

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

The proposal is to establish Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall Primary School, Millbank Primary School, Nairn; Inverness Royal Academy, Dingwall Academy, and Nairn Academy

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

INTRODUCTION

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

- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium (GM) catchment area for Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis (BSGI). The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of 33 primary schools, (full details below). Particular arrangements will apply for transport to BSGI from the other EM catchment areas.
- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Dingwall Primary School. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of 19 primary schools, (full details below). Particular arrangements will apply for transport to Dingwall Primary from the other EM catchment areas.
- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Millbank Primary School. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of 4 primary schools, (full details below). Particular arrangements will apply for transport to Millbank Primary from the other EM catchment areas.
- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Inverness Royal Academy. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of Inverness Royal Academy, Charleston Academy, Culloden Academy, Inverness High School, and Millburn Academy and part of the catchment area of Fortrose Academy. Particular arrangements will apply for transport to Inverness Royal Academy from the other EM catchment areas.
- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Dingwall Academy. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of Dingwall Academy and Alness Academy, and part of the catchment area of

Fortrose Academy. Particular arrangements will apply for transport to Dingwall Academy from the other EM catchment areas.

- To formalise the current arrangements relating to Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME) in Nairn Academy, under which the catchment area for Nairn Academy will apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium education.

Existing primary school catchments for the provision of English Medium education will be unaffected.

Highland Council is making this Proposal to comply with Statutory Guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig under Section 9 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. Part 1 of the Statutory Guidance specifically relates to the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 and the duty placed on education authorities to promote and support Gaelic education. The Guidance includes a specific requirement on local authorities to create GM catchment areas for schools that offer GME.

The proposed changes, if approved, will be implemented at the conclusion of the statutory consultation process.

Any identified parental demand for future local provision of GME from within any of the primary schools identified above, would be assessed in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education (2017).

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Proposal Paper Published

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

- Inverness Royal Academy
- Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis
- Aldourie Primary School
- Cauldeen Primary School
- Farr Primary School
- Foyers Primary School
- Hilton Primary School
- Holm Primary School
- Lochardil Primary School
- Charleston Academy
- Beaully Primary School
- Dochgarroch Primary School
- Kinmylies Primary School
- Kirkhill Primary School
- Muirtown Primary School
- Teanassie Primary School
- Tomnacross Primary School
- Culloden Academy
- Ardersier Primary School
- Balloch Primary School
- Cradlehall Primary School
- Croy Primary School
- Duncan Forbes Primary School
- Smithton Primary School
- Inverness High School
- Central Primary School
- Dalneigh Primary School
- Merkinch Primary School
- Millburn Academy

- Crown Primary School
- Daviot Primary School
- Drakies Primary School
- Inshes Primary School
- Milton of Leys Primary School
- Raigmore Primary School
- Nairn Academy
- Millbank Primary School
- Auldearn Primary School
- Cawdor Primary School
- Rosebank Primary School
- Fortrose Academy
- Avoch Primary School
- North Kessock Primary School
- Cromarty Primary School
- Culbokie Primary School
- Munloch Primary School
- Resolis Primary School
- Tore Primary School
- Alness Academy
- Ardross Primary School
- Bridgend Primary School
- Coulhill Primary School
- Kiltearn Primary School
- Obsdale Primary School
- Dingwall Academy
- Dingwall Primary School
- Ben Wyvis Primary School
- Ferintosh Primary School
- Marybank Primary School
- Mulbuie Primary School
- Strathconon Primary School
- Strathgarve Primary School
- Strathpeffer Primary School
- Tarradale Primary School

- Alness Library
- Ardersier Library
- Beaully Library
- Cromarty Library
- Culloden Library
- Fortrose Library
- Inshes Library
- Inverness Central Library
- Muir of Ord Library
- Nairn Library

and published on the Highland Council website:

www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

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

Business Support Team

Education Service

County Buildings

High Street

Dingwall

IV159QN

E-mail: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g., large print, Braille, audio formats, or suitable language, please also contact the Business Support Team, Education Service, County Buildings, High Street, Dingwall, IV15 9QN,

E-mail: 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 all of the schools listed above, including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (ii) The Parent Councils of each of the above schools.
- (iii) All staff of the schools listed above.

