

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

The proposal is to discontinue education provision at Achfary Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Kinlochbervie 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 Achfary Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Kinlochbervie Primary School. (Maps of the current catchment areas are at **Appendices A and Ai**). For the avoidance of doubt, any reference in this document to Achfary Primary Schools should be taken as a reference to both the primary and nursery classes.
- An alternative option would be to re-assign the catchment area to Scourie Primary School. (A map of the current catchment area is at **Appendix Aii**).
- The proposed changes, if approved, will take place immediately after the conclusion of the statutory process relating to school closures.
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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 Achfary Primary School is a rural school within the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 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 demographic projections for the area and the school roll projections for Achfary Primary (see Section 4 below); has given detailed consideration to the viable alternatives to closure (Sections 5 and 6 below); to the effect of closure on the community (Section 14 below) and to the impact of differing travel arrangements on children who are not yet of school age but who live in the Achfary catchment (Sections 12 and 19 below). The sole P1-7 pupil presently in the catchment already attends Kinlochbervie Primary.

Reason for the Proposal

- 2.1 This proposal is being advanced for the following reasons:

- No children have attended Achfary Primary School since the end of session 2011-12;
- Current population figures within the school catchment indicate a maximum school roll of 2 by 2019-20;
- A school roll of this size provides significant impediments to the successful implementation of a Curriculum for Excellence (details below) and;
- A school roll of 2 hampers social interaction opportunities for children, who conversely benefit from attending larger schools amongst more children of their own age.
- The Council has explored alternatives in arriving at this proposal, explained further below.

Examination of Alternatives

- 3.1 In bringing forward this proposal for closure, the Council must have special regard to any viable alternatives to closure. The alternatives to closure would be:
- to re-open Achfary Primary School, either with its current catchment area or an extended catchment area, or;
 - to continue with the current “mothballing” arrangement.
- 3.2 In considering the re-opening of the school, the Council has investigated the long-term roll projections as well as demographic information (See Section 4 below).
- 3.4 Were Achfary Primary to be re-opened, it would most likely be under an alternative management arrangement under which the school was managed as part of a “cluster” arrangement with other schools within the ASG. However, alternative management arrangements would not address the wider population issues within the Achfary area.
- 3.5 There has been no significant rise to the school age population of Achfary since the school was mothballed in 2012.
- 3.6 The current proposal follows informal discussions between Highland Council officials; local elected members and local representatives. Informal discussions with the latter were held as follows:
- Scourie Primary School Parent Council (Chairperson) (25 January 2016)
 - Scourie Community Council (25 January 2016)
 - Kinlochbervie Primary School Parent Council (Chairperson) (26 January 2016)
 - Kinlochbervie Community Council (26 January 2016)
 - Reay Forest Estate (25 and 28 January 2016)
- 3.7 In the event of a school closure being approved, consideration is required on the most appropriate way to re-zone the Achfary catchment. Further discussion on this can be found at Section 16 below.
- 3.8 The detail of the Council’s consideration of the alternatives is set out throughout this proposal paper and its appendices. A brief summary is at **Appendix B.**

Re-Opening of Achfary Primary School with Current Catchment Area

- 4.1 There is currently one pupil of P1-7 age (P6) living within the catchment area of the school, with 1 pupil who would be of nursery age (N3) in August 2016. There is 1 further child of pre-nursery age within the catchment (all figures as at February 2016).
- 4.2 The above figures suggest that, were Achfary School to re-open with 100% of catchment pupils attending the school, the P1-7 roll figures for the forthcoming few years would be:
- 2016-17 - 1
2017-18 - 0
2018-19 - 1
2019-20 - 2
- 4.3 The population living in the catchment fell by 40% (from 64 to 40) between 2001 and 2011 and the population of the primary catchment is older than the Highland average with only 6% aged 16 to 29 and 17% aged 30 to 44 (Highland 15% and 19% respectively). Analysis of the age of females living in the area using fertility rates for Sutherland overall suggests that we might expect to see an average of around 0.3 births per year: the recent historic average has been below this but with an increase in the last four years.
- 4.4 The long term roll at Achfary is probably in the region of 2 to 3 pupils albeit with year to year fluctuations around these figures. These roll projections indicate that if Achfary Primary were re-opened, it would be as a single teacher school with a very small roll. Highland Council considers that these circumstances present significant impediments to learning and teaching, particularly in terms of the requirements of the current curriculum. Further detail is provided at Section 11.
- 4.5 As previously stated, the school has not been operational since July 2012. No placing requests in or out of Achfary Primary School were recorded in the two sessions prior to mothballing (2010-11 and 2011-12).
- 4.6 If the school were to re-open, the potential pupils would have shorter journey times to school than they do at present. Further details on travel journeys to school are provide at Sections 12 and 16 below.

Re-Opening of Achfary Primary School with Expanded Catchment Area

- 5.1 The catchment area for Achfary PS abuts those of four other schools – Scourie, Kinlochbervie Primary, Altnaharra, and Lairg. All four are themselves rural schools. The roll at Scourie Primary is projected to fall to 9 next session before recovering in the longer term, whilst that of Kinlochbervie Primary is projected to remain fairly steady, at around 18-20 pupils in the longer term. The roll at Altnaharra Primary is due to fall to 3 in August 2016 and to remain at 2-3 for the foreseeable future. Any expansion of the Achfary catchment at the expense of the catchments of these 3 rural schools risks undermining the future of these schools, as well as increasing travel distances for pupils without increasing the roll at Achfary to a viable number.

- 5.2 Lairg Primary, whilst also a rural school, has a current roll of 40 and is projected to experience a rising roll in future years. Whilst there are a scattering of properties in the Lairg catchment that could, on the basis of geography, be considered for inclusion in the Achfary catchment (e.g. Corrykinloch and the Overscaig House Hotel) there are no children currently at any of these properties. The very small number of houses under discussion would make no significant difference to the future roll at Achfary. Furthermore, any proposal to alter the catchment area of Lairg Primary would require a statutory consultation with the school's parents, who would be likely to oppose any suggestion that they perceived as undermining the roll at Lairg.
- 5.3 A map of the Lairg Primary School catchment is at **Appendix C**. Roll projections for Altnaharra, Kinlochbervie, Lairg and Scourie Primaries are at **Appendix D - Diii**.

Continuation of "Mothballing"

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 Current school transport arrangements would not be affected by a continuation of mothballing.
- 6.4 A continuation of mothballing would have no impact on the community. Currently the mothballed building is used for ad hoc community events.

General Background

- 7.1 This proposal is advanced within the wider context of demographic change in the area. Between 2001 and 2011 (Census figures) the population of Highland grew by 11% but the population of the Kinlochbervie High ASG area fell by 6%. During this period the secondary school roll fell from 94 in 2001 to 49 during the current session. The population of the Kinlochbervie ASG area is older than the Highland average with 11% aged 16 to 29 and 16% aged 30 to 44 (Highland 15% and 19% respectively).

The birth rate (the true birth rate measured as births per year per 1,000 women aged X years) tends to be close to the Highland average.

- 7.2 The reference in the above paragraph to "...per 1,000 woman aged X years" is included because there is a different expected birth rate for women depending on their age. For example the expected birth rate for a woman aged 25 is higher than for a women aged 45. The Council has looked at the ages of each

woman in the area and applied the expected rate to each before adding them together to come up with the final figure.

7.3 The consultation process for this proposal is set out in detail at **Appendix E**.

Current Details – Achfary Primary School

8.1 Achfary Primary is located in Reay Forest, on the A838 road. Its catchment area extends from Laxford Bridge to just beyond Merkland Lodge.

8.2 The school building at Achfary is accommodated within the village hall, which is itself leased by Highland Council from the local estate. The main classroom is located in a room off the main hall, and the main hall itself was used for PE. The school has the use of another room off the main hall, and of an outside area.

8.3 The school has a permanent capacity of 18. Based on the permanent capacity available, the notional 2019-20 roll of 2 pupils would represent 11% use of capacity.

8.4 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). Achfary Primary School is currently rated as "C" for educational suitability and "C" for building condition.

8.5 The number of pupils within the catchment area entitled to free school meals is not broken down to avoid the identification of pupils.

8.6 The most recent HMIE report was published in January 2008. **A copy is at Appendix F.**

8.7 In recent years Highland Council has sought to manage its smaller primary schools through "cluster" arrangements with other local schools. Were the school to re-open as part of a cluster, the staffing entitlements, as per the Council's Devolved School Management policy are as follows;

Associate (Cluster) Head Teacher
Unpromoted Teachers – 1.00 FTE
Class Contact Time Teacher 2.5 hours per week
Clerical Assistant – 16 hours per week

A Cleaning Operative would also be employed at around 6.25 hours per week.

When the school was last in operation meals were cooked and served onsite and a Cook HC3 was employed for 20 hours per week. In the event the school were re-opened, it is likely meals would be cooked off site and transported to Achfary.

8.8 Were the school to re-open, school transport would be provided for the pupils who would be enrolled from 2018-19 onwards.

- 8.9 Annual Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the Achfary School building are estimated at 50.4 tonnes, along with annual Carbon Monoxide (CO) emissions of 0.063 tonnes.

Current Details – Kinlochbervie Primary

- 9.1 Kinlochbervie Primary School is located within the village of the same name in north-west Sutherland. The school has three classrooms, one of which is a dedicated music and art room; a Learning Support room; and a general purpose room. The playground has features such as a garden area, a rocky hill, and painted games. The school is able to make use of the gym hall in the adjoining High School for Physical Education and any events which require a large indoor space. In addition, there is a modern village hall just along the road where the school can put on plays, workshops, etc.
- 9.2 At the time of the 2015-16 school session census, the school had 17 pupils in P1-7, although numbers have since increased and the roll was 23 as at February 2016. A pre-school partner centre is managed by the Care and Learning Alliance, delivering the pre-school curriculum on behalf of Highland Council. The projected roll suggests the numbers will decline slightly over the next few years before settling at around 18-20.

2016-17 - 24
2017-18 - 23
2018-19 - 21
2019-20 - 19
2020-21 - 19
2021-22 - 18
2022-23 - 18
2023-24 - 17
2024-25 - 16
2025-26 - 18
2026-27 - 19
2027-28 - 19
2028-29 - 20
2029-30 - 20

There are currently 6 children in the CALA Nursery. The nursery roll is expected to be 4 in August 2016.

- 9.3 During the last 5 completed school sessions (2010-11 to 2014-15) there has been 1 placing request to join Kinlochbervie Primary. 1 placing request has also been made to leave Kinlochbervie Primary.
- 9.4 The population living in the catchment fell by 15% between 2001 and 2011 and the population of the primary catchment is older than the Highland average with 11% aged 16 to 29 and 14% aged 30 to 44 (Highland 15% and 19% respectively). Analysis of the age of females living in the area using fertility rates for Sutherland overall suggests that we might expect to see an average of around 2.7 births per year: the recent historic average has been slightly below this.

