

Hi Ian,

So my reason for asking for the data in the first place, is without knowing the demand for this, how can you make the statement in 9.1. You don't know how many parents (current or future) are likely to take their children out of Strontian Primary and therefore can't say with any certainty what effect it is going have on the school roll and consequently the staff and staffing level.

Yes please can you pass on this whole correspondence.

Many thanks.

Jamie

Jamie Tait

Sent from my iPhone

On 16 Nov 2021, at 16:38, Education Consultations <Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear Jamie,

Thanks for your further email. I know the Inspector and her admin assistant so could forward your email to them, if you would find that helpful?

You are correct that this proposed change is not based on any demand made by the parent body of Strontian. The catchment is being created because of Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, who act as the agent of the Scottish Government on matters relating to the Gaelic language. The Statutory Guidance requires that education authorities set up Gaelic Medium catchment areas for schools that offer Gaelic medium education. What is up for debate of course, is the extent of the catchment to be created.

Ian Jackson
Education Officer
Highland Council
07435 982557

From: Jamie Tait <jamie.tait@me.com>

Sent: 16 November 2021 15:26

To: Education Consultations <Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk>

Cc: Andrew Baxter - Member <andrew@lochabervoice.com>; Christopher Millar-Craig (Education) <christopher.millar-craig@highland.gov.uk>; Rachel Patterson (Education)

<rachel.patterson@highland.gov.uk>; Patricia Kennedy (Education)

<patricia.kennedy@highland.gov.uk>; Don Esson (Education) <Don.Esson@highland.gov.uk>; Brian Porter (Support Services) <Brian.Porter@highland.gov.uk>

Subject: Re: The proposal is to establish a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Acharacle Primary School

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Hi Ian,

Thank you for your. On your final point we have received an email only today, stating that they would be accepting comments until tomorrow (Wednesday 17th Nov) but no contact details were given, so I used the only one I could find in the past correspondence.

On your general reply to my query, I take it that this proposed change is not then based on any demand made by the parent body of Strontian, since you don't appear to have any survey data from them. Is this the case?

Kind Regards

Jamie

Jamie Tait

Sent from my iPhone

On 16 Nov 2021, at 14:51, Education Consultations <Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear Jamie

Thank you for your email below, submitted to the Education Consultations inbox of Highland Council.

As I am sure you know, there is an existing "custom and practice" arrangement under which pupils from the Strontian PS catchment can attend Gaelic Medium Education (GME) at Acharacle PS, and at the present time a small number of pupils from the Strontian PS catchment do exactly that. As the Proposal simply formalises that existing arrangement, we don't see that, in itself, it is likely to have a significant impact on current patterns of enrolment within the primary schools of the Ardnamurchan Associated School Group (ASG).

It is *possible*, of course, that the mere creation of a defined catchment will encourage more parents from the Strontian PS area to take up the opportunity of accessing GME in Acharacle PS for their children. So far, Highland Council has created 11 Gaelic Medium catchment areas and in most of these, the new GM catchment overlays several English Medium catchments, as has been proposed for Acharacle. However, in none of these have we seen any significant shifts in patterns of enrolment from before and after the creation of the catchment. The travel time between Strontian and Acharacle will clearly be a factor for any parent in the Strontian school catchment who is considering enrolling their child in Acharacle PS. I appreciate of course that some of the houses in the Strontian catchment are closer to Acharacle than is Strontian itself, but conversely, others are further away.

We believe the chances of any impact on Ardnamurchan High School itself are exceedingly small. The Proposal set out the Council's view that two primary school catchments within the ASG,

Lochaline and Ardgour, should be left out of the Acharacle GM catchment on grounds of distance, travel time and cost. It has been argued that excluding the Ardgour catchment might encourage children from the area to instead access GME from the Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar in Fort William. In the 21 years I have worked for Highland Council only 3 children from the Ardgour area have ever done so, all of whom are now well past school age. Two of the children subsequently attended Ardnamurchan High School in any case.

We have received a number of representations arguing that Ardgour PS should be included within the proposed GM catchment, and are currently considering these.

In answer to your specific question, we cannot of course *guarantee* that there will be no impact on the roll and staffing of the Ardnamurchan 3-18 Group, and the Proposal Paper offers no claim to that effect. I hope though, that the above provides further details on why we do not *expect* any significant impact on the roll of any school within the ASG, or any impact on staffing.

I'm not sure whether it is your intention to submit a formal response to the consultation exercise. If so, I must highlight that the public consultation period closed on 8 October. You are of course free to make whatever representations you wish, but the date of submission would be highlighted in our report reviewing the consultation exercise.

I'm aware that Education Scotland are currently carrying out their assessment of the merits of the Council's Proposal, and their report will doubtless take account of any views given to them by parents.