- (iv) Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.
- (v) Trade union representatives.
- (vi) All Community Councils for the areas covered by the Proposal.
- (vii) Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- (viii) Comann nam Pàrant.
- (ix) Education Scotland.

Advertisement in Local Media

Notices announcing the public meetings will be placed in the *Inverness Courier*, *Ross-shire Journal* and in the Nairnshire edition of the *Press and Journal*, as well as on the Highland Council's website and Facebook page.

Consultation Period

The consultation for this Proposal will run from 21 August 2023 and will end on 27 October 2023. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

Public Meetings

Three public meetings will be held, the details of which are set out below:

Millbank Primary School – 5 September 2023, 6.30pm

Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 13 September 2023, 6.30pm

Dingwall Primary School – 19 September 2023, 6.30pm

Anyone wishing to attend the public meetings is invited to do so. The meetings will be convened by the Council, will be chaired by a senior elected councillor, and will be addressed by officers of the Education Service. Electronic invitations will be sent to all statutory consultees.

The meeting will provide opportunities 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 of questions asked and views expressed. The note will be published on the Council website. The meeting may be recorded.

The note will be forwarded to Education Scotland, along with other submissions and comments received by the Council during the consultation process.

Responses to the Proposals

Interested parties are invited to respond to the Proposals by making written or electronic submissions on the Proposals to:

Business Support Team

Education Service

County Buildings

High Street

Dingwall

IV159QN

Email: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

Or via an online form, a link to which can be found on

www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

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, 27 October 2023 at 5.00pm.

Involvement of Education Scotland

When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland by the Council. Education Scotland will also be sent, by 6 November 2023, 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 summary notes of the public meetings 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 24 November 2023. 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 meetings. 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 as well as 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 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 Council's Education 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.

The Council intends to publish its Report in the spring of 2024 prior to submission to the Council's Education Committee in May or June 2024. 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 by the Education Committee would require to be confirmed by a subsequent meeting of the full Highland Council.

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 HMI will be advised.

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); to publish or otherwise make available information as to their arrangements for the placing of children in schools under their management (S.28 of the 1980 Act) and to promote and support Gaelic Medium education and learning (S.15 of The Education (Scotland) Act 2016. Statutory Guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig in 2017 specifies that local authorities should establish catchment areas for Gàidhlig Medium education, and the Council must comply with this Guidance. A catchment area for GME provision should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school, and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME provision for their children. Catchment areas for GME will normally overlay a number of school catchment areas.
- 1.2 In common with all public bodies in Scotland, the Highland Council also has a duty to provide Best Value. This includes making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost; and, in making those arrangements and securing that balance, to have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities requirements and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Reason for the Proposal

- 2.1 This proposal is being advanced for the following reasons:
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig has issued statutory guidance recommending that local authorities create catchment areas for GME.
 - Highland Council has not previously specified catchment areas for all of its schools offering GME. This has led to a lack of clarity for parents in respect of entitlement to GME (see paragraph 2.2 below).
- 2.2 Outwith our defined GM catchments, the criteria for providing transport to GME in Highland are not particularly well defined, and have evolved over time. The minimum distance and road safety criteria are the same as for English Medium education. The Council currently has an informal arrangement under which transport to GME can be provided “within

reasonable travelling distance". This has been generally interpreted as meaning up to 15 miles, but there are numerous variations.

Informal Consultation

- 3.1 Advance notification of the proposal has been provided to local elected councillors representing the wards in which the 3 schools are located, as well as with the Head Teachers of the schools directly affected. Contact was also made with the Parent Councils of the affected schools. An explanation of the Proposal was provided and comments were invited.
- 3.2 There is no compulsion on pupils from any other catchment to attend GME. The Proposal merely seeks to clarify the opportunity to do so.

Current and Planned Provision of Gàidhlig Medium Education within the Nairn ASG

- 4.1 There are 4 primary schools within the ASG. Millbank Primary is the only one to offer GME at the primary stage. Nairn Academy also offers GME.