- 9.5 The school has a permanent capacity of 50. The expected roll of 24 in August 2016 would therefore represent 48% use of capacity.
- 9.6 Kinlochbervie Primary is currently assessed as “B” for Suitability and “B” for Condition. Future investment need within the school will be assessed as part of the Council’s capital programme and maintenance programmes, and based on the ‘core facts’ of condition, suitability and sufficiency.
- 9.7 The number entitled to free school meals is not broken down to avoid the identification of pupils.
- 9.8 The year group numbers expected for August 2016 are as follows:
- P1 – 4
 - P2 – 2
 - P3 – 4
 - P4 – 2
 - P5 – 5
 - P6 – 3
 - P7 – 4
- 9.9 The most recent HMIE report was published in February 2010. A copy is at **Appendix G**.
- 9.10 The 2015-16 staffing structure is as follows;
- Associate Head Teacher, Kinlochbervie High and Primary Schools, and Durness Primary – 1.00FTE
Unpromoted Teachers – 2.00 FTE
Class Contact Time Teachers – 5 hours per week
Clerical Assistant/General Auxiliary – 17 hours per week
- In addition, ASN teaching and non-teaching staff are allocated annually to the school, to meet assessed levels of need.
- The Catering and Cleaning Service employs a Cleaning Operative HC2 at 10.50 hours per week. Meals are provided as part of the shared campus with Kinlochbervie High, and catering staff are employed for both schools.
- 9.11 At present, 2 school transport routes operate to Kinlochbervie Primary School, transporting a total of 8 school pupils. Currently therefore, approximately 35% of the pupil population are in receipt of school transport.
- 9.12 Annual CO₂ emissions from the shared campus for Kinlochbervie High and Kinlochbervie Primary are estimated at just under 771 tonnes, along with 0.963 tonnes of annual CO emissions. It is not possible to split the emissions between the primary and secondary schools, but in any case the figure would not be affected by the formal closure of Achfary Primary School.
- 9.13 As the single pupil from the Achfary catchment area currently attends Kinlochbervie Primary, no adverse effects for Kinlochbervie Primary are expected to arise from a decision to close Achfary.

Current Details – Scourie Primary

- 10.1 Scourie Primary School is located in northwest Sutherland. The catchment area stretches from Kylesku to the south shore of Loch Laxford.
- 10.2 At the time of the 2015-16 school session census, the school had 17 pupils in P1-7, although the roll was 16 as at February 2016. There is a P1-5 class with 9 pupils and a P5-7 class with 7 pupils. A pre-school partner centre is managed by the Care and Learning Alliance, delivering the pre-school curriculum on behalf of Highland Council. The projected roll suggests the numbers will fall sharply in August before making a gradual recovery in future years.

2016-17 - 9
2017-18 - 12
2018-19 - 11
2019-20 - 12
2020-21 - 13
2021-22 - 14
2022-23 - 16
2023-24 - 20
2024-25 - 19
2025-26 - 18
2026-27 - 19
2027-28 - 19
2028-29 - 20
2029-30 - 20

There are currently 3 children in the CALA Nursery. The nursery roll is expected to increase to 7 in August 2016.

- 10.3 During the last 5 completed school sessions (2010-11 to 2014-15) there has been 1 placing request for pupils from other areas to join Scourie Primary. 1 placing request has also been made to leave Scourie Primary.
- 10.4 The population living in the catchment increased by 4% between 2001 and 2011 and the population of the primary catchment is slightly older than the Highland average with 15% aged 16 to 29 and 15% aged 30 to 44 (Highland 15% and 19% respectively). Analysis of the age of females living in the area using fertility rates for Sutherland overall suggests that we might expect to see an average of around 1 birth per year: the recent historic average has been close to this.
- 10.5 The school has a permanent capacity of 48. The expected August 2016 roll of 9 pupils therefore represents 18% use of capacity.
- 10.6 Scourie Primary is currently assessed as “C” for Suitability and “C” for Condition. Future investment need within the school will be assessed as part of the Council’s capital programme and maintenance programmes, and based on the ‘core facts’ of condition, suitability and sufficiency.
- 10.7 The number entitled to free school meals is not broken down to avoid the identification of pupils.

10.8 The year group numbers for August 2015 are as follows:

P1 - 1
P2 - 1
P3 - 1
P4 - 1
P5 - 5
P6 - 1
P7 - 7

10.9 The most recent HMle report was published in February 2010. A copy is at **Appendix H**.

10.10 The school's 2015-16 staffing structure is as follows;

Head Teacher, – 1.00FTE
Unpromoted Teachers – 1.3 FTE
Class Contact Time Teachers – 5 hours per week
Clerical Assistant/General Auxiliary – 17 hours per week

In addition, ASN teaching and non-teaching staff are allocated annually to the school, to meet assessed levels of need.

10.11 The Catering and Cleaning Service employs a Cleaning Operative HC2 at 8.75 hours per week, and a Cook HC3 at 23.75 hours per week.

10.12 A single school transport route currently operates to Scourie Primary, transporting 3 pupils. Therefore approximately 19% of the pupil population are in receipt of school transport.

10.13 Annual CO₂ emissions from Scourie Primary School building are estimated at 64 tonnes, along with 0.08 tonnes of annual CO emissions. This figure would not be affected by the formal closure of Achfary Primary School.

10.14 As the single pupil from the Achfary catchment area currently attends Kinlochbervie Primary, the proposed closure is not expected to have any adverse effect on Scourie Primary.

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:

1. Pupils should be educated in facilities which are rated at least category B for each of Condition and Suitability.
2. Pupils should be members of an age-appropriate peer group.
3. Pupils should have the opportunity to engage in the widest possible range of activities beyond the core curriculum, including music, sports, drama and art.

4. Pupils with Additional Support Needs should be educated in the most appropriate local setting.
 5. 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.
 6. School facilities should be of a size appropriate to the delineated area that they serve, paying due regard to demographic trends.
 7. School delineated areas should reflect geography, travel routes and population distribution.
 8. Safe school transport should be provided and safe traffic management in and around school sites should be implemented.
 9. Teachers should be members of a professional learning community comprising at least 3 members located in the same facility.
 10. The implications of school location to local communities should be considered.
 11. Schools, wherever possible, should be located where there is a recognised village or other built up community.
- 11.3 It is Highland Council's view that children from the Achfary catchment derive educational benefits from their current attendance at the larger neighbouring schools. Formalising the current arrangements would provide a number of such benefits, judged against the Highland criteria set out above, and in particular those at points, 2, 3, 4 and 9.
- 11.4 Pupils at both Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools 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 2/3, of varying ages, such as that if Achfary 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. A roll of 2/3 would 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.
- 11.5 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.
- 11.6 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 2 or 3 pupils at varying ages severely 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 rolls at Kinlochbervie and Scourie provide a greater likelihood of pupils benefitting from a wider range of solo and group musical and artistic opportunities. Primary schools within the Kinlochbervie ASG host a visiting Art specialist, Strings tutor, Chanter tutor and a Kodály Voice tutor, all of whom engage in whole school and whole class pieces.
- 11.9 Schools in the Kinlochbervie ASG are also participating in the YUNGA (United Nations Youth Award), a programme aimed at getting young people involved in social and environmental issues, and which involves a substantial degree of co-operative work.
- 11.10 Larger pupil numbers also provide more opportunities for after school activities. Scourie Primary currently runs an after school Craft Club, and Gardening Club, whilst Kinlochbervie Primary has a multi-activity after-school club and is planning to set up clubs in Computing, and Gardening.
- 11.11 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.
- 11.12 In summary, pupils from the community of Achfary have derived a range of positive educational benefits from the mothballing of Achfary Primary, and wider opportunities than if they had attended Achfary Primary.
- 11.13 As the pupil from the Achfary catchment currently attends Kinlochbervie Primary, no adverse effects for that pupil are expected to arise from the merger.

Effects on School Transport

- 12.1 During the 2015-16 session, one P1-7 pupil will be travelling from the Achfary catchment to Kinlochbervie Primary. This pupil travels on the existing transport from Achfary to Kinlochbervie High, and consequently there is no current additional cost to the Council.
- 12.2 The fact that Achfary School is currently mothballed means that the sole P1-7 pupil will not experience any differing travel arrangements as a result of formal closure
- 12.3 When comparing the scenarios of a re-opened Achfary Primary to its current mothballed status or to formal closure, 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 could have otherwise walked or cycled to school, 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.

- 12.4 As the sole current pupil travels on existing transport, there are no additional greenhouse gas emissions from school transport as a result of the mothballing or closure of Achfary Primary.
- 12.5 Highland Council is not aware of any days in the most recent winter, in which the education of the Achfary pupil was disrupted due to unavailability of school transport in bad weather.
- 12.6 Formal closure of Achfary Primary does raise the possibility of increased travel distances for children in the catchment who will be aged for school in future, and this issue is discussed further in section 19 below.

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 Kinlochbervie or Scourie from a formal closure of Achfary 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 Achfary Primary School are set out at Paragraph 7.10 above, whilst the financial implications are set out at Section 14 below, and the associated **Appendix I**.

Effect on the Local Community

- 14.1 The community of Achfary is very closely linked to the Reay Forest Estate, which currently provides almost all the employment opportunities within Achfary itself.
- 14.2 The building is currently used for community events such as ceilidhs and film nights, and since the school has been mothballed has also been used regularly by the Estate for staff meetings and other events which were previously not possible.
- 14.3 As Highland Council does not own the Achfary School building, the lease between Highland Council and the Estate would likely be terminated in the event of the closure proceeding. If so the future use of the building will be a matter for the local Estate. The Estate has advised that they would continue using the hall as a community facility for the foreseeable future, and would additionally look to increase the number of community events held there.
- 14.4 Paragraph 4.5 above explains that the population of the catchment fell by 40% between 2001 and 2011, during a period when the school was open. Past analyses of rural locations in Highland that have experienced school closures has established no clear relationship between school closures and population patterns.
- 14.5 The Report of the Scottish Government’s Commission on Rural Education, published in 2013, found a number of examples of communities which continued to depopulate despite the presence of a school. The Commission’s

review of the scientific and other literature on school closures found there was a lack of robust evidence on how pre-school, childcare and school proximity (and freedom from threat of closure) links to the sustainability of communities.

Financial Consequences

- 15.1 The Table at **Appendix I** sets out the Highland Council's assessment of the Financial Implications of the proposed merger.

