

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

CARE, LEARNING AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

The proposal is to discontinue education provision at Uig Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Kilmuir Primary School.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

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 is proposing, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process:

- To discontinue education provision at Uig Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Kilmuir Primary School. (Maps of the current catchment areas are at **Appendices B - Bi**). A map of the merged catchment is at **Appendix Bii**.
- The proposed change, if approved, will take place immediately after the conclusion of the statutory process relating to school closures.

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Proposal Paper Published

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

- Portree Community Library, Fingal Centre, Portree, IV51 9ET
Kilmuir
- Primary School, Kilmuir, IV51 9UB

and published on the Highland Council website:

www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

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

Area Care and Learning Office,
Fingal Centre
Portree
IV51 9ES

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 Area Care and Learning Office, Fingal Centre, Portree IV51 9ES. 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 of pupils attending Kilmuir Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (ii) The Parent Councils of Kilmuir Primary School.
- (iii) The Parent Council of Kilmuir Primary School
- (iv) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
- (v) Staff of Kilmuir Primary School;
- (vi) The Head Teacher of Macdiarmid Primary School
- (vii) The Parent Council of Macdiarmid Primary School
- (viii) Trade Union representatives;
- (ix) Uig Community Council
- (x) Kilmuir Community Council
- (xi) Bòrd na Gàidhlig
- (xii) Highland Youth Convenor
- (xiii) Uig Mission Church

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 4 June 2019 and will end on 30 August 2019. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

Public Meeting

A public meeting will be held at 6.30pm on 19 June 2019 at Uig Village Hall. Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council, will be chaired by a senior elected councillor, and will be addressed by officers of the Care and Learning 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 Education Scotland, 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 (who are considered to be of a suitable age and maturity) in the affected schools. A record of questions, responses and views will be taken and this will be 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:

Area Care and Learning Office,
Fingal Centre
Portree
IV51 9ES
Email: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

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 August 2019 at 5.00pm.

Involvement of Education Scotland

When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will be sent to Education Scotland by the Council. Education Scotland will also be sent, by 16 September 2019, a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period. Education Scotland 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. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 4 October 2019. In preparing their report, Education Scotland 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 Education Scotland 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 Education Scotland 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 Care, Learning and Housing (CLH) Committee, 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 December 2019, prior to submission to the CLH Committee in March 2020. However, this timescale 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 CLH 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 Education Scotland will be advised.

DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

Legislative Background

- 1.1 The proposal is advanced within the context of all applicable legislation. Amongst other duties, education authorities are required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (S.1 of the Education Act 1980); and to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education in schools that are managed by them (S.3 of The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000).
- 1.2 Uig Primary School is a rural school within the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (the school is classed as "very remote rural") and the Council has had regard to the provisions of that Act, in particular the special regard required for rural school closures. The Council has considered the school roll projections for Uig Primary taking into account the current pattern of enrolments (see Section 8 below, and **Appendix C**); has given detailed consideration to the viable alternatives to closure (Sections 6-10 below); to the effect of closure on the community (Section 14 below) and to the impact of travel arrangements on children who are not yet of school age but who live in the Uig catchment (Sections 6-10, 12 and 18 below).

General Background

- 2.1 A statutory consultation into the proposed closure of Uig Primary School was undertaken during 2010. Following a review of the oral and written representations made, Highland Council decided to close Uig Primary on a temporary basis, pending a longer term review.

Reason for the Proposal

- 3.1 This proposal is being advanced for the following reasons:
 - No children have attended Uig Primary School since the end of session 2009-10.
 - Re-opening Uig Primary would have a negative educational impact, both on the pupils from Uig itself, and the pupils who remain at Kilmuir Primary. Further details on this are provided in Section 11 below.
 - The community of Uig has made use of the school building since the school was "mothballed" in 2010. The building has been used for church services by the Uig Mission Church, which is seeking to expand provision.
 - The Council has explored alternatives in arriving at this proposal, explained further below.
- 3.2 The current proposal follows informal discussions between Highland Council officials; local elected members and local representatives. Informal discussions with the latter were held with Uig Community Council, Kilmuir Community Council and with parents and residents within the Kilmuir and Uig school catchments.

