

Conclusion

The screening concluded that the proposal has an overall positive impact and that no full impact assessments are required at this stage.

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Education Committee

PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE EDUCATION PROVISION AT KNOCKBRECK PRIMARY SCHOOL (ISLE OF SKYE) AND RE-ASSIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA TO DUNVEGAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

PROPOSAL

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

The Highland Council proposes:

- to discontinue education provision at Knockbreck Primary School, Hallin, Isle of Skye, and re-assign the school catchment area to Dunvegan Primary School.

The proposal will be implemented only following completion of the statutory consultation process and all legislative requirements.

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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

Dunvegan Primary School,

Dunvegan,
Isle of Skye,
IV55 8GU

and published on the Highland Council website:

www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

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

Education Business Support Team,
Highland Council
Charles Kennedy Building

Fort William

PH33 6RQ

Email: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, audio formats, or suitable language, please contact The Education Business Support Team, Highland Council, Charles Kennedy Building, Fort William PH33 6RQ

Email: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

Formal notice of the Proposal and relevant information will be given and be made available, free of charge, to the consultees listed as follows:

- (i) Parents/carers of children resident within the Knockbreck Primary School catchment area.
- (ii) Parents/carers of pupils attending Dunvegan Primary School; including parents/carers of pre-school pupils.
- (iii) The Parent Council of Dunvegan Primary School.
- (iv) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.

- (v) Staff of Dunvegan Primary School
- (vi) Waternish Community Council
- (vii) Dunvegan and District Community Council
- (viii) Trade Union representatives
- (ix) Local Elected Members

In addition, arrangements will be made to seek the views of children and young people attending Dunvegan Primary School. Their views will be gathered in an age-appropriate manner and will be considered as part of the consultation process and reported within the Consultation Report.

Advertisement in Local Media

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

Consultation Period

The consultation for this Proposal will run from 2 September 2026 and will end on 30 October 2026. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

Public Meeting

A public meeting will be held during the week commencing 7 September 2026. The date, time and venue will be confirmed and publicised by The Highland Council following publication of this proposal paper. Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting will be invited to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council, chaired by a senior elected member and addressed by officers of the Education Service.

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

The note will be forwarded to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, along with other submissions and comments received by the Council during the consultation process.

Meetings with Pupils and Staff

School staff will arrange to discuss the proposal with pupils in the affected schools. Questions, responses and views will be taken down and the results published in the Consultation Report.

Responses to the Proposals

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

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

Email: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

Or via an online form, to be found at:

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations>

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

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, 30 October 2026 at 5.00pm.

Involvement of His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education

When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will be sent to His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) by the Council. HMIe will also be sent, by 6 November 2026, a copy of any written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period. HMIe will also receive the summary note of the public meeting that will be held and so far, as is practicable a copy of any other relevant documentation. HM Inspectors will prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal within three weeks of receipt of the consultation material in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. In preparing their report, HMIe 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 HMle Report, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made at the public meeting. It will then prepare a Consultation Report. This Report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be sent to anyone who submitted a written representation during consultation. It will be available on the Council website and at the affected school and local library, free of charge. The Report will include a summary of the written and oral representations made during consultation and a copy of the HMle Report, together with the Council's considered response to the issues raised. The Report will include details of any alleged inaccuracies and/or omissions and how these have been handled. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to being submitted to the Education Committee of Highland Council, who will make a recommendation to the full Highland Council.

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

At the present time the Council intends to publish its Report in January 2027, prior to submission to the Education Committee in February 2027. However, this time scale may change depending on the nature of issues raised during consultation, and the need to give full consideration to those issues. In the latter event, the Report may not be submitted until a later Committee meeting.

Any proposal approved at the Education Committee would require to be confirmed by a subsequent meeting of the full Highland Council.

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

Note on Corrections

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

1. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Knockbreck Primary School is classified as a rural school. In bringing forward this proposal the Council has had regard to the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 and the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 including the additional considerations applicable to rural school closures.

2. REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

2.1 Knockbreck Primary School has been temporarily closed since April 2024, and no pupils currently attend the school. At the time of publication of this proposal, six primary-aged pupils reside within the catchment area, with five attending Dunvegan Primary School and one attending Portree Primary School.