Catchment Areas

- 16.1 The distance and driving time between Achfary Primary School and Kinlochbervie Primary School is given as 15 miles and 27 minutes (source: Google Maps) whilst the same source gives the distance and driving time from Achfary Primary to Scourie Primary as 13.6 miles and 25 minutes.
- 16.2 Achfary Primary School is located within the Scourie Community Council area.
- 16.3 The building at Kinlochbervie Primary has a higher score for Suitability than the building at Scourie Primary.
- 16.4 Although Scourie Primary School is marginally closer to Achfary than Kinlochbervie Primary, in the medium term the roll projections are less certain. The larger pupil and staff numbers anticipated for Kinlochbervie Primary offer more opportunities for pupils to be part of age appropriate peer groups, and for staff to be part of a larger in-school professional network, than would be the case at Achfary Primary. Furthermore, the higher standard of accommodation at Kinlochbervie offers educational advantages over that at Scourie.
- 16.5 For the above reasons, Highland Council recommends that the Achfary PS area is re-assigned to that of Kinlochbervie Primary School.
- 16.6 Nevertheless, it remains Highland Council's opinion that both Scourie and Kinlochbervie Primaries offer educational advantages in comparison with a re-opened Achfary Primary.
- 16.7 Highland Council would welcome the community's views on the best way to re-assign the catchment area of Achfary Primary School.
- 16.8 Whichever decision is taken with respect to catchment areas, existing pupils will not be required to change schools and will continue to qualify for school transport. This will also apply to any younger siblings of such pupils, provided they remain at the same primary school.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 17.1 A preliminary EQIA assessment is at **Appendix J**.

Rural Impact Assessment

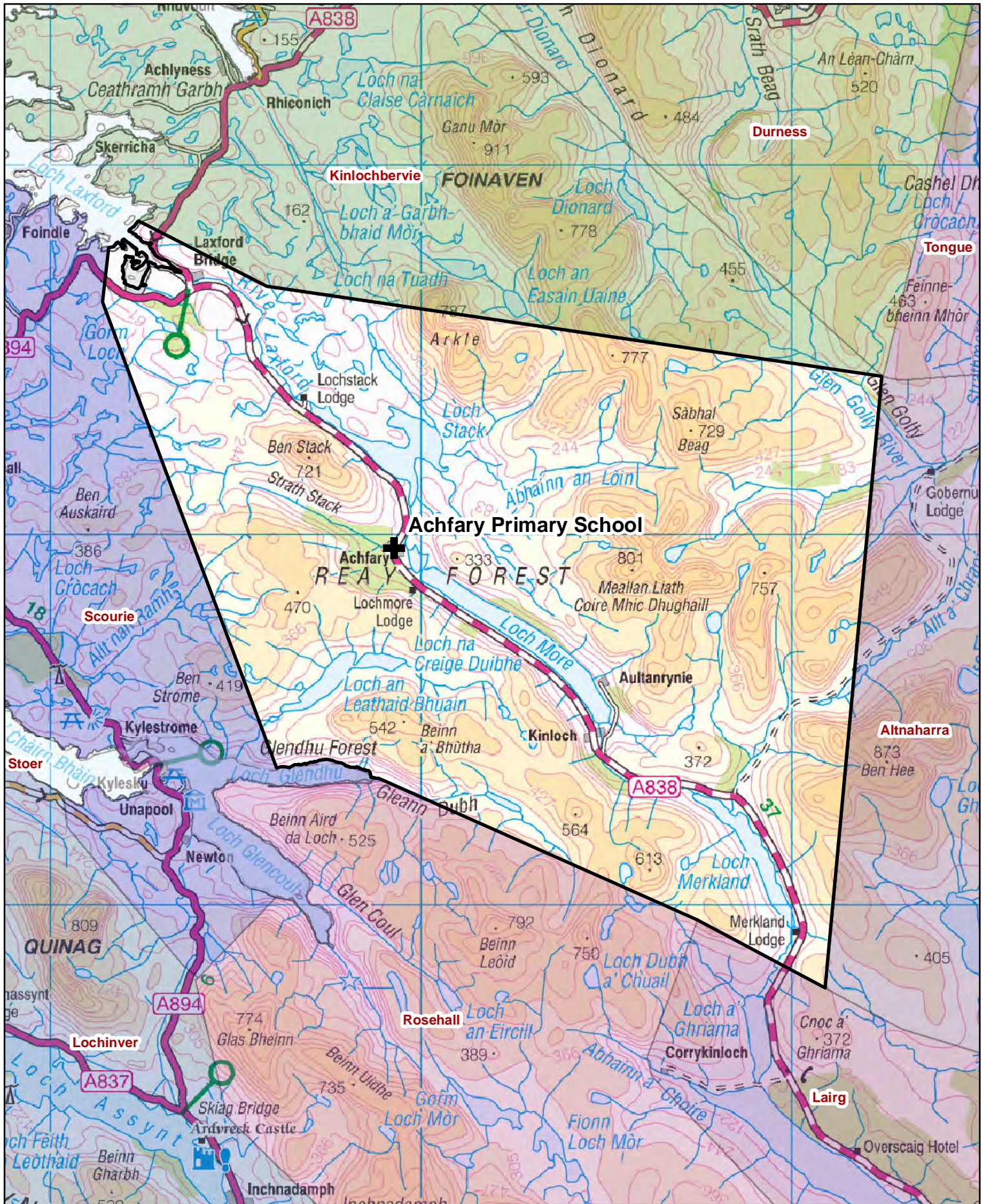
- 18.1 A preliminary Rural Impact Assessment is at **Appendix K**.

Mitigation of Adverse Effects

- 19.1 The main adverse effect for children in the P1-7 age group is the length of journey from Achfary to either Scourie or Kinlochbervie, details of which are provided above. However, as the school has been mothballed since 2012, the single current pupil is already making the journey to Kinlochbervie. The population in this area is accustomed to making long journeys to access things that people in urban areas take for granted.
- 19.2 Funded school transport will be provided to P1-7 pupils from Scourie attending whichever school the catchment is re-assigned to.
- 19.3 The pre-school children in the Achfary catchment area live at Merkland Cottage, at the eastern edge of the catchment. One pupil has registered for pre-school education in Kinlochbervie for August 2016. The distance and journey time from their home to Achfary Primary is 10.4 miles/19 minutes and that to Kinlochbervie Primary is 25.3 miles/46 minutes (source: Google maps). Although this journey time is undoubtedly an adverse effect, this must be balanced against the adverse educational effects that would arise from a child having to attend pre-school nursery on their own and having no peer group. The geography of Highland means that long journey times are not unknown even for such young children.
- 19.4 In overall terms, the adverse effects arising from the additional travelling time for pupils must be balanced against the educational benefits that will arise for pupils set out at section 11 above.

Recommendation

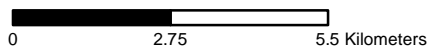
- 20.1 In considering the future of Achfary Primary School, the Authority has had special regard to viable alternatives to closure, to the likely effect on the community, and to the likely effect of different travelling arrangements arising from the proposal. Prior to consultation, informal discussions on these issues were held with a range of with local community representatives. The Council's detailed consideration of each issue is set out above. The Authority concludes that the closure may have a beneficial effect on the community, in providing opportunities for the building to be developed for community use. We further conclude that the likely long term roll of Achfary Primary means there are clear educational benefits to closure and no viable alternatives to closure. Closure will have no effect on the current travelling arrangements for the sole P1-7 pupil, and although adverse effects from travel do potentially arise for future pupils, these must be balanced against the educational and community benefits identified. Taking all of the above into account Highland Council recommends that Achfary Primary School, currently "mothballed," is closed and the catchment area re-assigned to that of Kinlochbervie Primary.
- 20.2 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 the submissions received, will be presented to the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee of the Highland Council.



Achfary Primary School

**Primary School
Catchment Boundary
March 2013**

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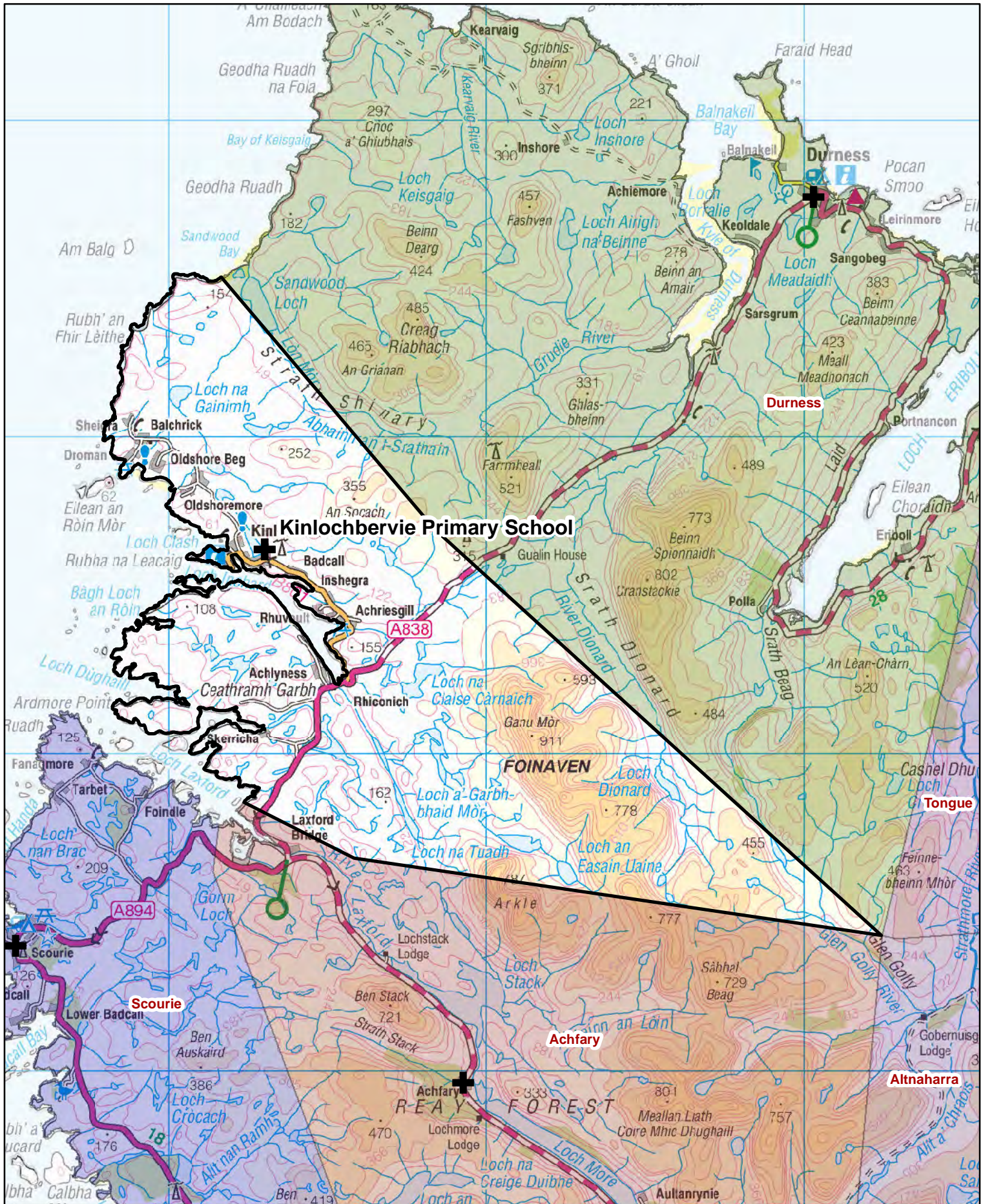
1 cm = 1,320 metres