Current Details – Uig Primary School

- 4.1 Uig Primary is located just off the A87 Trunk Road, at the south end of the entrance to the village. The catchment area encompasses the village of Uig along with Balnacnoc Earlish and Cuidrach.
- 4.2 The school has been mothballed since the end of session 2009-10 when the school roll fell to 2, and the pupils transferred to Kilmuir Primary School.
- 4.3 The accommodation at Uig consists of 2 classrooms, a General Purpose Room and office space. Prior to the school being mothballed one of the unused classrooms had been converted into a staffroom. A dining room and storage space had been created out of the former schoolhouse. There are no facilities for PE although the GP room was used for this purpose, as well as the village hall where necessary. Access to the school is via a steep incline.
- 4.4 The nursery class at Uig was closed prior to the school being mothballed. When the school was last in operation nursery education for pupils from Uig was provided at Kilmuir Primary.
- 4.5 The school has a registered permanent capacity of 25, based on the availability of one classroom.
- 4.7 The Highland Council assesses all of its schools for Suitability and Condition, in line with the Scottish Government's School Estate Management guidelines. Schools are assessed on a scale with the ratings "A" (good) "B" (satisfactory), "C" (poor) and "D" (bad). Prior to mothballing, Uig Primary School was rated as "C" for the educational suitability of the building and "C" for building condition. The Suitability Assessment from 2009 was reviewed as a desktop exercise in 2018 and the rating has not changed from a C.
- 4.8 The most recent review of the building Condition resulted in a "B" rating. This improved rating reflects changes to in the assessment guidance since the school was mothballed. The Condition Survey did however identify a number of issues for rectification, of varying seriousness. The total cost of these is estimated at around £125,000.
- 4.9 As the school has not operated since session 2009-10, placing requests have not arisen.
- 4.10 No HMle Report has been published since before 2006.
- 4.11 Annual CO₂ emissions from the Uig School building are estimated at just under 20 tonnes.

Current Details – Kilmuir Primary

- 5.1 Kilmuir Primary School is situated in Trotternish five miles north of Uig. The school's catchment extends from where it meets the Uig PS catchment, across Trotternish to Kendram, where it abuts the catchment of Bun-sgoil Stafainn. The present school was built in 1928 and has been extended twice, on the last occasion incorporating the lower part of the schoolhouse to provide a small classroom, storage, resource and office space for general school use.

The playground is adjacent to a community play area. Since August 2015 the school has had a large demountable unit situated in the school car park. The English class is located in this facility. At present there are no pupils attending the English Medium nursery.

5.2 The 2018-19 roll is 38, with 23 pupils in Gàidhlig Medium and 15 in English Medium. The anticipated roll for 2019-20 is 35, with 22 pupils in Gàidhlig Medium and 13 in English Medium

5.3 The school has a registered capacity of 75. The 2018-19 roll of 38 therefore represents 51% use of capacity. The anticipated 2019-20 roll of 35 would represent 47% use of capacity.

5.4 The Kilmuir Primary School building is rated as “C” for educational suitability and “B” for Condition.

5.5 There is no current HMIe Report for the school.

5.6 The current staffing levels at Kilmuir Primary are as follows:

Head Teacher – Shared with Bun-sgoil Stafainn – notional allocation of 0.5 FTE

Class Teacher – 3.00FTE

Class Contact Time Teacher 0.3 FTE

Nursery Management Time 0.05 FTE

Clerical Assistant – 18 hours per week

General Auxiliary – 5 hours per week

Early Years Practitioners – 44.17 hours per week

Cook 2 - 27.5 hours per week

Cleaning Operative – 15.75 hours per week

Facilities Management Assistant – 3 hours per week

5.7 Were Uig School to re-open as it was prior to mothballing, the staffing entitlements for Kilmuir, as per the Council’s Devolved School Management policy, would be as follows;

Head Teacher – Shared with Uig Primary and Bun-sgoil Stafainn – notional allocation of 0.33 FTE

Class Teacher – 3.00FTE

Class Contact Time Teacher 0.3 FTE

Nursery Management Time 0.05 FTE

Clerical Assistant – 18 hours per week

General Auxiliary – 5 hours per week

Early Years Practitioners – 44.17 hours per week

Cook 2 - 27.5 hours per week

Cleaning Operative – 15.75 hours per week

Facilities Management Assistant – 3 hours per week

5.8 Were Uig School to re-open offering both EM and GM education, the staffing entitlements for Kilmuir, as per the Council’s Devolved School Management policy, would be as follows;