2.2 The Council has reviewed current attendance patterns, recent school roll information, community feedback and available demographic information. The Council has identified no evidence of current or foreseeable demand sufficient to support the sustainable re-opening of the school.

2.3 The Council considers that continued temporary closure would not provide an appropriate long-term solution and would prolong uncertainty regarding the future of the school. The proposal would provide clarity regarding future educational provision for children residing within the catchment area and align statutory catchment arrangements with established attendance patterns.

2.4 The Council has also identified educational benefits associated with access to larger school settings, including larger age-appropriate peer groups, enhanced opportunities for collaborative learning and social interaction, and wider curricular and extra-curricular opportunities.

2.5 Community engagement undertaken on 2 March 2026 found no evidence of significant demand for the re-opening of the school and indicated that former pupils had settled successfully within their receiving schools.

3. CURRENT DETAILS – KNOCKBRECK PRIMARY SCHOOL

3.1 The school serves the Waternish area of the Isle of Skye and has been temporarily closed since April 2024. The school has capacity for 25 pupils. No Early Learning and Childcare provision is currently associated with the school.

3.2 The school building comprises the original school building together with later extensions and associated grounds. The school estate has been assessed as having a Condition Rating of B (Satisfactory) and a Suitability Rating of C (Poor). The suitability assessment identified limitations associated with accessibility, the absence of a dedicated PE facility, the absence of a disabled toilet and limited space for additional support and group working activities.

3.3 School Roll History

The school roll at Knockbreck Primary School has fluctuated at low levels over recent years prior to temporary closure.

School Session	School Roll
2020/21	8
2021/22	5
2022/23	7
2023/24	6
2024/25	0*
2025/26	0*

*The school has been temporarily closed since April 2024.

3.4 School Capacity and Occupancy

Prior to temporary closure, occupancy levels were very low. Based on the 2023/24 school roll of 6 pupils, occupancy was approximately 24% of capacity.

3.5 Forecast Pupil Numbers

The Council has reviewed available demographic information and pupil forecasts for the catchment area. These forecasts indicate that pupil numbers are expected to remain at very low levels throughout the forecast period, with no evidence of a sustainable increase in the school roll.

Whilst future pupil numbers may change as a result of factors such as family movement into or out of the area, the available evidence does not indicate a realistic prospect of

establishing a viable long-term school roll. The Council therefore considers that the forecasts do not support the sustainable re-opening of the school.

4. CURRENT DETAILS – DUNVEGAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

4.1 Dunvegan Primary School currently has a roll of 54 pupils and a capacity of 100 pupils. The school has a Condition Rating of C (Poor) and a Suitability Rating of C (Poor). The associated secondary school is Portree High School. A replacement Dunvegan Primary School is currently programmed for completion by the end of 2027. The current design provides four primary classrooms with capacity for 100 pupils together with expansion space for a further two classrooms should future demand require this. Current school roll forecasts indicate that pupil numbers are expected to remain well within the planned capacity of the replacement school throughout the forecast period.

5. EXAMINATION OF ALTERNATIVES

5.1 In bringing forward this proposal, the Council has given careful consideration to alternative courses of action. In accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, particular regard has been given to alternatives to closure and the specific circumstances of a rural school.

The Council has considered the following alternatives:

- Continuing the current temporary closure arrangement.
- Re-opening Knockbreck Primary School with its existing catchment area.
- Re-opening Knockbreck Primary School with an expanded catchment area.

5.2 As part of its consideration of these alternatives, the Council has reviewed current pupil numbers, parental preferences, community feedback, existing attendance patterns and the availability of education provision at neighbouring schools.

Option 1: Continued Temporary Closure

5.3 It would be possible for the Council to continue the current temporary closure arrangement. However, the Council does not consider this to be the most appropriate long-term solution. Scottish Government guidance makes clear that temporary closure is intended as a temporary measure and should not be used as a substitute for reaching a long-term decision regarding the future of a school where there is no realistic prospect of re-opening. The Council therefore considers it appropriate to determine the future of Knockbreck Primary School through the statutory consultation process.