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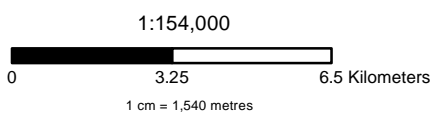


Planning & Development Service



Kinlochbervie Primary School

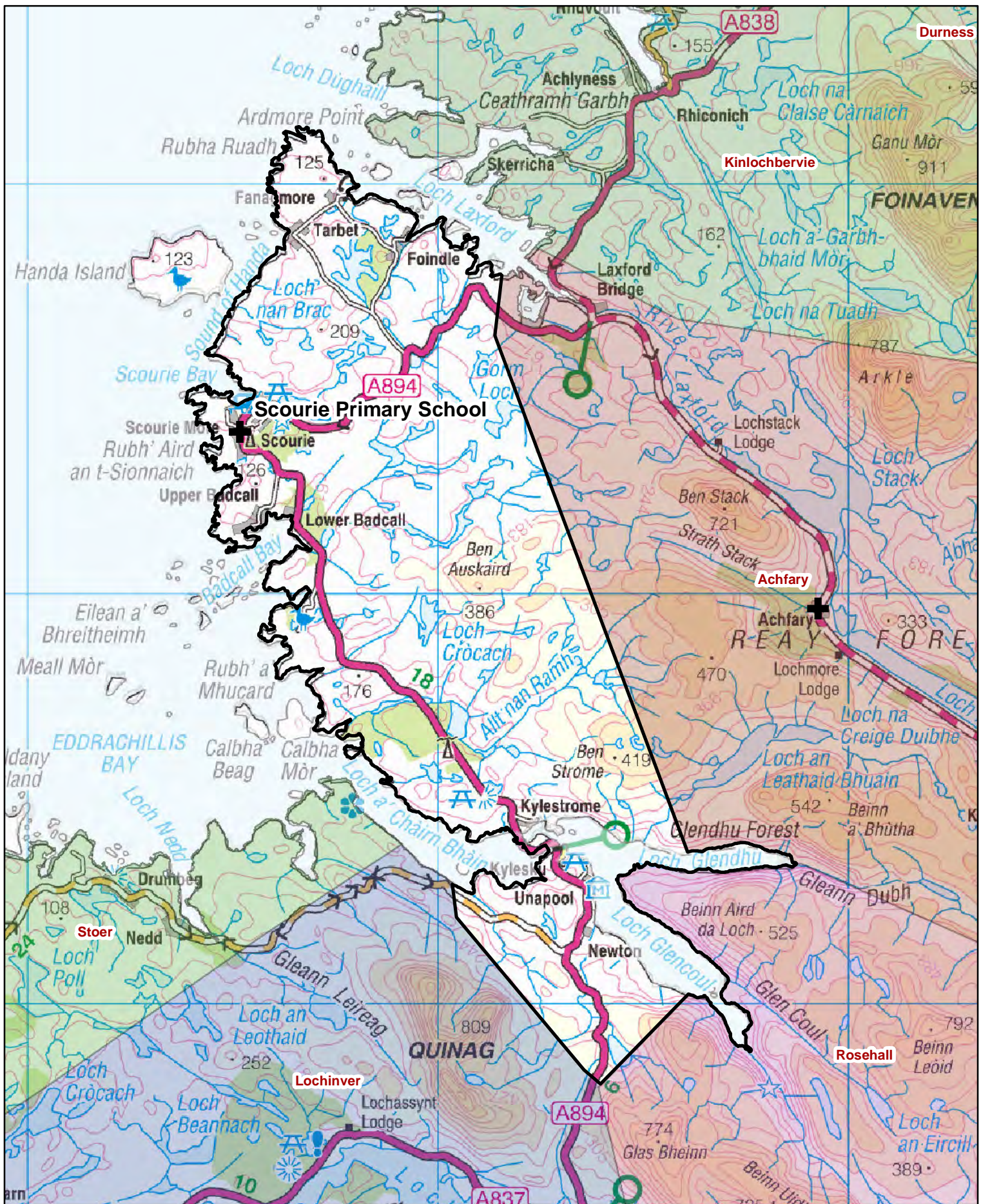
**Primary School
Catchment Boundary
March 2013**



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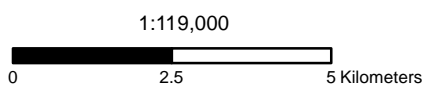


Planning & Development Service



Scourie Primary School

**Primary School
Catchment Boundary
March 2013**

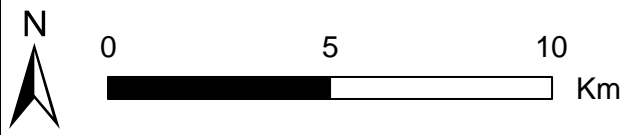
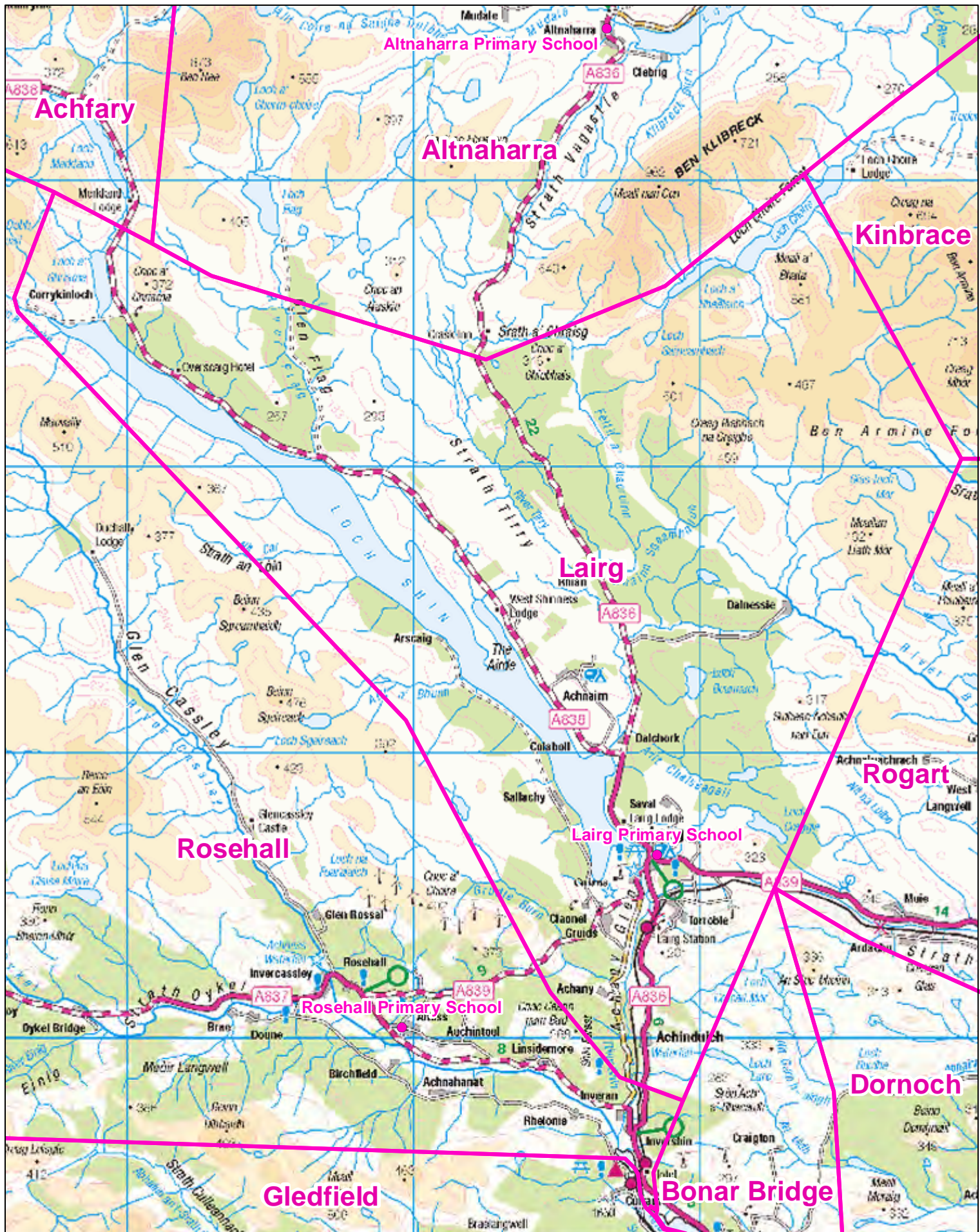


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Planning & Development Service

Expected Impacts	Formal Closure of Achfary PS with re-zoning to Scourie	Formal Closure of Achfary PS with re-zoning to Kinlochbervie	Continued Mothballing (as a short-term measure only)	Re-Opening of Achfary PS
Availability of Age-Appropriate Peer Group	Better availability than at Achfary, but low numbers mean low probability of an age appropriate peer group.	Significantly better availability than at Achfary, but low numbers mean an age appropriate peer group may not be sustainable.	Significantly better availability than at Achfary, but low numbers mean an age appropriate peer group may not be sustainable.	Would not provide for an age-appropriate peer group.
Development of Profiling	Improved opportunities for comparisons and peer review.	Significantly improved opportunities for comparisons and peer review.	Significantly improved opportunities for comparisons and peer review.	Self-assessment made more difficult by limited comparisons and lack of peer review.
Access to Music, PE, Drama, Art	Would provide access to specialist teaching.	Would provide access to specialist teaching.	Would provide access to specialist teaching.	Would provide access to specialist teaching.
Provision for ASN	Scourie PS requires significant investment to improve disabled access.	Appropriate provision.	Appropriate provision.	Appropriate provision.
Personal, Social, Health Needs	Limited opportunities for socialisation, but better than those available at Achfary.	Limited opportunities for socialisation, but better than those available at Achfary.	Limited opportunities for socialisation, but better than those available at Achfary.	Socialisation would be severely hampered by school roll of 2 or 3
Equality for All	Appropriate provision.	Appropriate provision.	Appropriate provision.	Appropriate provision.
Morale and Ethos	As at present.	At present Achfary pupils are part of a larger class with opportunities for peer group interaction.	At present Achfary pupils are part of a larger class with opportunities for peer group interaction.	Morale and Ethos would have to be created. Low pupil numbers may have a negative impact.
Partnership Working	As at present.	As at present.	As at present.	As at present.
Standard of Accommodation	Scourie has ratings of C/B	Kinlochbervie has ratings of B/B.	As at present.	Achfary has ratings of B/C
Availability of Adequate Professional Network	Scourie PS would be too small to provide an adequate professional network.	KLB PS would be two-teacher school, and a wider professional contact is available via the adjacent	As at Columns B and C	Would be a single teacher school with very limited professional network
Access to after-school activities	Access as at present.	Access as at present, but the facilities at KLB HS offer better opportunities than the other locations.	Access as at present, but the facilities at KLB HS offer better opportunities than the other locations.	Access might be possible by travelling to KLB or Scourie although pupils would be less familiar with their peers.
Access to school during adverse weather	Access as at present.	Access as at present.	Access as at present.	Improved access due to shorter travel distances.
Location in recognised village	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Travel Times	Additional travel time of 25 minutes (potential overall travel time of 44 minutes)	Additional travel time of 27 minutes (potential overall travel time of 46 minutes)	See Cols B and C	Potential maximum travel time of 19 minutes.
Provision of funded school transport for primary age pupils	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provision of funded transport for nursery age pupils	No	No	No	No, but with reduced travel times.
Community impact	Achfary PS is located within the village hall. Potential for further development for greater community use?	Achfary PS is located within the village hall. Potential for further development for greater community use?	Achfary PS is located within the village hall. Potential for further development for greater community use?	No opportunity for school building to be developed for community use.
Best Value	As at present.	As at present.	As at present	Additional annual revenue costs of c £64K



Lairg Primary School

Note: Locations and Catchment Areas shown here were last updated in 2015; there may have been changes since then.

