

> Sir,

> Thank you for the opportunity to take part in the consultation on the catchment area for the Acharacle Gaelic Medium unit(GMU)

>

> The Acharacle GMU is a tremendous success and a real credit to the staff, pupils, parents and the wider community, as now two thirds of the pupils in the Primary School are in the Gaelic stream. The early years, from the Nursery to P2, are all in the Gaelic classes.

>

> I want to add my voice to those who wish to see both Ardgour and Lochaline included within the catchment area.

>

> Ardgour primary school is only 5 miles outwith the suggested catchment area, with most of their pupils within walking distance of the primary school. The suggested maximum distance of 15 miles is arbitrary-my own sons traveled 22 miles to access GME.

>

> In the future, it would be all but impossible to establish a new GMU in either Ardgour or Lochaline as the threshold requires 4-5 pupils requesting GME in these tiny primary schools. After opening the Acharacle GMU 30 years ago, we tried and failed to establish GMUs in both Lochaline and Ardgour primary schools when their school roll was significantly greater. For HC to provide the opportunity to access GME for the Ardnamurchan and Morvern peninsulas requires Ardgour, Strontian, Lochaline and Kilchoan to be within the catchment area. The substantial Gaelic Specific Grant to HC, as well as support from BnG, should provide the funding for the necessary transport.

>

> The current HC Gaelic Language Plan has a target of increasing the number of pupils in GME to 10% by 2023. Enrolment in 20/21 stands at only 6.8%. Including Ardgour and Lochaline in the catchment area will assist in the HC reaching their target. The active promotion of the educational and cognitive benefits of bilingual education would help HC to reach their target.

>

> Finally, there is the remote and rural ethos of the Ardnamurchan and Morvern peninsulas with the pupils from all 5 primary schools attending Ardnamurchan High School. It has an excellent Gaelic dept with 3 teachers and a wide range of subjects available through GM. Both Ardgour and Lochaline are a part of that ethos.

> Thanks and regards,

> Dr Michael Foxley.

> 2, Achaphubuil, Ardgour.