

**Comann Nam Pàrant Response for Full Assessment
Education (Scotland) Act 2016
Requested by Highland Council**

The information provided by the local authority relating to the request

Statutory Guidance is that, at the stage of full assessment, statutory consultees should be given details of the request. We have received details from the local authority on the numbers, ages and location of children included in the request as well as other factors taken into consideration as part of the initial assessment.

Outcome of the Initial Assessment

Highland Council have informed us that following initial assessment, the local authority has determined that there is a potential need for GMPE in the assessment area.

The Potential need for GMPE in the Lairg area

Comann nam Pàrant agree with the findings of the initial assessment which is to establish GMPE in Lairg.

GMPE Assessment Location of provision

The council has not yet identified the catchment for the proposed new provision as Lairg is currently within the catchment for Tain GMPE. We agree with the designation of the GMPE assessment area as the Golspie ASG. Gaelic medium education is based on a 3-18 curriculum, and we recommend that the local authority consult with parents to establish a cohesive 3-18 structure for GME. This would hopefully include building on the current offer at Tain secondary level.

Resource Implications

The assessment paper refers to a probationer, but it is our understanding that Highland Council are reluctant to appoint probationers as sole teachers in new provision.

Information relating to the demand for GMPE in the area of the authority from parents of children who are under school age and have not commenced attendance at a primary school

The interest in GMPE from families named on the request is the result of minimal promotion through parental word-of-mouth and one information event. It is possible that if the local authority were to undertake a more robust assessment of demand that more families would be identified.

Conclusion

Highland Council's current Gaelic Language Plan includes "Expand the delivery of Gaelic Medium Education with increased secondary subject delivery, creation of new standalone schools and new early years, primary and secondary provision" as a strategic priority. This parental request for GMPE, and subsequent finding on initial assessment, that there is potential demand for GMPE in the Lairg area, provides an opportunity for the council to fulfil this commitment in their Gaelic plan by making additional provision for Gaelic medium education within the authority.

Comann nam Pàrant are aware that there has been a focus recently on raising awareness of Gaelic in the Lairg and wider Sutherland area and we have supported the delivery of some of these awareness raising activities, including Gaelic Bookbug sessions in the Lairg library which are attended by children from Lairg Primary nursery. The activities offered have generated a feeling of positivity towards the language throughout the community and Highland now have an opportunity to build on this positive attitude through the introduction of GMPE.