Head Teacher – Shared with Uig Primary and Bun-sgoil Stafainn – notional allocation of 0.33 FTE

Class Teacher – 2.00FTE

Class Contact Time Teacher 0.2 FTE

Nursery Management Time 0.05 FTE

Clerical Assistant – 18 hours per week

General Auxiliary – 5 hours per week

Early Years Practitioners – 44.17 hours per week

Cook 2 - 27.5 hours per week

Cleaning Operative – 15.75 hours per week

Facilities Management Assistant – 3 hours per week

- 5.9 Additional Support Needs teaching and non-teaching staff would be allocated to the school in accordance with an annual assessment of need.
- 5.10 Annual CO₂ emissions from Kilmuir Primary School building from August 2017 to August 2018 were just under 40 tonnes. This figure would not be affected by the formal closure of Uig Primary School.

Examination of Alternatives

- 6.1 In bringing forward this proposal for closure, the Council must give due consideration of alternative courses of action that could be considered. The following reasonable alternatives to closure have been considered:
- i. to continue with the current “mothballing” arrangement.
 - ii. to re-open Uig Primary as an English Medium School, with its current catchment area
 - iii. to re-open Uig Primary as a school offering both English Medium and Gaelic Medium education, with its current catchment area
 - iv. either of options ii. and iii. above with an expanded catchment area.
- 6.2 The option of closing Kilmuir Primary in favour of re-opening Uig Primary was considered but is not regarded as a reasonable alternative. Kilmuir Primary is itself a very remote rural school and a closure proposal would therefore have to demonstrate there was no viable alternative. Any such Proposal would be strongly opposed by the parents and the community of Kilmuir. This option has therefore been discounted.
- 6.3 As part of the consideration of alternatives, the Council has investigated the long-term roll projections.
- 6.4 The detail of the Council’s consideration of the reasonable alternatives is set out throughout this proposal paper and its appendices.

Option 1 – Continued Mothballing

- 7.1 Although it would be possible to continue with the current “mothballing” arrangement, Highland Council does not consider that that would represent the best option for the taxpayer or the community. “Mothballing” would mean the continuation of the current lack of clarity regarding the future status of the school and would prevent the community from developing options for the

future use of the accommodation. The Council would also be burdened with the costs of maintaining a “mothballed” building.

- 7.2 Uig Primary School has now been mothballed since 2010, and it is necessary to decide on the future of the school.
- 7.3 Scottish Government guidance relating to the mothballing of schools makes it clear that mothballing is a temporary measure and should not be used to undermine the requirements to undertake a statutory school closure consultation.
- 7.4 Current school transport arrangements would not be affected by a continuation of mothballing.
- 7.5 At present Uig Primary School building is leased to Uig Mission Church for Sunday services. Mothballing would have no effect on this arrangement.

Option 2 - Re-Opening of Uig Primary School as a School Offering English Medium Education, with its Current Catchment Area

- 8.1 Prior to mothballing, Uig Primary School operated as a school offering English Medium education, and there was no school nursery. This option would therefore represent reinstatement of the status quo prior to mothballing.
- 8.2 For the 2018-19 school session, there are 18 pupils of P1-7 age living within the catchment area of the school.
- 8.3 Six of the current 18 current pupils attend English Medium education at Kilmuir Primary School.
- 8.4 The above figures suggest that, were Uig School to re-open offering English Medium education, as was the situation prior to mothballing, it would be as a single teacher school with a total roll of less than 10 pupils. Highland Council considers that these circumstances present significant impediments to learning and teaching. Further detail is provided at Section 11 below.
- 8.5 The long-term roll projections for a re-opened Uig Primary can be found at **Appendix C**. These are divided into potential EM and GM rolls. The figures suggest that, under the option of re-opening Uig as a school offering English Medium education, the long-term roll would remain below ten.
- 8.6 Were Uig Primary to be re-opened, it would most likely be under an arrangement where the school was managed as part of a “cluster” with other schools within the ASG. However, alternative management arrangements would not address issues around the sustainability of the school.
- 8.7 Were the school to re-open with as it was prior to mothballing, the staffing entitlements, as per the Council’s Devolved School Management policy are as follows;

Head Teacher – Shared with Kilmuir Primary and Bun-sgoil Stafainn – notional allocation of 0.33 FTE
 Class Teacher – 1.00FTE