Millbank Primary School

- 5.1 Millbank Primary is located within the town of Nairn. At the time of writing, the school's anticipated roll for August 2023 was 31 pupils across P1-7 in Gàidhlig Medium and 204 pupils across P1-7 in English Medium. There are also currently 15 children in Cròileagan Inbhir Narainn (Gàidhlig Medium pre-school partner centre nursery).
- 5.2 The GM pupils in P1-7 at present are almost all from within Nairn. There are currently 2 Gaelic Medium classes and a further 8 mainstream English Medium classes in the school.

Nairn Academy

- 6.1 For the 2022-23 school session, 8 pupils attending Nairn Academy are studying Gàidhlig for fluent speakers. The anticipated roll of Nairn Academy for August 2023 is 670 pupils. The provision of GME at Nairn Academy is a relatively recent development and the number of GM pupils at the school is expected to increase.

Proposed School Catchments for GME

- 7.1 Approximate travel distances and times to Millbank Primary from the other schools in the ASG are set out below:

Rosebank Primary – Millbank Primary – 0.2 miles, 2 minutes on foot.

Auldearn Primary – Millbank Primary – 2.9 miles, 8 minutes travel time.

Cawdor Primary – Millbank Primary – 5.4 miles, 11 minutes travel time.

- 7.2 The statutory guidance specifies that a catchment area for GME provision should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school, and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME provision for their children.
- 7.3 The Council is sympathetic to the idea that Gàidhlig Medium Education should be accessible as many pupils Highland as possible, provided it is practical and reasonable to provide access.
- 7.4 The Council therefore proposes that the GM catchment for Millbank Primary will overlay the English Medium catchments of Auldearn Primary, Rosebank Primary, and Cawdor Primary, but with restrictions on transport as set out below.
- 7.5 In considering the principles of Best Value – see paragraph 1.2 above - Highland Council has noted that to provide dedicated transport from the areas outwith Nairn, but within the Millbank GM catchment, could result in an unacceptably high level of additional cost to the taxpayer.
- 7.6 The Council therefore proposes that school transport to GME at Millbank Primary will be on the basis of utilising the existing transport for Nairn Academy, wherever it is practicable to do so. Dedicated transport by taxi or minibus will not normally be provided.
- 7.7 The map at **Appendix B** shows the proposed GM catchment for Millbank Primary School with the existing EM catchments outlined in red.
- 7.8 No changes are proposed for these catchments in respect of English Medium education.
- 7.9 For the purposes of GME, the Nairn Academy catchment will be the same as the school's existing catchment.

Current and Planned Provision of Gàidhlig Medium Education within the Dingwall, Alness and Fortrose ASGs

- 8.1 There are 9 primary schools within the Dingwall ASG. Dingwall Primary is the only one to offer GME at the primary stage. Dingwall Academy also offers GME.
- 8.2 There are 5 primary schools within the Alness ASG, none of which offer GME at present. Alness Academy offers Gaelic for Learners, but not Gàidhlig medium education.
- 8.3 There are 7 primary schools within the Fortrose ASG, none which offer GME at present. Fortrose Academy does not offer Gaelic as a subject.

Dingwall Primary School

- 9.1 Dingwall Primary is located within the town of the same name. At the time of writing, the school's anticipated roll for August 2023 was 75 pupils across P1-7 in Gàidhlig Medium and 353 pupils across P1-7 in English Medium. There are also 23 children in Cròileagan Inbhir Pheofharain (Gàidhlig Medium pre-school partner centre nursery).
- 9.2 About two-thirds of the GM pupils are from Dingwall itself, with the next largest group coming from the Conon Bridge/Maryburgh area. Pupils also attend from Alness/Invergordon, Contin/Strathpeffer, and Muir of Ord
- 9.3 There are currently 4 Gaelic Medium classes and a further 13 mainstream English Medium classes in the school.

Dingwall Academy

- 10.1 For the 2022-23 session, 29 pupils attending Dingwall Academy are studying Gàidhlig for fluent speakers. The anticipated roll of Dingwall Academy for August 2023 is 1,050 pupils.

Proposed School Catchments for GME

- 11.1 Approximate travel distances and times to Dingwall Primary from the other schools in the Dingwall and Alness ASGs are set out below:

Ben Wyvis Primary – Dingwall Primary – 4 miles, 10 minutes travel time.