5.4 Knockbreck Primary School has been temporarily closed since April 2024, and no pupils have attended the school during that period.

5.5 At the time of publication of this proposal, there are six primary-aged children residing within the Knockbreck Primary School catchment area. Five attend Dunvegan Primary School and one attends Portree Primary School. Families living within the catchment have already established educational arrangements elsewhere.

5.6 During the informal review meeting held on 2 March 2026, attendees recognised that there were currently no children requiring education provision at Knockbreck Primary School and discussion indicated limited evidence of future demand sufficient to support re-opening.

5.7 Continued temporary closure would maintain uncertainty regarding the future status of the school and would provide no clear resolution for parents, the local community or the Council. It would also mean retaining school estate arrangements despite there being no pupils attending the school and no identified demand for its re-opening.

5.8 The Council, therefore, does not consider continued temporary closure to be a realistic or sustainable long-term alternative and considers that a formal decision on the future of the school should now be reached through the statutory consultation process.

Option 2: Re-opening Knockbreck Primary School with its Existing Catchment Area

5.9 The Council has considered whether Knockbreck Primary School could be re-opened to serve its existing catchment area.

5.10 At the time of publication of this proposal, no pupils attend the school. There are six primary-aged pupils living within the catchment area, all of whom attend alternative schools. Five attend Dunvegan Primary School and one attends Portree Primary School. Prior to temporary closure, the school roll remained consistently low, varying between five and eight pupils over the period 2020/21 to 2023/24. The Council considers that this historic pattern, together with current attendance arrangements and available demographic information, does not indicate a realistic prospect of establishing a sustainable long-term school roll.

5.11 Feedback received during the informal review process indicated that former pupils had settled successfully into their receiving schools and were benefiting from larger peer groups and wider educational opportunities. The parent attending the review meeting expressed the view that moving to a larger school had been beneficial and noted the absence of any apparent demand from other parents for the school to re-open.

5.12 The Council has seen no evidence of parental demand for the re-establishment of education provision at Knockbreck Primary School. Similarly, the informal review process identified no expectation that a sufficient number of children would become available within the catchment area to create a sustainable school roll.

5.13 The Council has reviewed the school roll history, current pupil numbers and available demographic information described in Section 3. The Council has identified no

evidence that a viable school roll could be sustained at Knockbreck Primary School over the short, medium or longer term.

5.14 The Council considers that re-opening the school with its existing catchment area would be unlikely to secure a viable long-term roll and would therefore be unlikely to represent an efficient or sustainable use of educational resources.

5.15 Accordingly, the Council does not consider re-opening the school with its existing catchment area to be a realistic alternative.

Option 3: Re-opening Knockbreck Primary School with an Expanded Catchment Area

5.16 The Council has also considered whether it would be appropriate to re-open Knockbreck Primary School by expanding the school's catchment area.

5.17 Any proposal to alter existing catchment boundaries would require detailed consideration of population distribution, geography, travel patterns, parental preferences and the effect on neighbouring schools. Any such changes could require separate statutory consultation processes.

5.18 The Council considered whether amendments to neighbouring school catchments could create a sustainable roll at Knockbreck Primary School.

5.19 The majority of primary-aged pupils currently residing within the Knockbreck catchment area already attend Dunvegan Primary School. Dunvegan Primary School currently has a roll of 54 pupils and a capacity of 100 pupils, providing sufficient capacity to accommodate future pupils from the area. In addition, a replacement Dunvegan Primary School is programmed for completion by the end of 2027 and is being designed with sufficient capacity and future expansion provision to accommodate forecast pupil numbers across the revised catchment area.

5.20 The distance between Knockbreck Primary School and Dunvegan Primary School is approximately 11.2 miles, with a travel time of approximately 22 minutes. Existing educational links between the two communities are therefore already established.

5.21 School roll forecasts for neighbouring schools were reviewed as part of this assessment. Forecast rolls indicate that neighbouring schools are themselves projected to remain small rural schools, including Edinbane (12 pupils by 2040/41), Carbost (8 pupils by 2040/41) and MacDiarmid (16 pupils by 2040/41). The Council concluded that no realistic alteration of catchment boundaries would create a sustainable roll at Knockbreck without adversely affecting neighbouring schools and communities.