Class Contact Time Teacher 0.1 FTE
 Clerical Assistant – 16 hours per week
 Cook 3 – 20 hours per week
 Facilities Management Assistant – 3 hours per week
 Cleaning Operative – 7.5 hours per week

- 8.8 Additional Support Needs teaching and non-teaching staff would be allocated to the school in accordance with an annual assessment of need.
- 8.9 Uig Primary School did not have a school nursery prior to mothballing. At present there are 5 children in the nursery at Kilmuir Primary, one of whom is from the Uig catchment. Taking the small numbers of pre-school children into account, Highland Council does not see merit in establishing a new pre-school nursery at a re-opened Uig Primary School.
- 8.10 If the school were to re-open, none of the current pupils would qualify for school transport. Pupils would have shorter journey times to school than they do at present. However, Highland Council does not consider that the travel distances from Uig to Kilmuir are excessive, as the two schools are only located about 5 miles apart. Full details of the transport arrangements are set out at Section 12 below.
- 8.11 The shorter journey times set out above must be balanced against the negative educational effects that would arise for the Uig pupils, and which are set out in full at Section 11 below.
- 8.12 The re-opening of Uig Primary would have a moderate adverse effect on Kilmuir Primary. See paragraph 11.11 for further details.
- 8.13 A re-opening of Uig Primary would mean that the Uig Mission Church would no longer be able to make use of the building.

Option 3 - Re-Opening of Uig Primary School as a School Offering both and Gaelic Medium and English Medium Education, with its Current Catchment Area

- 9.1 Twelve of the 18 current pupils from within the Uig PS catchment area attend Gaelic Medium education (GME) at Kilmuir Primary.
- 9.2 Although, prior to mothballing, Uig Primary did not offer GME, the option of re-opening Uig Primary as a school offering both English and Gaelic medium education could be considered as an alternative to closure.
- 9.3 As mentioned above, there are 35 pupils enrolled at Kilmuir Primary for the 2019-20 session, comprising 22 pupils in Gàidhlig Medium and 13 in English Medium. The school will have 2 Gaelic Medium classes with a P1-3 and a P4-7, and a single English Medium class. 17 of the pupils will be from the Uig catchment, 11 in Gàidhlig Medium and 6 in English Medium.
- 9.4 The possible departure of the 17 pupils from Uig would create the following class structure across the two schools:

Kilmuir Primary – a single GM class with 11 pupils

a single EM class with 7 pupils

Uig Primary – a single GM class with 11 pupils
a single EM class with 6 pupils

- 9.5 The roll projections at Appendix C indicate that if Uig re-opened offering both English and Gàidhlig Medium education, the long-term configuration of classes would continue as one GM and one EM class.
- 9.6 Were the school to re-open offering both GM and EM education, the staffing entitlements, as per the Council's Devolved School Management policy are as follows;
- Head Teacher – Shared with Kilmuir Primary and Bun-sgoil Stafainn – notional allocation of 0.33 FTE
Class Teacher – 2.00FTE
Class Contact Time Teacher 0.2 FTE
Clerical Assistant – 17 hours per week
Cook 3 – 20 hours per week
Facilities Management Assistant – 3 hours per week
Cleaning Operative – 7.5 hours per week
- 9.7 Additional Support Needs teaching and non-teaching staff would be allocated to the school in accordance with an annual assessment of need.
- 9.8 Section 8 above considers the options around the provision of a new pre-school nursery class at a re-opened Uig Primary. In addition, the requirements of offering separate GM and EM classes would mean that the school's GP room would need to be used for nursery accommodation.
- 9.9 The situation with school transport would be the same as described at paragraph 8.9 above.
- 9.10 The educational implications of the above are discussed at paragraphs 11.12 – 11.14 below. Negative effects would arise from splitting the already small numbers attending English Medium education, and from splitting the current GM P1-3 and P4-7 classes into two P1-7 classes.