Ferintosh Primary – Dingwall Primary – 8.3 miles, 14 minutes travel time.

Marybank Primary – Dingwall Primary – 7.6 miles, 14 minutes travel time.

Mulbuie Primary - Dingwall Primary – 6.2 miles, 12 minutes travel time.

Strathconon Primary - Dingwall Primary – 19.5 miles, 37 minutes travel time.

Strathgarve Primary - Dingwall Primary – 13.8 miles, 25 minutes travel time.

Strathpeffer Primary - Dingwall Primary – 5.1 miles, 11 minutes travel time.

Tarradale Primary - Dingwall Primary - 7.5 miles, 17 minutes travel time.

Ardross Primary - Dingwall Primary - 12.2 miles, 20 minutes travel time.

Bridgend Primary - Dingwall Primary - 10.3 miles, 19 minutes travel time.

Coulhill Primary - Dingwall Primary – 10.4 miles, 19 minutes travel time.

Kiltearn Primary - Dingwall Primary - 5.6 miles, 10 minutes travel time.

Obsdale Primary - Dingwall Primary - 11.6 miles, 19 minutes travel time.

- 11.2 Approximate travel distances and times to Dingwall Primary from the schools in the Fortrose ASGs are set out below:

Avoch Primary – Dingwall Primary – 14.5 miles, 25 minutes travel time.

Cromarty Primary – Dingwall Primary – 19.2 miles, 34 minutes travel time.

Culbokie Primary – Dingwall Primary – 6.2 miles, 12 minutes travel time.

Munlochy Primary - Dingwall Primary – 11 miles, 20 minutes travel time.

North Kessock Primary - Dingwall Primary – 12 miles, 20 minutes travel time.

Resolis Primary - Dingwall Primary – 10.6 miles, 17 minutes travel time.

Tore Primary – Dingwall Primary – 7.7 miles, 14 minutes

- 11.3 The statutory guidance specifies that a catchment area for GME provision should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school, and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME provision for their children.
- 11.4 The Council is sympathetic to the idea that Gàidhlig Medium Education should be accessible as many pupils Highland as possible, provided it is practical and reasonable to provide access.
- 11.5 In line with the above, The Council therefore proposes that the GM catchment for Dingwall Primary will overlay the English Medium catchments of all the schools in the Dingwall and Alness ASGs, but with restrictions on transport as set out below.
- 11.6 The Council also proposes that the GM catchment for Dingwall Primary should overlay the majority of schools within the Fortrose ASG. This is discussed in more detail in Section 16 below.
- 11.7 In considering the principles of Best Value – see paragraph 1.2 above - Highland Council has noted that to provide dedicated transport from the areas outwith Dingwall, but within the proposed GM catchment, could result in an unacceptably high level of additional cost to the taxpayer.
- 11.8 The Council therefore proposes that school transport to GME at Dingwall Primary will be on the basis of utilising the existing transport for Dingwall Academy, wherever it is practicable to do so. Dedicated transport by taxi or minibus will not normally be provided.
- 11.9 The proposed GM catchment for Dingwall Academy will be the same as the catchment for Dingwall Primary.

Current and Planned Provision of Gàidhlig Medium Education within the Five Inverness ASGs

- 12.1 There are 5 Associated School Groups within Inverness – Charleston, Culloden, Inverness High, Inverness Royal Academy, and Millburn.
- 12.2 Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis is a dedicated GM school which has offered GMPE to all primary school aged pupils within these 5 ASGs. At secondary school level, Inverness Royal Academy also offers GME, and are the only schools to do so within this group of ASGs

Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis

- 13.1 Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis is located within Inverness. At the time of writing, the school's anticipated roll for August 2023 was 214 pupils across P1-7, organised into 8 classes. There are currently 76 children in Sgoil-àraich (Gàidhlig Medium pre-school nursery).
- 13.2 A large majority of pupils attending the school have addresses within the City of Inverness, but a proportion attend from the City's rural hinterland, particularly the Nairnside/Croy area, as well as some from communities within Ross-shire, such as North Kessock, Muir of Ord, Munloch and Strathpeffer.