5.22 Furthermore, any such catchment amendment would itself require detailed consideration and may require separate statutory processes.

5.23 The Council therefore does not consider that re-opening Knockbreck Primary School with an expanded catchment area represents a realistic or sustainable alternative.

Conclusion

5.24 Having considered the reasonable alternatives available, the Council has concluded that:

- Continued temporary closure would prolong uncertainty and would not provide a long-term resolution.
- Re-opening Knockbreck Primary School with its existing catchment area is unlikely to result in a viable school roll.
- Re-opening Knockbreck Primary School with an expanded catchment area would not provide a realistic or sustainable solution.

5.25 The Council, therefore, considers that the most appropriate option is to proceed with consultation on the discontinuation of education provision at Knockbreck Primary School and the re-assignment of the catchment area to Dunvegan Primary School.

6. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

6.1 Highland Council considers that children and young people should have access to learning environments which support high quality learning and teaching, positive wellbeing, achievement and attainment, and effective preparation for lifelong learning. In assessing this proposal, the Council has considered the educational opportunities currently available to children residing within the Knockbreck Primary School catchment area and the opportunities available through attendance at Dunvegan Primary School and other larger schools within the area.

6.2 At the time of publication of this proposal, no pupils attend Knockbreck Primary School. There are six primary-aged pupils residing within the catchment area. Five attend Dunvegan Primary School and one attends Portree Primary School. The Council notes that families within the catchment area are already choosing to access education within larger school settings.

6.3 The Council considers that pupils benefit from being educated within an age-appropriate peer group of sufficient size to allow friendships, learning relationships and social groupings to develop and change over time. Larger peer groups provide increased opportunities for children to learn with and from others, develop teamwork and communication skills, build confidence and participate in a wider range of social experiences. These opportunities support both learning and wellbeing and are consistent with the aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence.

6.4 The Council considers that the educational opportunities available to pupils are significantly influenced by the size of the school roll. A re-opened Knockbreck Primary School would be likely to operate with a very small number of pupils. This would limit opportunities for collaborative learning, group discussion, peer support and social interaction when compared with the opportunities available within a larger school environment. Whilst some of these challenges could be mitigated through joint activities

with other schools, this would require pupils to travel elsewhere to access opportunities that are available as part of everyday school life within a larger establishment.

6.5 Dunvegan Primary School currently has a roll of 54 pupils and a capacity of 100 pupils. The larger school roll enables children to participate in a wider range of group-based learning experiences and collaborative activities. Pupils are able to work alongside a broader range of peers, benefiting from exposure to different perspectives, abilities and experiences. These opportunities support the development of communication skills, problem-solving abilities and collaborative approaches to learning.

6.6 The Council further considers that a larger school setting provides enhanced opportunities for participation in sport, music, expressive arts, outdoor learning, pupil leadership activities and wider achievement opportunities. Such activities play an important role in children's personal development and wellbeing and contribute to the wider educational experience available to pupils.

6.7 Working with others is an important element of Curriculum for Excellence. Opportunities to undertake collaborative projects, share responsibilities, participate in group discussion and learn from peers are all enhanced where children have access to a larger peer group. The Council considers that these experiences support the development of confidence, resilience, leadership and interpersonal skills.

6.8 Feedback received through the informal review process indicated that former pupils had settled successfully within their receiving schools and were benefiting from wider educational and social opportunities. The parent attending the review meeting stated that transfer to a larger school had been beneficial for their child and observed that other families appeared content with their current educational arrangements.

6.9 The Council has identified no evidence of parental demand for the re-opening of Knockbreck Primary School. During the informal review process, participants acknowledged that there were currently no children requiring education provision at the school and limited evidence of future demand sufficient to support a viable school roll.

6.10 In addition, Highland Council is progressing plans for a replacement Dunvegan Primary School through the Highland Investment Programme. The new school is currently programmed for completion by the end of 2027 and is expected to provide modern learning accommodation and facilities that will support the delivery of high-quality education within the area.