Option 4 - Re-Opening of Uig Primary School with Expanded Catchment Area

- 10.1 Consideration has been given to extending the Uig PS catchment areas. However, any proposal to extend the Uig PS catchment into the Kilmuir or MacDiarmid catchments needs to take account of the fact that Kilmuir and MacDiarmid Primaries are themselves rural schools (see Appendices B-Bi).
- 10.2 Were Kilmuir to be shorn of the pupils from the Uig catchment, its roll would potentially drop to 20. Current legislation requires that any consultation on changing the catchment areas of schools requires consultation with the parents of any affected school. During informal consultation, Kilmuir parents advised they would not be supportive of any changes to the present catchment area, so it is extremely unlikely that parents would support any further reductions in the school roll at Kilmuir to boost the roll at Uig. Moreover, the current boundary between the Uig and Kilmuir catchments,

which lies just north of Idrigill, is located at a natural gap between local settlements, and fits with the local geography.

- 10.3 The area of Glenhinnisdal lies within the Macdiarmid Primary School catchment, but is geographically closer to Uig. The area lies approximately 5 miles/11 minutes from Uig and 9 miles/15 minutes from Macdiarmid Primary.
- 10.4 Macdiarmid Primary has a current P1-7 roll of 29, of whom 8 are from Glenhinnisdal. The roll at Macdiarmid has declined steeply in recent years. If Glenhinnisdal were removed from the Macdiarmid Primary catchment, the long term roll at that school might well fall to below 20. As with Kilmuir, current legislation requires that any consultation on changing the catchment areas of schools requires consultation with the parents of any affected school and it is extremely unlikely that parents at Macdiarmid Primary would support a reduction in their school roll to boost the roll at Uig.

Educational Benefits

- 11.1 Highland Council is of the view that the school environment should be of a quality that sustains and improves education provision, pupil performance and outcomes for the young people of Highland.
- 11.2 With the above aim in mind, Highland Council has adopted the above indicators in reviewing its' school estate:
- Pupils should be educated in facilities which are rated at least category B for each of Condition and Suitability.
 - Pupils should be members of an age-appropriate peer group.
 - Pupils should have the opportunity to engage in the widest possible range of activities beyond the core curriculum, including music, sports, drama and art.
 - Pupils with Additional Support Needs should be educated in the most appropriate local setting.
 - Pupils should not ordinarily be required to travel for longer than 30 minutes from the nearest classified road pick-up point to school (primary) although it is recognised that this may not always be possible in a rural Council area such as Highland.
 - School facilities should be of a size appropriate to the delineated area that they serve, paying due regard to demographic trends.
 - School delineated areas should reflect geography, travel routes and population distribution.
 - Safe school transport should be provided and safe traffic management in and around school sites should be implemented.
 - Teachers should be members of a professional learning community comprising at least 3 members located in the same facility.
 - The implications of school location to local communities should be considered.
 - Schools, wherever possible, should be located where there is a recognised village or other built up community.
- 11.3 As mentioned above, were Uig PS to re-open as a school offering English Medium education, as it did prior to mothballing, it is the Highland Council's

view that there would be educational detriment to pupils from the Uig catchment. Pupils at Kilmuir Primary regularly work in co-operative learning groups of various sizes, sometimes as a whole school group and sometimes in groups of mixed ages and abilities. A roll of around 6, of varying ages, such as that if Uig Primary re-opened, would mean that the groups would not only be limited in size but also static, since there would be no possibility of changing the membership of learning groups. Such a small roll would also limit the variety of skills that pupils could bring to the groups, and there would be a smaller range of work to use in terms of sharing standards.

- 11.4 Working with others across a wide range of settings is one of the core elements of the school curriculum. This includes planning and carrying out projects in small groups, sharing tasks and responsibilities, and being ready and willing to learn from and with others. Working with others also plays a part in the development of leadership skills, which become increasingly important to pupils as they move through their school years and beyond school education into adulthood.
- 11.5 The Language Programme at Kilmuir Primary aims to develop listening, talking, reading and writing skills. Listening is developed by games, stories, radio & television programmes, music, listening centres and use of ICT. The school aims to develop fluency and clarity of expression and to extend vocabulary. Talking is developed by role playing, mime, reporting, interviewing etc. These techniques are used in both the English Medium and Gàidhlig Medium classes. They are also used for the teaching of French, which is introduced to pupils in the Upper Stages as part of the 1+2 language initiative. Once again, the emphasis is on oral work and role play. In all cases, working with others plays an important role.
- 11.6 As part of the Developing Scotland's Young Workforce the aim is to develop increased awareness of the world of work, social skills and employability skills, including team working, leadership and working with others. Such knowledge and understanding and skills acquisition would very much benefit from discussions and dialogue with peers of the same age/stage.
- 11.7 It is self-evident that a total school roll of around 6 pupils at varying ages restricts opportunities for team sports and other active recreational activities. This applies even to individual sports, where successful learning of skills is helped by talking and sharing of experiences. It further applies to the health and wellbeing element of the curriculum which involves discussion between pupils about health lifestyle choices. Whilst these problems can be overcome by taking the pupils to participate in activities in neighbouring schools, that in itself involves time out of school in travelling.
- 11.8 As with sports, the larger roll at Kilmuir provides a greater likelihood of pupils benefitting from a wider range of group musical and artistic opportunities, events that are more difficult to deliver with restricted numbers. Pupils at Kilmuir are encouraged to create their own dramatic situations. These are developed by mime, stories, poems, and songs. The children from P5 upwards participate in an annual dance festival. The school also has a strong tradition of participating in both the local and National Mod.