Date: 29 January 2016 Ref: gis1108



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2015/16 School Roll Forecast

ALTNAHARRA

5110025	ACTUAL						FORECAST														
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
PI Input								0	0	1											
Pupils/Hhld								0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12
Housing							0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Placing Requests								0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cumulative New Houses								0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pre-school moving into new houses								0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P1 born in new houses											0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N3		1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N4		0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P I	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P II	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P III	2	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P IV	0	2	1	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P V	1	0	2	1	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P VI	1	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
P VII	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total Roll	7	6	6	6	5	5	5	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2

Total Capac	19	19	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
Tot Roll - To	-12	-13	-19	-19	-20	-20	-20	-23	-23	-22	-23	-22	-23	-23	-22	-22	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23
(Tot Roll/To	37%	32%	24%	24%	20%	20%	20%	8%	8%	12%	9%	10%	8%	9%	10%	11%	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%

Typical birth rate factor children per new house **0.0000**
 Pre-school from new houses **0.0000**

Because of rounding, the sum of the PI-PVII figures may not be exactly the same as the Total Roll

2015/16 School Roll Forecast

KINLOCHBERVIE

5108322	ACTUAL						FORECAST															
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	
PI Input								4	2	2												
Pupils/Hhld								0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12
Housing							1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Placing Requests								0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cumulative New Houses								2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Pre-school moving into new houses								0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
P1 born in new houses											0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
N3		3	2	3	2	4	2	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
N4		1	3	1	3	2	4	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
P I	4	2	0	3	1	3	2	4	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
P II	4	4	2	0	3	1	3	2	4	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
P III	4	3	4	3	0	3	1	4	2	4	3	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
P IV	3	4	3	4	2	0	4	2	4	2	4	3	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	
P V	3	3	4	3	3	3	1	5	2	4	2	4	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	
P VI	4	3	5	4	4	3	3	3	5	2	4	2	4	2	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	
P VII	7	4	3	2	4	4	3	4	3	5	2	4	2	4	3	1	2	3	3	3	3	
Total Roll	29	23	21	19	17	17	17	24	23	21	19	19	18	18	17	16	18	19	19	20	20	
Total Capac	41	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	
Tot Roll - To	-12	-23	-25	-27	-29	-29	-29	-28	-29	-28	-29	-28	-28	-28	-29	-29	-28	-27	-27	-26	-26	
(Tot Roll/To	71%	50%	46%	41%	37%	37%	37%	39%	37%	40%	36%	40%	38%	40%	37%	38%	40%	41%	41%	42%	43%	

Typical birth rate factor children per new house 0.0000
 Pre-school from new houses 0.0000

Because of rounding, the sum of the PI-PVII figures may not be exactly the same as the Total Roll

2015/16 School Roll Forecast

LAIRG								FORECAST														
5109922	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	ACTUAL 2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	
PI Input								11	7	6												
Pupils/Hhld								0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12
Housing							2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Placing Requests								-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
Cumulative New Houses								6	10	14	18	22	26	30	34	38	42	46	50	54	58	
Pre-school moving into new houses								0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P1 born in new houses											0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N3		7	6	12	5	12	7	6	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	9	9	9			
N4		9	8	8	14	6	11	7	6	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	9	9			
P I	5	2	7	3	5	14	7	10	6	5	6	7	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	8
P II	3	6	1	5	4	6	13	7	10	6	5	7	7	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8
P III	8	3	6	2	6	3	6	13	7	11	7	6	7	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8
P IV	4	7	4	3	3	5	4	6	13	7	11	7	6	7	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8
P V	6	4	6	5	3	2	5	4	6	13	7	11	7	6	7	7	7	7	7	8	8	8
P VI	10	5	5	8	5	5	1	5	4	6	13	7	11	7	6	7	7	7	7	8	8	8
P VII	12	8	3	6	8	5	4	1	5	4	6	13	7	11	7	6	7	7	7	8	8	8
Total Roll	48	35	32	32	34	40	40	47	52	53	56	57	51	51	47	48	50	52	53	54	56	
Total Capac	107	107	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110
Tot Roll - To	-59	-72	-78	-78	-76	-70	-70	-63	-58	-57	-54	-53	-59	-59	-63	-62	-60	-58	-57	-56	-54	-54
(Tot Roll/To	45%	33%	29%	29%	31%	36%	36%	42%	48%	48%	51%	51%	46%	46%	43%	44%	46%	47%	48%	49%	51%	

Typical birth rate factor children per new house 0.0000
 Pre-school from new houses 0.0000

Because of rounding, the sum of the PI-PVII figures may not be exactly the same as the Total Roll

2015/16 School Roll Forecast

SCOURIE	ACTUAL							FORECAST														
	5108829	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
PI Input								0	4	4												
Pupils/Hhld								0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12
Housing							1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Placing Requests								0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cumulative New Houses								2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Pre-school moving into new houses								0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
P1 born in new houses											0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
N3		1	1	2	1	0	4	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
N4		5	1	1	2	1	0	4	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
P I	5	0	4	0	1	1	1	0	4	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
P II	6	6	0	3	1	1	1	1	0	4	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
P III	3	5	6	0	5	1	1	1	1	0	4	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
P IV	5	2	5	7	1	5	1	1	1	1	0	4	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	
P V	2	5	2	5	6	1	5	1	1	1	1	0	4	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	
P VI	3	2	5	3	5	7	1	4	1	1	1	1	0	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	
P VII	1	3	2	6	5	5	7	1	4	1	1	1	1	0	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	
Total Roll	25	23	24	24	24	21	17	9	12	11	12	13	14	16	20	19	18	19	19	20	20	
Total Capac	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	
Tot Roll - To	-17	-19	-18	-18	-18	-21	-25	-32	-29	-30	-28	-27	-25	-24	-21	-23	-24	-23	-23	-22	-22	
(Tot Roll/To	60%	55%	57%	57%	57%	50%	40%	24%	31%	29%	33%	36%	40%	43%	50%	46%	43%	44%	45%	46%	47%	

Typical birth rate factor children per new house 0.0000
 Pre-school from new houses 0.0000

Because of rounding, the sum of the PI-PVII figures may not be exactly the same as the Total Roll

CONSULTATIVE PROCESS - SUMMARY OF PROCESS FOR THIS PROPOSAL DOCUMENT - ACHFARY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Consideration by the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee

The Proposal paper has been issued as a result of a decision approved by the above Committee.

Prior to submission to Committee, pre-consultation discussions took place between Highland Council officials and the Parent Councils of Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primaries, as well as with Kinlochbervie Community Council, Scourie Community Council, and Reay Forest Estate.

Proposal Document issued to consultees and published on Highland Council Website

A copy of the Proposal paper will be issued free of charge to the following consultees:

- (i) Parents of pupils in the catchment area of Achfary Primary School; and parents of pupils attending Kinlochbervie Primary School and Scourie Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (ii) All P4-7 pupils attending Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools.
- (iii) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
- (iv) The Parent Councils of Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools.
- (v) Staff of Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools.
- (vi) Trade union representatives;
- (vii) The community councils for the areas covered by the 3 schools;
- (viii) Education Scotland;
- (ix) Highland Youth Convenor
- (x) The Duke of Westminster (owner of the Reay Forest Estate)
- (xi) The Care and Learning Alliance, who operate the nurseries at Kinlochbervie and Scourie).
- (xii) Members of the Highland Community Planning Partnership

and will be published on the Council website.

Publication in local newspapers

A notice announcing the public meeting will be placed in the Northern Times and on the Highland Council's Facebook page.

Length of Consultation period

The consultation period will begin on 11 April 2016. The consultation will thereafter run until close of business on 24 May 2016 which includes a period of 31 school days.

Public meeting

A public meeting will be held at 7.00pm on 26 April at Achfary Primary School. 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.

Involvement of HMI/Education Scotland

When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland (HMIE) by the Council. HMIE will also be sent, by 30 May 2016, a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period. HMIE 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. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 20 June 2016. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such enquiries of people there as they consider appropriate.

Preparation of Consultation Report

Highland Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMI 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 as well as at the affected schools and local libraries, free of charge. The Report will include a summary of the written and oral representations made during consultation and a copy of the HMI 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 Education, Children and Adult Services (ECAS) 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 on 18 October 2016, prior to submission to the ECAS Committee on 9 November 2016. However, this timescale may change depending on the nature of issues raised during consultation, and the need to give these full consideration. In the latter event, the Report may not be submitted until a later Committee meeting.

Any closure proposal approved at ECAS Committee in November 2016 would require to be confirmed by the full Highland Council on 15 December 2016.

Scottish Ministers Call-in

In the event that the Council decides to close the school at that stage, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, within 6 working days of the decision being made, and to publish on its website a notice that it has done so, detailing the opportunity to make further representations within 3 weeks. The Scottish Ministers have an 8-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal, it will be referred to a School Closure Review Panel. Within the first 3 weeks of the 8-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the 8-week call-in process has been notified to the Council, the Council will not proceed to implement the proposal.

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.

**Achfary Primary School
Sutherland
The Highland Council
11 December 2007**

Contents	Page
1. Background	1
2. Key strengths	1
3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?	1
4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	2
5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?	3
6. How good is the environment for learning?	4
7. Leading and improving the school	5
Appendix 1 Indicators of quality	7
Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses	8
How can you contact us?	9

1. Background

Achfary Primary School was inspected in September 2007 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils and staff. Members of the inspection team also met a number of parents¹. There was no Parent Council.

The school serves the village of Achfary and the surrounding area of Sutherland. At the time of the inspection the roll was six. There were no pupils at the P1-P3 stages. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was above the national average. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Enthusiastic pupils who were keen to learn.
- High quality teaching which helped pupils improve.
- Attainment of pupils in English language, and pupils' abilities in using information and communications technology (ICT).
- Staff's provision of care and welfare for pupils.
- Links with parents and the wider community.
- The teamwork of all staff, and the overall leadership of the headteacher.