6.11 Taking all factors into account, Highland Council considers that positive educational benefits would arise from the proposal through:

- Access to larger age-appropriate peer groups.
- Enhanced opportunities for collaborative learning and peer interaction.
- Greater opportunities for social development and relationship building.
- Broader participation in sport, music, expressive arts and wider achievement activities.

- Improved opportunities for pupil leadership and teamwork.
- Continued access to educational provision already being accessed by families within the catchment area.
- Future access to modern educational accommodation through the planned replacement Dunvegan Primary School.

6.12 The Council, therefore, considers that the proposal would provide positive educational benefits for current and future pupils residing within the Knockbreck Primary School catchment area.

7. RE-ALLOCATION OF THE CATCHMENT AREA

7.1 Should the proposal be approved, the existing Knockbreck Primary School catchment area will transfer to Dunvegan Primary School. This will align statutory catchment arrangements with current attendance patterns.

8. EFFECT OF DIFFERING TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 The distance between Knockbreck Primary School and Dunvegan Primary School is approximately 11.2 miles with a travel time of around 22 minutes. The proposal is not expected to create significant transport impacts because pupils residing in the catchment area already attend alternative schools, therefore, no pupil will be required to transfer school as a direct consequence of this proposal.

9. EFFECTS ON STAFF AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

9.1 As the school has been temporarily closed since April 2024, no significant staffing implications are anticipated from implementation of the proposal.

10. EFFECT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

10.1 The Council recognises that schools play an important role within rural communities and that their significance extends beyond the provision of education. Schools can contribute to community identity, local heritage and perceptions of community sustainability. The Council has therefore given careful consideration to the potential impact of this proposal on the Waternish community.

10.2 Community engagement was undertaken on 2 March 2026 as part of the informal review of the school's temporary closure. Feedback received during that process demonstrated affection for the school and recognition of its historical importance within the local area. Participants expressed sadness at the prospect of the permanent loss of the school and acknowledged the contribution it has made to the community over many years.

10.3 During the engagement process, participants also recognised that Knockbreck Primary School has been temporarily closed since April 2024, having experienced a very low roll for some years, and that no pupils currently attend the school. There was acknowledgement that children from the catchment area are already accessing education elsewhere and that these arrangements had become established. The parent attending the meeting indicated that transfer to a larger school had been beneficial for their child and stated that they were not aware of any significant demand for the school to re-open.

10.4 The Council has identified no evidence of demand sufficient to support the re-opening of Knockbreck Primary School. At the time of publication of this proposal, six primary-aged children reside within the catchment area, with five attending Dunvegan Primary School and one attending Portree Primary School. No pupils currently attend Knockbreck Primary School.

10.5 The Council recognises that some members of the community may consider the permanent discontinuation of education provision at Knockbreck Primary School to have a negative effect on perceptions of community sustainability. This potential impact has been identified through the Integrated Impact Assessment Screening and has been considered as part of the Rural Impact Assessment.

10.6 Participants in the informal review process highlighted the importance of ensuring that the school building does not remain unused in the future. Potential opportunities for community use of the building were discussed. The Council notes that this proposal relates solely to the provision of education and does not determine the future use of the building. Any future decision regarding community use, transfer, disposal or alternative use of the property would be subject to separate Council governance and asset management processes.

10.7 Taking all factors into account, the Council considers that the proposal would formalise existing educational arrangements rather than remove an educational service currently being accessed by local children. Whilst a potential impact on community sustainability has been identified, the Council considers that this must be balanced against the educational benefits identified elsewhere in this proposal and the absence of evidence supporting a viable future roll for the school.

11. FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

11.1 Knockbreck Primary School was temporarily closed in April 2024. Prior to closure, the school's total expenditure in financial year 2023/24 was approximately £108,000. The majority of expenditure related to staffing costs, including teaching staff, support staff and associated employer on-costs. Additional expenditure related to utilities, property costs and educational resources.

11.2 As the school has been temporarily closed since April 2024, the majority of operational and staffing costs associated with delivering education at the school are no

longer being incurred. Consequently, the proposal is not expected to generate significant additional operational savings beyond those already realised through temporary closure.

11.3 Should the school re-open, staffing, operational and educational expenditure would require to be reintroduced. This would include teaching staff, employer on-costs, utilities, educational resources and other school operating costs.