Inverness Royal Academy

- 14.1 For the 2022-23 session, 123 pupils attending Inverness Royal Academy are studying Gàidhlig for fluent speakers. The anticipated roll of Inverness Royal Academy for August 2023 is 1,364 pupils.

Proposed School Catchments for GME

- 15.1 Most of the 33 schools are located within the City of Inverness. Of those that are not, approximate travel distances and times to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis are set out below:

Beaully Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 17.6 miles, 27 minutes travel time.

Dochgarroch Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 6.3 miles, 12 minutes travel time.

Kirkhill Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 11.8 miles, 22 minutes travel time.

Teanassie Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 17.2 miles, 30 minutes travel time.

Tomnacross Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 15.6 miles, 27 minutes travel time.

Daviot Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – miles, minutes travel time.

Strathdearn Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 16.2 miles, 22 minutes travel time.

Ardersier Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 12.3 miles, 22 minutes travel time.

Balloch Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 6.3 miles, 16 minutes travel time.

Croy Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis - miles, minutes travel time.

Aldourie Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 6.1 miles, 10 minutes travel time.

Farr Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis - 6 miles, 12 minutes travel time.

Foyers Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 18.2 miles, 33 minutes travel time.

Stratherrick Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis - 18.1 miles, 32 minutes travel time.

15.2 Approximate travel distances and times to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis from the schools in the Fortose ASGs are set out below:

Avoch Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 14.3 miles, 25 minutes travel time.

Cromarty Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 25.9 miles, 43 minutes travel time.

Culbokie Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis - 15.4 miles, 25 minutes travel time.

Munlochy Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 10.5 miles, 17 minutes travel time.

North Kessock Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 7.1 miles, 14 minutes travel time.

Resolis Primary - Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 20.9 miles, 33 minutes travel time.

Tore Primary – Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis – 10.7 miles, 17 minutes

15.3 In line with the criteria set out in Section 11 above, the Council proposes that the GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis will overlay the English Medium catchments of all the schools in the Charleston, Culloden, Inverness

High, Inverness Royal Academy and Millburn ASGs, but with restrictions on transport as set out below.

- 15.4 The Council also proposes that the GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis should overlay two of the schools within the Fortrose ASG. This is discussed in more detail in Section 16 below.
- 15.5 In considering the principles of Best Value – see paragraph 1.2 above - Highland Council has noted that to provide dedicated transport from the areas outwith Inverness, but within the proposed GM catchment, could result in an unacceptably high level of additional cost to the taxpayer.
- 15.6 The Council therefore proposes that school transport to GME at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis will be on the basis of utilising the existing transport for Inverness Ryal Academy or the Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis itself, wherever it is practicable to do so. Dedicated transport by taxi or minibus will not normally be provided.
- 15.7 The proposed GM catchment for Inverness Royal Academy will be the same as the catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis.

The Fortrose ASG

- 16.1 It can be seen from the descriptions of distances and travel times, that within the Fortrose ASG, the schools at Culbokie, Resolis and Cromarty are significantly closer to Dingwall Primary than they are to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. The Council therefore proposes to include these school catchments within the GM catchment for Dingwall Primary.
- 16.2 Conversely, the school at North Kessock is much closer to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. The Council therefore proposes to include this school catchments within the GM catchment of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis.
- 16.3 The schools at Avoch and Munloch are almost equidistant between Dingwall Primary and Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, whilst the school at Tore is marginally closer to Dingwall.
- 16.4 Given the proximity of Tore and Munloch, it seems to make sense to group the schools together. Furthermore, the two schools are currently managed by a single Head Teacher on a “cluster” basis. On balance, the Council proposes to include the two schools within the GM catchment of Dingwall Primary.
- 16.5 The decision on Avoch is finely balanced, but The Council proposes to include this school catchments within the GM catchment of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis.

- 16.6 Highland Council would welcome comments on the most appropriate zoning of the schools at Tore, Munlochy and Avoch for the purposes of GME.