3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to all parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to all of the questionnaires normally appears in Appendix 2. However, as there were fewer than five respondees in the group of parents, in order to maintain confidentiality, that analysis is not provided.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

HM Inspectors also interviewed staff, parents and pupils during the inspection. The following is an analysis of the views expressed by staff, parents and pupils. Almost all parents, pupils and staff were very positive about the school, and felt that it was very well led. Parents felt that their children enjoyed being in school, and that the staff showed concern for the care and welfare of their children. They believed that staff were always approachable, and that they would respond appropriately when given information affecting pupils. All felt welcome in the school. Pupils were happy in the school, and felt that they were helped to improve. They believed that they were treated fairly, and that behaviour was good. They also felt safe and well looked after. Staff enjoyed being in school, and felt very well supported by the headteacher. They believed that pupils were enthusiastic about their learning. They also felt that there was mutual respect between themselves and pupils.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

Staff provided a very wide range of learning experiences for pupils which successfully developed their knowledge, skills and understanding in key areas of the curriculum. Teachers used time very effectively to ensure that an appropriate focus was given to the expressive arts. Appropriate time was available to allow pupils to travel to a range of events and field trips. These activities all helped to develop the social skills of pupils. Teaching programmes were very well organised and had a positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly in science and writing in English language. The school had been awarded Health Promoting School status and pupils were well aware of what was required for a healthy lifestyle. Pupils benefited from two hours per week of physical activity. All pupils had been involved in the school gaining an Eco School (Scotland) award. They were actively involved in recycling and understood the necessity to care for the environment. Their involvement with the Eco School project had helped them focus on key areas of citizenship, as well as involving them in helpful enterprise activities. The overall quality of teaching was very good. Teachers were very well prepared and used questioning very effectively to encourage pupils to think for themselves. They explained clearly to pupils what they expected them to learn, and also reviewed what they had done to check their levels of understanding. Teachers also used ICT effectively as part of their teaching. Visiting teachers made an important contribution to pupils' learning in key areas of the curriculum including art and design, music, physical education (PE), science and writing. Homework was set regularly and was suitably varied. Overall, the quality of teaching in the school generated an enthusiasm for learning amongst pupils.

Pupils were enthusiastic and well motivated learners. They settled to their tasks quickly, and cooperated very well with one another. Older pupils willingly helped younger ones develop their skills, for example, in ICT. The pace of pupils' work was very good and, as a result, pupils were making very good progress. Pupils were accustomed to working independently and making some decisions for themselves. They were making particularly good progress in using ICT. They were capable of editing texts on screen, and were involved in creating an animated film using a digital camera and computer program. They participated with enthusiasm in PE where they were beginning to develop good ball skills. They were developing good skills in drawing and shading in art. In science, they were developing their knowledge and understanding of conductors and insulators through their experimentation with circuits. Although their study of World War II had only recently

begun they were developing a good knowledge of evacuees, the events which led to the war, and key national figures.

The school took very good steps to help pupils develop their wider achievements. Pupils participated in the after school drama club, and all had enjoyed their performance to the local community. Members of the community commented positively on the pupils' musical performance at the school prize giving. Some pupils took part in a shinty club organised at a neighbouring school. A few pupils had their poems published in a commercial publication, and all had been involved in raising funds for a Highland hospice.

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was very good. Pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment, and making very good progress. Higher attaining pupils had made particularly good progress in reading, and were producing writing of very high quality using a wide range of vocabulary. Pupils listened very well to one another and adults and responded appropriately. They were very articulate when talking with adults, and gave clear description of texts they had read and work they had undertaken. Pupils read widely and were fluent while reading aloud. They had a good understanding of what they had read, and appreciated the styles of different writers. The standards in reading of a few pupils were very high, and they read a wide range of texts. Pupils wrote a range of prose and poetry for a wide variety of purposes. They organised their writing very effectively, and created pieces of texts which were interesting and captured the attention of the reader. Overall the writing was of a very high standard. Standards of handwriting and presentation were also very good.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was good. Pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment and making good progress. They had a good understanding of a range of graphs and had created a number of them using the computer. Older pupils could use scales on the axes of graphs effectively. Their skills in using databases and spreadsheets were at an early stage of development. Pupils had a good understanding of a range of numbers and carried out written calculations accurately. They were developing good skills in mental calculation. They were not consistently quick and accurate in multiplying and dividing mentally. They had a good knowledge of units of measurement and could use both the twelve and twenty-four hour clock. They also had a good recall of the names and properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. They were aware of the strategies required to tackle problems, and now required more practice in deciding which of these to use.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

Staff had a very good knowledge of pupils' progress and their varying needs, and took appropriate action to address identified support needs. Teaching programmes were targeted appropriately and, as a result, pupils were making very good progress. Assessments had been well used to confirm teachers' judgements of pupils' attainment. Discussions had taken place with staff from the local secondary school to help provide appropriate resources for higher attaining pupils in reading. Pupils with additional support needs had been well supported and helped become more confident and self assured. The time was now

appropriate, however, to create individualised educational programmes for such pupils in order to target their needs and monitor their progress more formally. The school was well supported by the area learning support coordinator.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Pastoral care	<p>Arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils were excellent. Staff used their knowledge of pupils' social, emotional and personal needs very effectively to help pupils cooperate with one another and develop good relationships. They had discussed anti-bullying with pupils as part of the health and religious and moral education programmes. Staff had taken effective steps to deal with any incidents of inappropriate behaviour. They cooperated with parents very effectively to provide care when necessary for pupils with allergies. Staff had undergone appropriate training, and had carried out effective risk assessments to ensure pupils' safety on school trips. The school nurse had also discussed allergic reactions with all pupils to help them understand and support others. All staff had been trained in child protection.</p>
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>The school's accommodation was good overall and was located within the community hall. Pupils and staff benefited from a well appointed classroom, kitchen, spacious hall and headteacher's office. Staff had created a stimulating learning environment in the classroom. They made very good use of the display of pupils' work to encourage pupils to produce work of high quality. Pupils and staff had improved the school grounds through the creation of a kitchen garden and a wildlife garden as part of a 'Grounds for Learning' project. Pupils had grown, harvested and, with the assistance of the school cook, eaten their own produce. Both gardens had helped pupils observe and become more aware of the birdlife in the area. Security arrangements were appropriate. There was no provision for access to the school for those with physical disabilities. Staff were required to use pupils' toilets.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>The overall ethos within the school was very good. Pupils, parents and staff were very proud of their school. Pupils were very polite and friendly, and courteous with visitors. Relationships were good, and there was a great deal of respect between pupils and staff. Pupils behaved well, and persevered at their activities. Staff morale was high, and there was a very good spirit of teamwork within the school. Pupils took part in weekly religious observance. Staff set clear expectations of the pupils and expected them to produce work of a high standard. Overall, pupils responded very well to these expectations. Although there was no Pupil Council, all pupils were members of the eco committee. This had a positive impact on their attitudes to the local environment. All pupils were very well included in the life of the school. Staff and pupils helped new pupils settle quickly into the school. Pupils had a good understanding of the issues of tolerance and respect for others, and were aware of issues of anti-racism.</p>
Partnership with parents and the community	<p>Links with parents and the wider community were very good. Although there was no Parent Council, parents supported the school very well in a number of ways. Staff discussed pupils with parents on a regular, informal basis and also produced very informative written reports for parents. The school provided regular newsletters and sought parents' views on aspects of the school's provision. Parents were invited to view the resources used for the teaching of sensitive health issues. The local community was very supportive of the school, with a community volunteer helping on trips and assisting pupils to maintain the school gardens. There were good links with Kinlochberrie High School and other schools in the area. Arrangements were being made to restart the group meetings of headteachers of small schools to support further headteachers and staff.</p>

7. Leading and improving the school

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

Achfary Primary School provided a very high quality of education for its pupils. Staff provided a very good curriculum and the quality of teaching helped develop pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Pupils were making very good progress in their learning, and achieved high levels of attainment in writing in particular. The staff met the needs of all pupils effectively, and now required to formalise the programmes required for pupils with additional support needs.

The headteacher had the respect of parents, pupils and staff. She was a very effective leader and manager who had worked successfully to provide a stimulating curriculum for pupils. She had determined and implemented appropriate priorities within the school in order to make improvements. In all of these efforts she had been very well supported by a staff who worked very well together. She had a very good knowledge of pupils' progress, and now required to refine her procedures for quality assurance by monitoring more formally the quality of learning and teaching. Overall, the school had demonstrated that it had the capacity to improve.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should continue to provide high quality and improving education. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- develop individualised educational programmes for pupils with additional support needs; and
- raise attainment in mathematics.

What happens next?

As a result of the high performance, the strong record of improvement and the very effective leadership of this school, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. Within two years of the publication of this report the education authority, working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents.

Dr Roddy Duncan
HM Inspector

11 December 2007

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
Structure of the curriculum	very good
The teaching process	very good
Pupils' learning experiences	very good
Pupils' attainment in English language	very good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	good

How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting pupils' needs	good

How good is the environment for learning?	
Pastoral care	excellent
Accommodation and facilities	good
Climate and relationships	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	very good
Equality and fairness	very good
Partnership with parents and the community	very good

Leading and improving the school	
Leadership of the headteacher	very good
Self-evaluation	good

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below. As fewer than five responses were received from parents, in order to maintain confidentiality, the analysis is not provided.

What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They enjoyed being at school, and were told when they had done something well.• They felt that they were treated fairly, and felt safe and well looked after.• Teachers expected them to work hard, and helped them keep safe and healthy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no significant issues.
What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Almost all staff were positive about most aspects of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no significant issues.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Longman House, 28 Longman Road, Inverness, IV1 1SF or by telephoning 01463 253115. Copies are also available on our website www.hmie.gov.uk.

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**Kinlochbervie Primary School
The Highland Council
2 September 2008**

Contents	Page
1. Background	1
2. Key strengths	1
3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?	1
4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	2
5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?	4
6. How good is the environment for learning?	4
7. Leading and improving the school	5
Appendix 1 Indicators of quality	7
Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses	8
How can you contact us?	10

1. Background

Kinlochbervie Primary School was inspected in May 2008 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the Parent Council, and a group of parents¹.

The school serves the village of Kinlochbervie and the small townships in the surrounding rural area. At the time of the inspection the roll was 33. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well below the national average. Pupils' attendance was above the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- A very welcoming and inclusive ethos.
- Courteous, well-behaved and motivated pupils.
- High quality attainment in English language and mathematics.
- High quality accommodation and the use made of the local environment to support and extend learning.
- The teamwork of all staff and their contribution to meeting the needs of all learners.
- The leadership of the headteacher.

