



## **HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

### **EDUCATION AND LEARNING SERVICE**

#### **REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREA FOR GLENURQUHART PRIMARY SCHOOL**

This report has been prepared following a review of the proposal to establish a Gaelic Medium (GM) catchment area for Glenurquhart Primary School.

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period.
- Oral representations made to it (by any persons) at the public meeting held online on 8 December 2021.
- The report from Education Scotland.

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

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## **Appendices**

**Appendix 2** - Minute of public meeting held online on 8 December 2021

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

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

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

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

**Appendix A** - The proposal document

**Appendix B** - Proposed GM catchment for Glenurquhart Primary School

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Highland Council's Education Committee, at its meeting on 17 November 2021, agreed that a statutory consultation be undertaken on the proposal to establish a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Glenurquhart Primary School.
- 1.2 The Proposal Paper suggested that the new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of Glenurquhart Primary School, Balnain Primary School, and Cannich Bridge Primary School. Particular arrangements would apply to school transport from the areas outwith the Glenurquhart PS catchment.
- 1.3 The Proposal Paper also suggested formalising the current arrangements relating to Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME) in Glenurquhart High School, under which the catchment area for Glenurquhart High School would apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium education.
- 1.4 **Appendix A** is the original consultative paper and provides full details of the above proposal. **Appendix B** is the appendix to the original proposal.

## 2.0 Consultation process

- 2.1 The formal consultation period ran from Monday 29 November 2021 to Friday 4 February 2022. 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 Glenurquhart Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
  - (ii) Parents of pupils attending Balnain Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
  - (iii) Parents of pupils attending Cannich Bridge Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
  - (iv) The Parent Councils of each of the above schools.
  - (v) Staff of the schools listed above.
  - (vi) Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.
  - (vii) Trade union representatives.
  - (viii) All Community Councils for the areas covered by the Proposal.
  - (ix) Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
  - (x) Comann nam Pàrant
  - (xi) Education Scotland.
- 2.3 The proposal document was advertised on the Highland Council website.
- 2.4 A public meeting was held online on 8 December 2021. The meeting was advertised in advance on the Highland Council website and in the *Inverness Courier*. 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 3 written responses received during the consultation period. Copies of these responses can also be found at **Appendices 3i-3iii**. Two responses were submitted on behalf of organisations (Comann nam Pàrant, and Bòrd na Gàidhlig), and one from a parent.

## 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.

**Issue 1**

Bòrd na Gàidhlig welcomes the recommendation that a catchment area will be established for Glenurquhart Primary School where there is GME provision.

**Response 1**

The Council notes and welcomes the response of Bòrd na Gàidhlig

**Issue 2**

Comann nam Pàrant welcomes the formalisation of a school catchment area for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in the Glenurquhart area.

The proposal is in keeping with Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education which recommends that local authorities establish catchments with reasonable travelling distances, and with the potential to attract parents to GME.

The setting of a catchment area will provide clarification for parents on their entitlement to GME within the proposed catchment area. The travel distances are reasonable, although we appreciate that for some families from the Cannich Bridge Primary catchment there may be longer distances.

**Response 2**

The Council notes and welcomes the response of Comann nam Pàrant,

**Issue 3**

Consideration should be given to widening the catchment area to include surrounding villages such as Fort Augustus, Beauly, etc. - ones that don't otherwise have access to a Gaelic education.

This is for two reasons:

1. It will enable children who would otherwise miss out to learn Gaelic (or they'd have to travel to Inverness - which in most cases parents would be unable to accommodate due to travel times, logistics, expense, etc.)
2. It would have the potential to increase the number of children in the Gaelic stream, which, having spoken to a number of parents of current pupils, would be seen as a real positive by all. This would give stability to a small (and thus very fragile) group, which would in itself breed a growth in numbers.

I do appreciate that there are resultant complications from bringing children into our catchment area who would then potentially be entitled to stay for

their secondary education, but I am absolutely positive that we are not talking about huge quantities of children, so I don't think this should be enough of a hurdle to prevent it going ahead. Realistically, Glenurquhart would potentially gain half a dozen children per year, and probably fewer.

### **Response 3**

Although Beauly is not yet part of any defined GM catchment, the Council has still to consult on GM catchments for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis (BSGI) and for Dingwall Primary School. For English Medium purposes, Beauly is part of the Charleston Academy ASG. Several pupils from Beauly already attend BSGI and would qualify for school transport if Beauly is incorporated within the GM catchment for that school.