- 11.9 Larger pupil numbers also provide more opportunities for after school activities. From time to time, Kilmuir Primary organises teams to compete against other schools in sports such as shinty, football, basketball and hockey.
- 11.10 The level to which pupils are able to become skilled in social interaction will depend to an extent on the opportunities afforded to them. The forging of close friendships and the development of self-esteem is enhanced by each pupil being enabled to be part of an age appropriate peer group of a sufficient size to allow a range of interactions and relationships to form and reform.
- 11.11 Were Uig PS to re-open offering English Medium education, there would additionally be a negative impact on Kilmuir Primary. The expected EM class of 13 pupils at that school for 2019-20 would be reduced in size to 7 pupils, leading to reduced opportunities for social interaction and collaborative working within this class.
- 11.12 As mentioned above, there is an alternative scenario of re-opening Uig Primary, with the school offering both EM and GM education. This would represent a change to what was on offer prior to mothballing.
- 11.13 It can be seen from paragraphs 9.3 and 9.4 above, that in such a scenario the current P1-3 and P4-7 GM classes at Kilmuir would be reorganised into two P1-7 classes, one at each school, whilst the single EM class at Kilmuir, which has 13 pupils expected for August 2019, would split into two classes, one of 7 pupils and one of 6 pupils.
- 11.14 Highland Council believes the above scenario would be educationally undesirable for the pupils at both schools, leading to reduced social interaction and reduced opportunities for collaborative working. In the case of GM, it would involve the creation of classes with children spread across the whole of the 5-12 age range, something which does not occur at present.
- 11.15 As indicated at paragraphs 4.3 and 4.5 above, Uig Primary is a one classroom school with a GP room. A further small classroom was converted into a staffroom prior to mothballing. Were Uig Primary to re-open offering both GM and EM education, the school would lose the use of either the GP room or the staffroom.
- 11.16 In summary, a number of positive benefits have derived from the operational merger of Uig and Kilmuir Primary Schools. Collaborative working within the classroom, language learning, and artistic and sports activities have all benefited from the greater numbers available through the operational merger of the two schools.

Effect of Differing Transport Arrangements

- 12.1 Currently, pupils from the Uig PS catchment are transported to Kilmuir Primary at an annual cost is £18,850.
- 12.2 As Uig Primary is currently mothballed, the pupils from the catchment already travel to Kilmuir Primary and no differing transport arrangement would need to be applied in the event Uig Primary is closed.

- 12.3 The village of Uig is located between 4 and 5 miles from the Kilmuir Primary School. Currently the pupil within the Uig catchment living furthest from Kilmuir, has a one-way journey over just over 6 miles to Kilmuir Primary. The travel times involved are well within the normal range for the Highland Council area.
- 12.4 It is recognised that the larger merged school implies an increase in the number of pupils entitled to school transport compared to the number who can currently walk/cycle to school, should they choose to do so, and the occasional inconvenience for parents who wish to take their child to/from school during the school day, should they require to do so.
- 12.5 It is estimated that the current arrangements for transporting pupils from Uig to Kilmuir result in additional CO₂e emissions of 4.6kg per day, compared to a scenario in which Uig PS was re-opened. Based on 190 school days per session, this represents 0.874 tonnes of CO₂e emissions per school year. The figure can only ever be an estimate as emissions are affected by the speed at which vehicles are driven and the type of road travelled.
- 12.6 The increased annual CO₂ equivalent emissions from the provision of transport (less than 1 tonne) should be set against the annual emissions of over 19 tonnes from the Uig Primary School building itself (see paragraph 4.12 above).
- 12.7 During the last full school session (2013-14) there were no days in which the school remained open but where the education of the Uig children was disrupted due to unavailability of school transport in bad weather.

Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements

- 13.1 As the school is already “mothballed” there will be no impact on school management arrangements at Kilmuir from a formal closure of Uig Primary School.
- 13.2 A continuation of the current mothballing arrangement will have no effect on current staffing arrangements.
- 13.3 The staffing implications of re-opening Uig Primary School are set out at Paragraphs 4.9 – 4.11 above, whilst the financial implications are set out at Section 15 below, and the associated Appendix D.

Effect on the Local Community

- 14.1 There is an existing village hall in Uig which provides a public space for the local community.
- 14.2 The mothballed school building at Uig is currently being used on some days by the Trotternish Mission Church, who lease the building on a month-by-month basis. The Church are included as a statutory consultee for this Proposal.

- 14.3 Other suggestions have been made for the future use of the building in the event of the closure proceeding. Subject to the Council not having any operational need for the building, Highland Council would be keen to work with the local community over the future use of the building and site. Any such proposal would however have to be progressed within the terms of the Council's current asset management policy.

Financial Consequences

- 15.1 The Table at **Appendix D** sets out the Highland Council's assessment of the Financial Implications of the proposed merger.
- 15.2 It can be seen from the paper that re-opening Uig Primary as a school offering only English Medium education would lead to an increased cost of just under £72,000 per year, in comparison to the current arrangement. Under the second option, under which Uig Primary would offer both GM and EM education, the additional cost would rise to £125,000 per year.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 16.1 The proposal has been assessed as having no impact on the following Equality areas:

- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or Maternity
- Marriage/Civil Partnership
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Looked After Children
- Young Carers
- Children and Young People Living in Deprivation

- 16.2 In respect of age equality, the proposal relates to 2 primary schools and as such primarily affects children in the 3-12 age group, and their parents. The proposal is advanced on the basis of educational benefit to the children in the area concerned. No negative age related effects arise. Age is not a protected characteristic for the purposes of schools provision.

Rural Impact Assessment

- 17.1 Both Uig and Kilmuir are classed by the Scottish Government as "very remote rural schools". Although the proposal involves a formal closure of service, the service itself has not operated since the summer of 2010. In practical terms the proposal will not change the current position.
- 17.2 The relocation of service (which in practical terms has already taken place) involves moving local school provision from Uig to Kilmuir, a distance of 5 miles.

- 17.3 As set out in Section 11 above, the Highland Council believes that the proposal offers educational benefits
- 17.4 At present Kilmuir Primary School has a pupil roll of around 50% of the school's capacity. The school is comfortably able to accommodate the pupils from Uig and no adverse effects for Kilmuir Primary are expected to arise. On the contrary, including the pupils from Uig within the Kilmuir catchment will help to maintain a healthy roll at Kilmuir.
- 17.5 It is recognised that pupils from Uig itself have less opportunity to walk or cycle to school than when Uig School was in operation, and that there is occasional inconvenience for parents who wish to take their child to or from school during the school day.
- 17.6 The maximum additional travel time for school pupils from the Uig catchment to Kilmuir is 14 minutes (source: Google Maps). As school transport is provided by the Council, the proposal would not be expected to have any impact on accessibility to education or on fuel poverty.

Mitigation of Adverse Effects

- 18.1 The main adverse effect for children in the P1-7 age group is the additional travel from Uig to Kilmuir, details of which are provided above.
- 18.2 Funded school transport is and will continue to be provided to P1-7 pupils from Uig attending Kilmuir Primary School.
- 18.3 If the school re-opened, it would be on the same basis as it existed prior to mothballing, i.e. without a nursery class. Nursery pupils would continue to travel to Kilmuir Primary, as happened prior to the mothballing.

Recommendation

- 19.1 Taking the above into account Highland Council recommends that Uig Primary School, currently "mothballed," is closed and the catchment area re-assigned to that of Kilmuir Primary School.
- 19.2 This proposal paper is issued in terms of the authority's procedures to meet the relevant statutory requirements. Following the consultation period, a report and submissions received will be presented to the Care, Learning and Housing Committee of the Highland Council.

END OF PROPOSAL PAPER