3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to all parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

Parents were very positive about almost all aspects of the school. They felt their children enjoyed being at school and were very well looked after. Parents thought that

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

the school communicated with them regularly and responded promptly to matters of concern. They felt that the school was well led. Pupils were happy about almost all aspects of the school. They appreciated the efforts of their teachers in keeping them safe and improving their learning. Teaching and support staff were very positive about all aspects of the school. They enjoyed working in the school and felt very well supported by the headteacher.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Learners' experiences

The school's curriculum provided a very good range of experiences and took very good account of national and education authority guidance. The Active Schools Coordinator and visiting teachers in music and art and design were enhancing the development of pupils' skills. Staff had begun to make good use of time towards the end of the school day to enable pupils to learn through play. Teachers placed an appropriate emphasis on pupils' personal and social development, which included health education and education for citizenship. Pupils benefited from appropriate opportunities for physical education each week. Pupils in the P5 to P7 class were acquiring good conversational skills in French. Staff made effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) across the curriculum. Interactions between pupils and teachers were very positive. The overall quality of teaching across the school was very good. Teachers provided clear explanations and instructions and built successfully on prior learning. They all shared the purposes of lessons with pupils, gave very helpful and detailed feedback and told them how to improve their work. All teachers used praise and rewards effectively to encourage and motivate pupils. They also used written comments appropriately in jotters to identify pupils' strengths and highlight areas for improvement. Arrangements for assessing, tracking and monitoring pupils' progress were effective. Teachers made good use of homework to enhance the activities being carried out in class.

Learner's experiences were very good. Pupils settled quickly to their classwork, were well-behaved and responded enthusiastically to teachers' questions. Staff provided appropriately frequent opportunities for pupils to be active and to learn independently. Pupils responded well when working collaboratively on tasks in the P5 to P7 class. At all stages, pupils were learning effective skills in drama and physical education. Pupils had effective opportunities to learn in different ways, to be creative and expressive, to think critically and to set and evaluate their own targets for learning. Pupils were developing good skills in the use of ICT in their learning.

Improvements in performance

Overall, improvements in performance were good.

The quality of attainment in English language was very good overall. Almost all pupils attained, or exceeded, appropriate national levels in listening, talking, reading and writing. Pupils who had not achieved these levels were making very good progress with their coursework. Throughout the school, pupils talked with confidence, expressed personal views and listened attentively. At the early stages, pupils were making steady progress

with reading. Pupils in the P5 to P7 class were highly motivated readers and were able to discuss authors and identify personal preferences. At all stages, pupils wrote effectively for a variety of purposes and across all curricular areas. In the P5 to P7 class, pupils wrote successfully in a range of genres, including science reports, poetry and play scripts. Pupils in the upper stages did not have sufficient opportunities to complete extended pieces of imaginative and personal writing.

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was very good. Almost all pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in key aspects of mathematics. Most pupils at the early stages achieved these levels earlier than might normally be expected. Pupils with additional support needs were making good progress. At all stages, pupils were able to handle and interpret information accurately using an appropriate range of graphs and tables. They made effective and regular use of computer software. By P7, pupils were competent in written and mental calculations. Almost all pupils were able to round numbers and use decimals accurately. Across the school, pupils were secure in working out money calculations. They had a good knowledge of angles, shape and symmetry. They could identify correctly a range of shapes and discuss their properties. Pupils' skills in problem-solving and enquiry were developing well. They were able to identify and use a range of strategies to solve problems. Most were able to communicate their solutions clearly.

Pupils were making good progress in developing skills in art and design, music, drama and physical education. Across the school, pupils demonstrated a sound awareness of a range of drawing and painting techniques. Pupils had used these techniques creatively to produce a range of imaginative art displays. At P1 to P4, pupils worked cooperatively in small groups to create an attractive fruit collage, making choices about which materials to use. In environmental studies, pupils were developing an appropriate range of knowledge and skills. Pupils had successfully designed and built models of their own versions of an energy efficient house. At P5 to P7, pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of aspects of the solar system and about the impact of meteors on the surface of the moon and the effects of gravity. Throughout the school, pupils were confident in using ICT. Pupils at the upper stages demonstrated very good understanding of how to create animations and were developing their skills in filming and photography.

The school encouraged pupils' broad achievements very effectively. Pupils had achieved success in a broad range of endeavours, including sporting and enterprise activities. Many had enjoyed success and represented the school in shinty competitions. All pupils benefited from taking part in Gaelic lessons, batik and mosaic workshops. They enthusiastically took part in bridge building and a drumming workshop with pupils from other local primary schools. Pupils at all stages developed their awareness of citizenship in a variety of ways. For example, they raised funds for charities and performed in concerts for members of the local community. Pupils in the upper primary developed their self-awareness and appreciation of others, as well as their skills in outdoor education, through highly successful residential trips.

The school had made very good progress in achieving the priorities in its improvement plan. The planned improvements were having a positive effect on pupils' experiences. Pupils were benefiting from working with their teachers, the local countryside ranger and science staff from the local secondary school as they planned and recorded science

experiments. At all stages pupils benefited from involvement in the Eco-Schools Scotland project as they worked to reduce waste and encourage recycling.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

Pupils' learning needs were met very effectively. Staff had a very good knowledge of pupils' strengths and areas for development. They took appropriate steps to ensure that pupils made very good progress by undertaking tasks which were well matched to their needs. Staff set clearly stated learning targets, reviewed pupils' progress regularly and discussed this with parents. They worked closely with parents, professionals and support agencies to support pupils with additional support needs. Staff liaised closely with the support for learning teacher who provided useful advice regarding any pupils with additional support needs. Support staff provided very good assistance for individuals and groups. Very good arrangements were in place to support pupils with English as an additional language.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	The overall quality of care, welfare and development was very good. Staff knew their pupils well and were very sensitive to their emotional, social and medical needs. Staff were aware of child protection procedures and knew how to implement these. Appropriate procedures were in place for the administration of medicines and safe use of the Internet. Effective procedures were in place to check on the location of absent pupils. The Pupil Council played an important part in the life of the school. Staff and a range of partner agencies worked effectively together to support children and their families. The school had appropriate transition arrangements in place for pupils as they entered P1 and transferred from P7 to Kinlochbervie High School.
Management and use of resources and space for learning	The quality of accommodation and facilities was very good. All staff made good use of attractive displays to enhance the learning environment. Classrooms were large, bright and well equipped. Pupils benefited from extensive and well-planned grounds which provided ample space for play, games and sport. The school had made very good use of available space to support pupils and welcome parents. There were appropriate security arrangements. The school was fully accessible to users with restricted mobility.

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality and fairness	<p>There was a very good sense of community and very positive and supportive interactions between staff and pupils. Staff praised children appropriately to acknowledge their efforts and achievements and to build self-esteem. Staff promoted a strong sense of fairness and mutual respect through the positive use of praise and reward. All staff contributed fully to the very good ethos of the school. The school effectively celebrated pupils' achievements in well-presented displays of their work. All staff were fully committed to ensuring all pupils achieved their full potential. A racial equality policy was in place and education authority procedures were well implemented. Weekly assemblies provided very good opportunities for religious observance and to celebrate pupils' achievements.</p>
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	<p>The school had very good links with parents and the local community. Very good opportunities were available for parents and staff to discuss children's progress. Parents were kept well informed about the life and work of the school. Parents of P1 pupils were given very helpful advice prior to their children's entry to the school. Parents had appropriate opportunities to view resources used for sensitive issues in health education. They received regular and informative reports on pupils' progress. The newly formed Parent Council provided active and high quality support. Parent support through fundraising had enhanced outdoor learning and play opportunities for pupils. The school nurse, community policeman, parental volunteers and the Active Schools Coordinator contributed very effectively to the work of the school. The school had established effective links with local businesses.</p>

7. Leading and improving the school

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

Kinlochbervie Primary School provided a secure, well ordered and friendly learning environment within which staff put a high priority on pupils' care and welfare. Primary pupils were happy, very motivated to learn and well-behaved. The quality of learning and teaching was very good. Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics was very good. Pupils enjoyed their learning and their skills in personal and social education were well developed. Staff provided very effective support for pupils requiring additional assistance in their learning. Relationships with parents and the community were very good.

The headteacher provided very good leadership. She demonstrated a high level of commitment, professional expertise and care in managing and moving the school forward. She had developed very positive relationships with pupils, parents and staff and had gained their respect. She recognised the talents, interests and development needs of all staff and supported them effectively in their endeavours. The school's approaches to improvement through self-evaluation were good. The headteacher effectively monitored the work of the school by observing lessons, monitoring teachers' plans and sampling pupils' work. She had consulted parents and pupils on aspects of the work of the whole school and taken good account of their views. She fully involved staff in evaluating the quality of the provision and in identifying improvement priorities. All staff showed a strong commitment to taking these forward. The school had many strengths and was very well placed to build on the existing high standards.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should continue to provide high quality and improving education. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- further develop the current approaches to self-evaluation to ensure they are appropriately focused on securing improvements in key areas of the school's work.

What happens next?

As a result of the high performance, the strong record of improvement and the very effective leadership of this school, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. Within two years of the publication of this report the education authority, working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents.

David M Martin
HM Inspector

2 September 2008

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
The curriculum	very good
Teaching for effective learning	very good
Learners' experiences (primary stages)	very good
Improvements in performance (primary stages)	very good

How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting learning needs (primary stages)	very good

How good is the environment for learning?	
Care, welfare and development	very good
Management and use of resources and space for learning	very good
The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	very good
Equality and fairness	good
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	very good

Leading and improving the school	
Developing people and partnerships	good
Leadership of improvement and change (of the headteacher)	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below.

What parents thought the school did well	What parents think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children enjoyed being at school and were treated fairly.• Staff showed concern for children's care and welfare.• They were made to feel welcome and were consulted on decisions which affected their children.• The school was well led and if they raised a matter of concern it would be dealt with.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no significant issues.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers encouraged them and helped them when they had difficulties with their school work.• The school helped to keep them safe and healthy.• Pupils had a say in deciding how to make the school better.• Teachers expected them to work hard and were good at letting them know how they could improve their learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Around one quarter of pupils thought that not all pupils were treated fairly and that the behaviour of pupils in the school was not good.

What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school was well led. • There was good communication between senior managers and staff. • The school worked hard to promote good relations with the community. • They had good opportunities to be involved in decision making. • Continuous professional development was effective. • They liked working in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant issues.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, 1st Floor, Endeavour House, 1 Greenmarket, Dundee DD1 4QB or by telephoning 01382 576700. Copies are also available on our website www.hmie.gov.uk.

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Should you wish to comment on any aspect of primary inspections, you should write in the first instance to Chris McIlroy, HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

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14 January 2014

Dear Parent/Carer

**Scourie Primary School
The Highland Council**

Recently, as you may know, I inspected your child's school. During my visit, I talked to parents and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. I wanted to find out how well children are learning and achieving and how well the school supports children to do their best. The headteacher shared with me the school's successes and priorities for improvement. I looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including numeracy and mathematics, writing and support for learning. As a result, I was able to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

How well do children learn and achieve?