11.4 Dunvegan Primary School currently has sufficient capacity to accommodate pupils from the Knockbreck catchment area, and no additional school accommodation is anticipated as a result of the proposal. This position is supported by current pupil roll forecasts and the planned replacement school, which includes capacity and flexibility to accommodate future demand within the enlarged catchment area.

11.5 The proposal is not expected to result in significant additional transport expenditure as pupils residing within the catchment area are already attending alternative schools and associated travel arrangements are already established.

11.6 The proposal is being advanced primarily on educational and sustainability grounds rather than as a savings measure.

12. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

12.1 An Integrated Impact Screening Assessment was completed on 7 July 2026. The assessment identified a positive impact in relation to Age, reflecting the educational benefits associated with access to larger age-appropriate peer groups, enhanced opportunities for collaborative learning, wider curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, and increased social interaction. The proposal is considered to support children's right to education and wellbeing through continued access to sustainable educational provision.

12.2 No significant negative impacts were identified in relation to any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. The assessment concluded that the proposal would not result in unlawful discrimination and that children and young people with additional support needs or disabilities would continue to receive support in accordance with statutory duties through the receiving school.

12.3 The screening identified a potential negative impact on the sustainability of the local rural community arising from the permanent discontinuation of education provision at Knockbreck Primary School. However, the school has been temporarily closed since April 2024, and no pupils currently attend the school. Educational provision is already being accessed through alternative schools and existing transport arrangements are established.

12.4 The Council has concluded that no significant adverse equality impacts arise from the proposal. The findings of the Integrated Impact Assessment Screening will inform consideration of the proposal alongside the Educational Benefits Statement, Rural Impact Assessment and consultation responses.

12.5 Outcome: No significant adverse impacts identified. Positive impacts identified for children and young people through continued access to wider educational opportunities. A full Integrated Impact Assessment Screening is attached at Appendix B.

13. RURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

13.1 Knockbreck Primary School is classified as a rural school for the purposes of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. In developing this proposal, the Council has given special regard to the additional considerations required in relation to rural school closures.

13.2 The Council has considered alternatives to closure, including continuation of the current temporary closure arrangement, re-opening the school with its existing catchment area and re-opening the school with an expanded catchment area. Having examined current pupil numbers, attendance patterns, community feedback and available demographic information, the Council concluded that none of these alternatives would provide a realistic or sustainable long-term future for the school.

13.3 The Council has considered the likely impact of the proposal on the local community. The proposal would result in the permanent discontinuation of education provision at Knockbreck Primary School, and the Council recognises that this may be perceived as having a negative impact on community sustainability and community identity within the Waternish area. However, the school has been temporarily closed since April 2024, and no pupils currently attend the school. The proposal therefore formalises an existing position rather than resulting in the withdrawal of an educational service currently being used by local children.

13.4 The Council has considered the effect of differing travelling arrangements. Pupils residing within the catchment area already attend alternative schools and associated transport arrangements are established. The proposal is therefore not expected to result in significant additional travel requirements, transport costs or changes to existing school transport arrangements for current pupils.

13.5 The Council has also considered the educational benefits arising from the proposal. These include access to larger age-appropriate peer groups, enhanced opportunities for collaborative learning and social interaction, broader curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, and continued access to sustainable educational provision. The Council considers that these benefits support the educational experience and wellbeing of current and future pupils residing within the catchment area.

13.6 The Council's Integrated Impact Assessment Screening identified a potential negative impact on community sustainability but found no significant adverse impacts in relation to travel arrangements, access to educational services or island communities. The Council considers that the educational benefits identified outweigh the potential

adverse effects associated with the permanent discontinuation of education provision at Knockbreck Primary School.

13.7 Taking account of the viable alternatives considered, the potential community impacts, existing travel arrangements and the educational benefits identified, the Council considers that the proposal satisfies the additional rural school closure considerations required by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and represents the most appropriate long-term arrangement for educational provision within the area.

