

Agenda Item	<b>7</b>
Report No	<b>G/7/22</b>

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Gaelic Committee

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022

**Report Title:** Gaelic and Gàidhlig Medium Education Update

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide elected Members with an update on Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) course attainment within Gàidhlig and Gaelic in secondary schools in The Highland Council.
- 1.2 This report also updates Members on developments in the key areas of current and future development which will support the growth of Gaelic Education in Highland Council, encompassing the key priorities of GLP3 and outcomes of the Gaelic Specific Grant.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. note the contents of the paper and recognise the significant improvement trends in attainment and presentation numbers for Gàidhlig and Gaelic in S4, S5 and S6;
  - ii. formally congratulate the young people, their families and the school staff for such significant improvement in Gàidhlig SQA attainment and presentation in the Highlands in August 2022; and
  - iii. note that a report will be brought back to the Gaelic Committee on progress on the 3-18 feasibility study.

### 3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource - The resource implications are met within the current main budget stream which include Gaelic Specific Grant, COVID support fund, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund (Bòrd na Gàidhlig).

- 3.2 Legal - The Highland Council have a requirement to implement its Gaelic Language Plan under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island); Climate Change / Carbon Clever; Risk – there are no implications arising directly from this report.
- 3.4 Gaelic - The report highlights Gaelic Development within The Highland Council area and supports the implementation of the Gaelic Language Plan.

#### **4. Achievement Data – Level 4-6 Gaelic Learners and Gàidhlig**

- 4.1 The SQA is the national accreditation and awarding body for Scotland. The SQA works with learners, schools, colleges and training providers across Scotland, the UK as well as internationally. It provides a framework of qualification and set standards by providing awards and accreditation. An overview of 2022 achievement in A-C passes in both Gaelic and Gàidhlig is as follows, including data on previous presentations.

##### Gaelic Learners

36 young people in S4 achieved passes at National 4 in Gaelic Learners.  
22 young people achieved this in 2021 compared to 12 in 2020 and 9 in 2019.

50 young people achieved passes at National Level 5 in Gaelic Learners.  
50 young people achieved this in 2021 compared to 48 in 2020 and 34 in 2019.

29 young people achieved passes at Higher 6 in Gaelic Learners.  
16 young people achieved this in 2021 compared to 13 in 2020 and 16 in 2019.

##### Gàidhlig

9 young people achieved passes at National 4 in Gàidhlig.  
6 young people achieved this in 2021 compared to 3 in 2020 and 3 in 2019.

44 young people achieved passes at National Level 5 in Gàidhlig.  
53 young people achieved this in 2021 compared to 47 in 2020 and 43 in 2019.

36 young people achieved passes in SCQF Higher in Gàidhlig.  
29 young people achieved this in 2021 compared to 27 in 2020 and 24 in 2019.

- 4.2 An infograph comparing 2019, 2021 and 2022 data is available in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 There is recognition, both locally and nationally, that there is a growing need to build a curriculum for Gàidhlig Medium subject choices in both the BGE phase and Senior Phase of secondary schools. This has been given priority in the [Draft National Plan](#). Education Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Highland Council are engaging in discussions on the support required to develop this area.

This is part of a wider national picture requiring a strategic support structure with a view to strengthening the range of subjects that can be taught in GME for both a broad general education and in the senior phase of secondary school.

- 4.4 The Inverness Royal Academy has increased its Senior Phase offer for 2022/23, introducing progression in their Eachdraidh (History) pathway. Young people can now undertake a Higher at SCQF Level 6 in Eachdraidh.

Portree High School has also increased its Gaelic Medium offer for 2022/23. Following an introduction of Art and Information Technology into S1 and S2 curriculum, the Gaelic department are also working with the Gaelic Team Senior Translator preparing resources to further develop their senior phase offer.

## **5 Update on the creation of Gaelic Medium (GM) catchments**

- 5.1 At the present time, the Council has created Gàidhlig Medium catchment areas for 13 of the 20 primary schools in Highland that offer GME. GM catchments have also been set for the 8 secondary schools associated with the above primaries.