Catchment Proposals

- 17.1 The map at **Appendix C** shows the proposed GM catchment for Dingwall Primary School with the existing EM catchments outlined in red.
- 17.2 The map at **Appendix D** shows the proposed GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, with the existing EM catchments outlined in red.
- 17.3 No changes are proposed for these catchments in respect of English Medium education.
- 17.4 For the purposes of GME, the Dingwall Academy catchment will be the same as the proposed GM catchment for Dingwall Primary School. This is to allow pupils who attended GME at Dingwall Primary to continue to access GME during their secondary school education.
- 17.5 Similarly, for the purposes of GME, the Inverness Royal Academy catchment will be the same as the proposed GM catchment for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. This is to allow pupils who attended GME at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis to continue to access GME during their secondary school education.

Educational Benefits

- 18.1 The Proposal forms part of Highland Council's overall approach to the promotion of Gàidhlig medium education. Up to now, Highland Council's admission arrangements to GME have been informal and based on a "reasonable distance" (often applied as a 15-mile radius) from each school offering GME. In some locations these radii have overlapped, and the "15 mile" principle has not always been applied consistently. The creation of GM catchment areas, extended throughout Highland, will mean that admissions to GME will in future be more formal and robust.
- 18.2 The Proposal therefore helps to consolidate our existing provision of GME, and allows for the more efficient use of resources. It should be considered alongside other measures being undertaken to promote Gaelic and the benefits of bilingualism.
- 18.3 It is acknowledged that bilingualism has educational benefits as it provides the user with a better sense of the structure of language, and bilingual children often find it easier to pick up other languages. The continued availability of Gaelic medium education in schools within the relevant ASGs, as evidenced by the new catchments, will provide children with the opportunity to develop these skills for life.

- 18.4 The creation of GM catchment areas will demonstrate the Council's commitment to the long-term future of Gaelic Medium education. Evidence of this commitment may help with the known problem with "drop-out" from GME.
- 18.5 The Education section of the Council's Gaelic Language Plan sets out the following aims:
- That the Highland Council increases the percentage of pupils in GME from potential enrolment figures at key transition points.
 - That the Highland Council increases the percentage of pupils undertaking Gaelic through the Primary Language Learning programme, based on the 1+2 Language Learning Approach and subsequently through secondary Gaelic Learner Education across The Highland Council area.
 - That the Highland Council creates a Gaelic education transitions strategy for retaining children in 0–3/childcare to nursery, nursery to primary, primary to secondary 1, and the Broad General Education to senior phase.
 - That the Highland Council develops a curriculum and workforce plan for the delivery of Gaelic education at all levels (0–3, nursery, primary and secondary) including clear signposting to www.teagasg.com and early years' recruitment via The Highland Council's website.
 - That the Highland Council undertakes a Highland-wide survey of existing Gaelic education staff to identify career-long professional learning needs, particularly in relation to Gaelic language skills, and develops a programme of training and support.
 - That the Highland Council ensures that Gaelic education is considered as part of the school estates capital development whenever possible.
- 18.6 The Proposal will raise the profile of Gaelic in the area and make it clear that the opportunity exists for children in the other primary school catchments to attend GME at Millbank Primary, Dingwall Primary and Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. It will therefore assist with our aim of increasing enrolments, and forms part of our Strategy of providing improved transitions that will help retain children within GME.

Effects on School Transport

- 19.1 Pupils attending GME are offered school transport on the same basis as children attending English Medium education. Paragraphs 7.6, 11.8, and 15.6 above provide more details of how the Council proposes to provide school transport in the case of the schools featured in this Proposal.
- 19.2 Currently, there are pupils accessing GME at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis and at Dingwall Primary, who receive transport but whose homes are outwith the newly defined catchments. Where pupils had enrolled in school prior to the creation of the GM catchments, and where they were already in receipt of school transport, the Council will continue to provide it. School transport will also be provided to any younger siblings of such pupils, provided their older siblings are still at the same school.

Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements

- 20.1 The Proposal is not expected to have any direct effect on staff and management arrangements.

Effect on the Local Communities

- 21.1 The proposal is not expected to have any impact on the wider local communities.

Recommendation

- 22.1 Highland Council recommends the adoption of Gàidhlig Medium catchment areas for Millbank Primary School, Nairn Academy, Dingwall Primary School, Dingwall Academy, Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, and Inverness Royal Academy, along the lines set out in this paper.
- 22.2 This consultation 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 Education Committee of the Highland Council.

END OF PROPOSAL PAPER