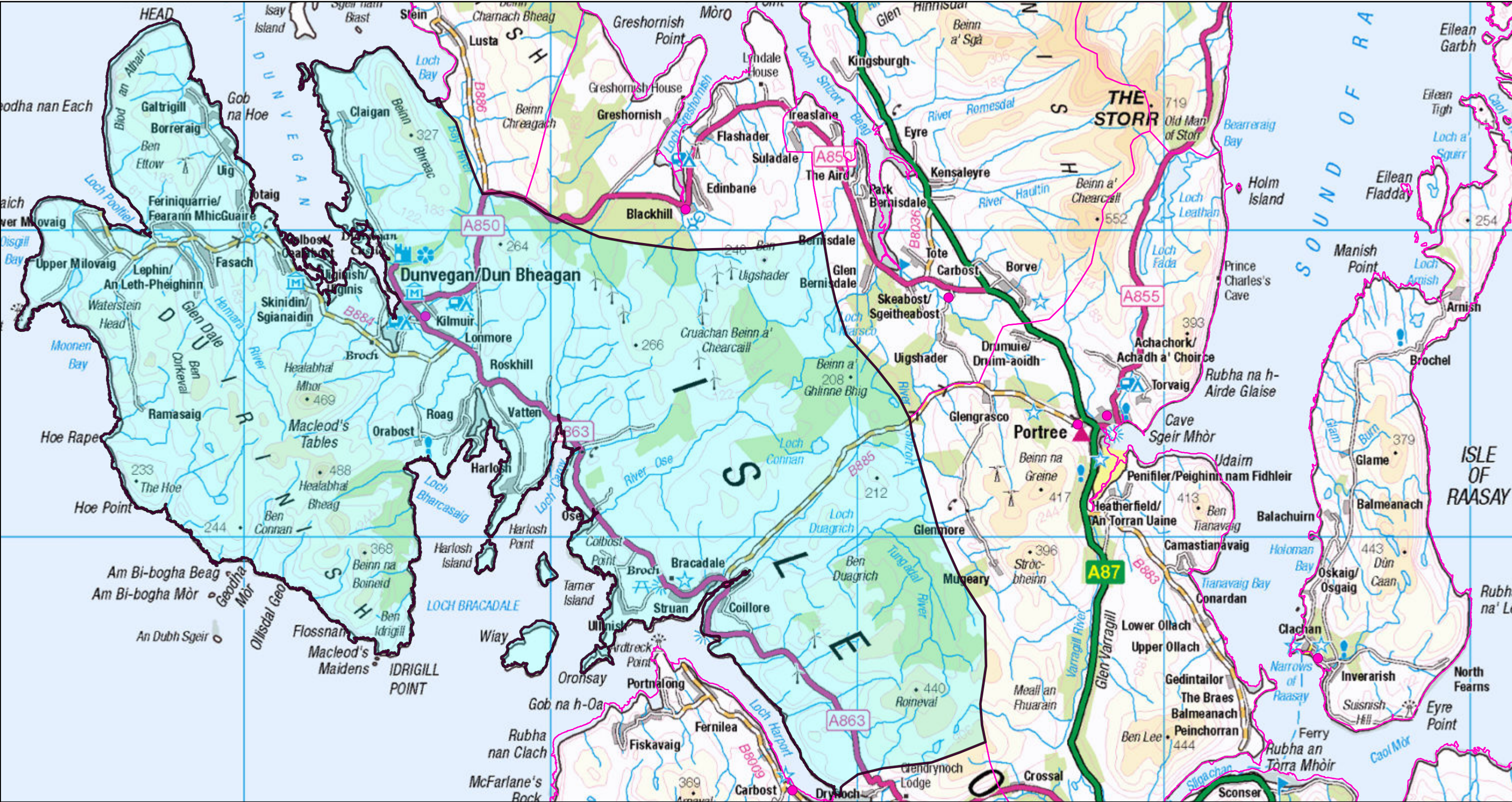
14. RECOMMENDATION

14.1 Highland Council recommends that education provision at Knockbreck Primary School (Isle of Skye) be discontinued and that the catchment area be re-assigned to Dunvegan Primary School.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Catchment Maps
- Appendix B – Integrated Impact Screening Assessment