The school is improving how well children learn and achieve. Staff have been focussing on improving children's behaviour. As a result, there is a calm and welcoming learning environment across the school. Most children enjoy school. They concentrate well and keep on task in the classroom. They are learning to work both independently and in small groups. Children are motivated when taking part in activity-based tasks. They are positive about new approaches to setting and reviewing targets for what they will learn in literacy and numeracy. This is helping children gain an awareness of what they are good at and what they need to do to improve. Increasingly, children are involved in reviewing their own work and the work of others at the end of lessons. This is encouraging them to think more about their learning and to achieve success. Staff should continue to develop approaches to target-setting and to supporting children in discussing and reviewing their learning.

Children are not making enough progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Staff are aware of the need to improve children's skills in these areas and are taking action to improve children's attainment. Children are confident and articulate when speaking during class discussions. They can recall main events from texts they have read. Children are less skilled in analysing texts more deeply. They do not yet write well enough for a variety of purposes. The school now needs to implement, as planned, a programme for developing children's skills in writing. Across the school, children's skills in number and measurement need to be developed further. Children enjoy practising their skills in numeracy and mathematics using information and communications technology and games. They now need to apply their skills better to solve problems in numeracy and mathematics. Children achieve well in a range of sporting activities outwith the classroom, including shinty and football.

Within the school, there has been a focus on developing children's skills in music and, as a result, most children can play a musical instrument and many participate in the school band.

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

Staff are improving how they support children to develop and learn. They now provide children with more varied opportunities to learn. Staff are developing their confidence in using Curriculum for Excellence guidance to plan children's learning. Visiting specialists, for example in art and design, enhance children's experiences. Staff are working closely with other schools in the associated schools group (ASG) to review the programmes for science and social studies. Together with the ASG, they are planning interesting ways for children to apply the skills they have learned through projects such as the 'goblin racing car'. Staff now need to ensure they plan learning which provides progression in children's knowledge, understanding and skills across all areas of the curriculum. Staff have reviewed arrangements for supporting children who require additional help with their learning. They identify children who need support and put in place additional planning to help children make progress. The learning support teacher and pupil support assistants provide valuable support for those children who require additional help. Staff now need to make sure they provide children with tasks at the right level of difficulty, particularly when planning whole-class activities. Parents are highly supportive of the school. They value the many opportunities to support children in their learning through taking after school clubs and helping with school activities.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

Since taking up post, the headteacher has gained the respect of children, parents and staff. She has an accurate view of what is working well in the school and what needs to improve. The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear guidance for staff. Staff work very well together as a team. They are highly committed to improving the work of the school and have put in place changes which are making children's learning experiences better. Staff now need to ensure they monitor and track children's learning carefully to ensure all children make appropriate progress. Parents feel they can offer their views and opinions to help the work of the school. They support recent changes in the life and work of the school. Overall, approaches to self-evaluation have not yet had enough impact on improving children's progress and achievement.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Welcoming school ethos.
- Partnership with parents and the community to support children's learning.
- Teamwork and commitment of staff to improving the work of the school.
- Positive changes made by the headteacher.

I discussed with staff and the Highland Council how they might continue to improve the school. This is what I agreed with them.

- Meet children's learning needs more effectively to improve their progress.
- Continue to review and update the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence.
- Ensure approaches to self-evaluation improve the work of the school.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. Our Area Lead Officer will work with the Highland Council to build capacity for improvement, and will maintain contact to monitor progress. We will return to carry out a further inspection within eighteen months of publication of this letter. We will then issue another letter to parents on the extent to which the school has improved.

Janie McManus
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/ScoriePrimarySchoolHighland.asp>

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Financial Template- Achfary PS closure

Table 1			
	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Forecast revenue costs for Achfary PS			
	Costs for full financial year (projected annual costs)	Additional financial impact on receiving schools	Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)
ACHFARY PRIMARY SCHOOL			
School costs			
<i>Employee costs</i>			
teaching staff	42,961	0	42,961
support staff	8,217	0	8,217
teaching staff training (CPD etc)	0	0	0
support staff training	0	0	0
Supply costs	1,738	0	1,738
<i>Building costs:</i>			
property insurance	142	0	142
non domestic rates	0	0	0
water & sewerage charges	394	0	394
energy costs	6,477	0	6,477
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	2,412	0	2,412
building repair & maintenance	220	0	220
grounds maintenance	0	0	0
facilities management costs	0	0	0
revenue costs arising from capital	0	0	0
other	0	0	0
<i>School operational costs:</i>			
learning materials	1,431	70	1,361
catering (contract or inhouse)	437	200	238
SQA costs	0	0	0
other school operational costs (e.g. licences)	0	0	0
<i>Transport costs:</i>			
home to school	0	0	0
other pupil transport costs	0	0	0
staff travel	0	0	0
SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL	64,430	270	64,160
<i>Income:</i>			
Sale of meals	0	0	0
Lets	0	0	0
External care provider	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL	0	0	0
TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL	64,430	270	64,160
UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR	64,430	270	64,160

Table 2

Capital costs	School proposed for closure	Receiving school
Capital Life Cycle cost		
Third party contributions to capital costs		

Table 3

Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal	
property insurance	142
non domestic rates	0
water & sewerage charges	394
energy costs	2863
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	0
security costs	0
building repair & maintenance	0
grounds maintenance	0
facilities management costs	0
other	0
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL	3399

Table 4

Non-recurring revenue costs	
none	0
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	0

Table 5

Impact on GAE	
none	0
GAE IMPACT	

Note: As Achfary PS is currently mothballed the costs in column 1 of table 1 above reflect the estimated costs of running the school if it were to reopen. If the school were then to close the additional costs at the receiving school, Kinlochberrie, are shown in column 2. The net savings from the closure can be seen in column 3. As the school is currently mothballed these savings are already being realised.

HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CARE AND LEARNING SERVICE
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared on a proposal:

- To discontinue education provision at Achfary Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Kinlochbervie Primary School.

Details of Consultation To Be Carried Out:

The Proposal will be the subject of statutory consultation from under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

In accordance with statutory requirements, the following will be consulted:

- (i) Parents of pupils in the catchment areas of Achfary Primary School, and parents of children attending Kinlochbervie Primary School and Scourie Primary School, including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (ii) All P4-7 pupils attending Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools.
- (iii) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
- (iv) The Parent Councils of Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools;
- (v) Staff of Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools;
- (vi) Trade union representatives;
- (vii) The community councils for the areas covered by the 3 schools;
- (viii) Education Scotland;
- (ix) Highland Youth Convenor;
- (x) The Duke of Westminster (owner of the Achfary PS building);
- (xi) Care and Learning Alliance (who operate the nurseries at Kinlochbervie and Scourie).

The proposal document will also be advertised in the local press and on the Highland Council website.

A public meeting will be held in Achfary on 26 April 2016. This meeting will be advertised in advance in the local press and on the Highland Council website.

IDENTIFIED IMPACTS

Equality Category	Impact	Evidence
AGE	Neutral.	The proposal relates to 3 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

		<p>to the children in the area concerned.</p> <p>No negative age related effects arise.</p> <p>Age is not a protected characteristic for the purposes of schools provision.</p>
DISABILITY	Neutral, but with some positive benefits.	As there are currently no pupils attending Achfary School, the proposal will not have any adverse effects on disabled children. In principle, the integration of disabled pupils within the larger peer group in the alternative schools promotes integration.
GENDER	Neutral	The proposal will have no effect on gender equality issues.
PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY	Neutral	There would be no direct impact on pregnancy and maternity issues.
GENDER REASSIGNMENT	Neutral	The proposal will have no impact on gender reassignment equality.
MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	Neutral	The proposal will have no impact on equality issues around marriage and civil partnership.
MINORITY LANGUAGES	Positive	There would be no impact on minority languages.
RACE	Neutral	The proposal will have no impact on race equality.
RELIGION OR BELIEF	Neutral	None of the schools affected are denominational. The proposal will have no impact on religious equality.
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Neutral	The proposal will have no impact on equality around sexual orientation.
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN	Neutral.	There would be no direct impacts on Looked After Children.
YOUNG CARERS	Neutral	There would be no impacts on Young Carers.
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN DEPRIVATION	Neutral	The proposal is being advanced on the basis of educational benefit for all children, although not specifically those living in deprivation.

RURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This Rural Impact Assessment has been prepared on a proposal to discontinue education provision at Achfary Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Kinlochbervie Primary School.

Details of Consultation To Be Carried Out:

The Proposal will be the subject of statutory consultation from under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

In accordance with statutory requirements, the following will be consulted:

- (i) Parents of pupils in the catchment area of Achfary Primary School, and parents of pupils attending Kinlochbervie Primary School and Scourie Primary School, including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (ii) All P4-7 pupils attending Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools.
- (iii) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
- (iv) The Parent Councils of Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools.
- (v) Staff of Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools.
- (vi) Trade union representatives;
- (vii) The community councils for the areas covered by the 3 schools;
- (viii) Education Scotland;
- (ix) Highland Youth Convenor.
- (x) The Duke of Westminster (owner of the Achfary PS building).
- (xi) Care and Learning Alliance (who operate the nurseries at Kinlochbervie and Scourie).
- (xii) The Highland Community Planning Partnership

The proposal document will also be advertised in the local press and on the Highland Council website.

A public meeting will be held in Achfary on 26 April 2016. This meeting will be advertised in advance in the local press and on the Highland Council website.

Describe what the change will mean in rural communities

Although the proposal involves a formal closure of service, the service itself has not operated since the summer of 2012. In practical terms the proposal will not change the current position.

The relocation of service (which in practical terms has already taken place) involves moving local school provision from Achfary to Kinlochbervie.

Achfary School was mothballed when the pupil roll fell to 2. The Highland Council believes that educational benefits arise when schools have a sufficient number of

children to allow pupils to work collaboratively and participate in team sports and wider activities; and where there are age appropriate peer groups of a sufficient size to allow a range of interactions and relationships to form and reform.

How will people in rural communities be affected?

Accessibility of service – since the “mothballing” of Achfary Primary School pupils of P1-7 age from the Achfary catchment have been provided with free school transport to Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools. The “mothballing” has meant reduced accessibility of service for parents of pre-school children, who are required to transport their children to Kinlochbervie or Scourie. It is also recognised that pupils from Achfary have less opportunity to walk or cycle to school than when Achfary 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.

Travel time to the service – The maximum additional travel time for school pupils is 21 minutes to Kinlochbervie – 14.9 miles.

Cost to access the service – Compared to when Achfary Primary was still open, parents of children aged 3 and 4 years have increased costs if they wish to access pre-school education.

Fuel poverty – The proposal will not have any impact on fuel poverty.

Economic impact – when the school ceased to operate in 2012, there were some negative impacts in respect of the loss of part-time employment opportunities such as school clerical and cleaning staff.

Partner service delivery – there has been no significant impact on partner service delivery to children from the change. Since the change has in practical terms already been implemented, there is no need to consult other partners.

Other options or adjustments

The above do not apply in the circumstances of a change already implemented for practical purposes.