There is no GME provided within the Kilchuimen ASG, although provision exists for parents to seek the provision of GME locally, should there be a demand for it.

Given the distances and travel times from Fort Augustus to Drumnadrochit, any local demand for GME might best be pursued through a GMPE assessment for provision within Kilchuimen Primary.

It would be possible to amend the Glenurquhart GM catchment in the future, in the event that children from the Kilchuimen ASG sought to enrol in GME at Glenurquhart PS. An amendment to the catchment would however require a further statutory consultation.

- 4.2 The note of the public meeting is at Appendix 2. Only one substantive issue was raised during the meeting. It covered the same issue as was raised in the written responses and is addressed 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 4**. A Gaelic language copy is at **Appendix 5**.
- 5.2 In their report, Education Scotland agree that the proposal has potential to result in educational benefits. However, Education Scotland also identified a few issues and concerns arising from the consultation that merit further consideration.
- 5.3 The issues raised by Education Scotland are addressed in Section 6 below.

## 6.0 Responses to the Issues raised by Education Scotland

### Issue 4

In its final report, the council needs to confirm if they are increasing the catchment area as requested by consultees. Consultees are committed to growing Gaelic Medium Education. They view an increased catchment area as an important step towards growth. It would also be important to clarify concerns on the primary school's capacity to absorb an increase in pupil enrolments.

### Response 4

The Council does not propose to expand the GM catchment to include the Kilchuimen ASG.

The travel time and distance from Kilchuimen Primary/Academy to Glenurquhart Primary/High School is around 19 miles/30 minutes (one way). The Kilchuimen catchment extends to Aberchalder Swing Bridge and to Glendoebeg, both of which are around 35 minutes' drive from Drumnadrochit. It is acknowledged that by Highland standards these distances are not excessive, but neither are they likely to be attractive to parents of P1 children. Historically there has been no demand from the Kilchuimen ASG to attend GME at Glenurquhart PS/HS.

Given that Kilchuimen Academy/Primary form their own ASG, any local demand for GME would best be pursued through a GMPE assessment for provision within Kilchuimen Primary.

The school presently has 7 rooms in its main building and 2 in a modular unit; 1 room is used as Gaelic Medium nursery, along with 1 GP and 1 ASN room. That leaves 6 classrooms (5 English Medium and 1 Gaelic Medium). This is sufficient for the anticipated roll during session 2022-23. In the short to medium term, the current GP room could be used if an additional classroom is required. The Council are currently looking into the feasibility of an additional modular classroom/small extension to the main building, with proposals to be drawn up by the end of the current session.

### Issue 5

In its final report, the council needs to detail how parents make future requests for establishing further Gaelic Medium Education as set out in the Education (Scotland) Act 2016. They should do so with a particular regard to rural areas.

**Response 5**

Advice on how parents can make requests for establishing further Gaelic Medium Education is available on the Highland Council website at

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/18/gaelic\\_medium\\_education/2](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/18/gaelic_medium_education/2)

The Council will arrange to add to this advice with further Guidance on how new provision might be established in rural areas.

**7.0 Effects on the Community**

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

**8.0 Effects on School Transport**

8.1 Travel arrangements are already in place for journeys to the designated GM provision. The proposal will clarify entitlement to this travel.

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

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

**10.0 Alleged omissions or inaccuracies**

10.1 There were no alleged omissions or inaccuracies

**11.0 Overall Review of Consultation Exercise**

11.1 Only 3 written responses were received, two of which were in support of the Proposal.

11.2 The main suggestion to emerge from consultation was that the proposed catchment should be expanded to include the Kilchuimen ASG. This issue has been addressed in detail at Responses 3 and 4 above.

**12.0 Legal issues**

12.1 Throughout this statutory consultation Highland Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

**13.0 Conclusion**

13.1 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 6 above.

13.2 The Education Scotland Inspector met online with parents, pupils and staff at Glenurquhart Primary School, 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.

- 13.3 On reviewing all of the submissions, the note of the meeting, and the Education Scotland report; officials conclude that the Proposal to create a GM catchment area for Glenurquhart Primary School offers educational benefits and should be implemented.

**14.0 Recommendation**

- 14.1 It is therefore recommended that Highland Council proceeds with the course of action set out at Paragraph 13.3 above.

**Nicky Grant**

**Executive Chief Officer, Education**

**15 August 2022**