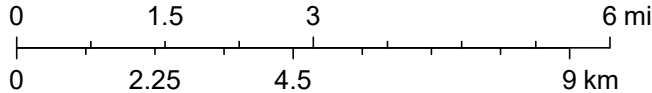
Dunvegan Catchment Area



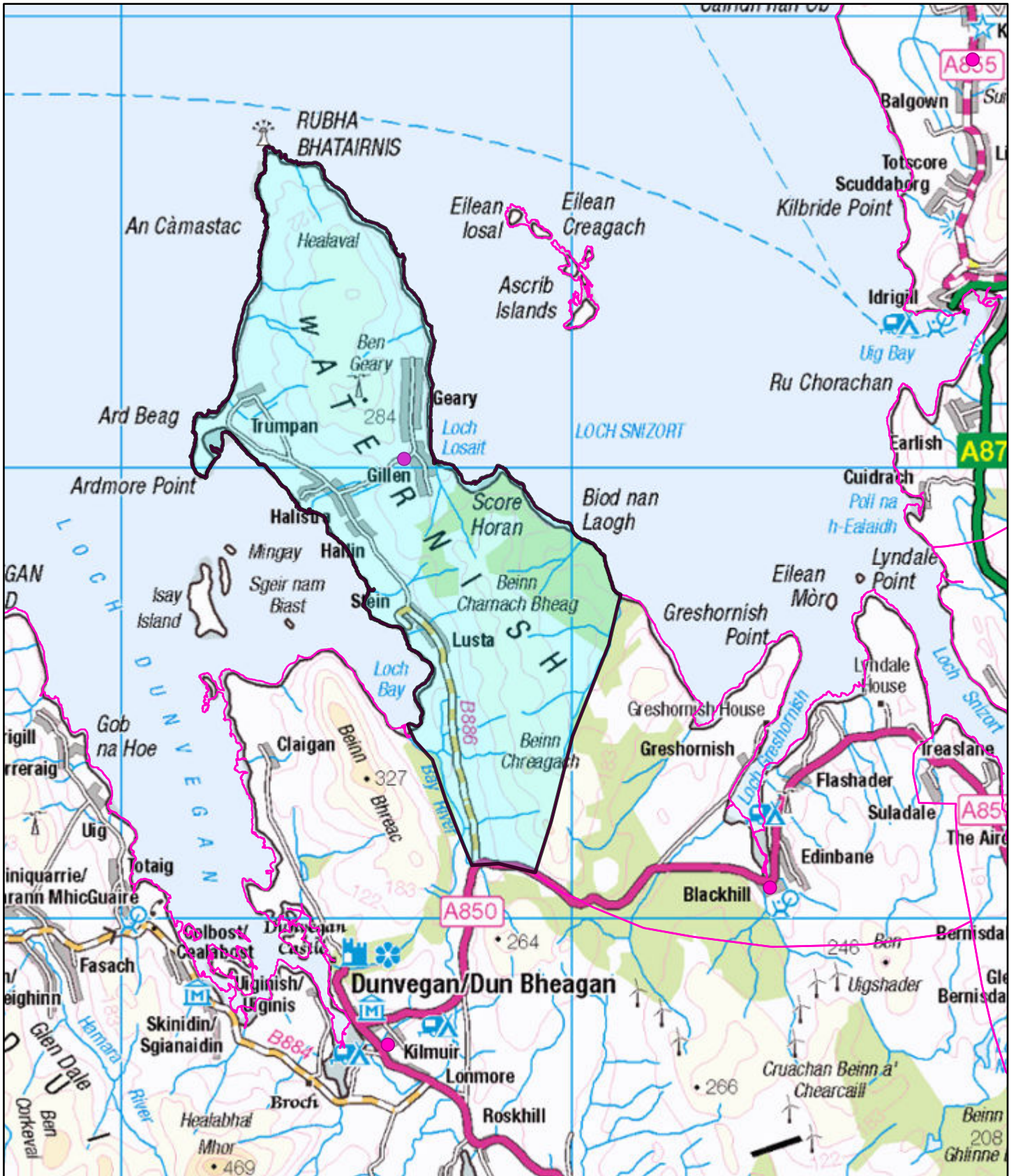
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- Primary School Catchments



Knockbreck Catchment Area



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