### **5.2 Glenurquhart PS/HS**

At the November 2021 meeting of the Education Committee, Members approved a proposal for consulting on a GM catchment area relating to Glenurquhart PS/HS. The public consultation exercise has now been completed. A paper recommending the creation of the new GM catchment is due to be submitted to the Education Committee on 15 September. The Scheme of Delegation then requires that the decision is ratified at full Council, which is due to meet on 22 September. If agreed, the new catchment will then come into effect.

### **Plockton PS, Lochcarron PS and Plockton High School**

A consultation on creating GM catchment areas for the above schools was approved at Education Committee on 24 February 2022. The public consultation exercise has now been completed. At the time of writing, officials intend to submit a paper recommending the creation of the new GM catchment to the Education Committee on 23 November. The Scheme of Delegation then requires that the decision is ratified at full Council, which is due to meet on 8 December. If agreed, the new catchment areas will then come into effect.

### **5.3 Remining GM catchments**

Officials have held initial discussions with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Comann nam Pàrant, about formal consultations for the remaining four GM primary catchments in Highland that have not yet been created or proposed. These relate to the Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Millbank Primary School, Dingwall Primary School, and Craighill Primary School/new Tain Campus. Further informal consultation, with parents and local Members, is required before a formal proposal can be put to Committee. It is likely that a single Proposal Paper will be put forward for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Millbank Primary School, and Dingwall Primary School, as any changes to the proposed GM catchments for one of these would affect the other. The proposals will also address GM catchments for the associated secondary schools.

## **6 Assessment Response to a Parental Request for Gaelic Medium Education (GMPE) in Highland Council – Applecross Primary School**

- 6.1 Highland Council received a request for an assessment of the need for Gaelic Medium Education in Applecross. The request was received from the lead parent on 23 March 2022. As the Highland Council had received a GMPE request from 8 parents at Applecross Primary School via the lead parent, it was decided to seek in writing the individual intentions of parents to commit to the initial GMPE request at Applecross Primary School, should this commence from August 2022.

Through the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, the Scottish Government has established a process for parents to request an assessment of the need for Gaelic medium primary education (GMPE) from their education authority, the local authority that provides school education in the area where they live.

## 6.2 Initial Assessment

The Highland Council wrote to all parents and staff in Applecross Primary School to indicate the outcomes of the initial assessment on 18th May 2022.

The Highland Council as part of the Initial Assessment has now assessed the need for GMPE in line with Guidance [Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education. \[513.01KB\]](#). The Guidance sets out the steps education authorities must take to assess demand on receipt of a request for GME.

Where any education authority determines that there is a potential need for GMPE in the GMPE assessment area, it has two possible options, it can:

- carry out a full assessment of the need for GMPE in the GMPE assessment area; or
- without carrying out a full assessment, exercise its discretion to take such steps as are necessary to secure the provision of such GMPE as it considers appropriate in the GMPE assessment area.

In response to the process Highland Council concluded that next steps would be taken to “secure provision of GMPE” as the outcome of the Initial Assessment. Thereby exercising its discretion to take such steps as are necessary to secure the provision of such GMPE without carrying out a full assessment.

- 6.3 When an education authority receives a parental request made under the 2016 Act, it must designate the geographical area in relation to which it will undertake its assessment of the need for GMPE referred to as a ‘GMPE assessment area’.

The GMPE assessment area for which this determination was made is the area in covered by the Applecross Primary School catchment. The reasons for this were:

- The Applecross catchment abuts that of only two other schools, Lochcarron PS and Shieldaig PS.
- The Council already offers GME at Lochcarron PS
- Shieldaig PS is part of the Gairloch Associated School Group, whilst Applecross PS is part of the Plockton Associated School Group. Including Shieldaig in the GMPE assessment for Applecross would imply a transfer of children to Plockton HS rather than Gairloch HS, and would reduce community cohesion in Shieldaig
- The travel distance/time from Shieldaig PS to Applecross PS is 22 miles/50 minutes one-way.

- 6.4 The Highland Council can confirm that a post for a Gaelic Medium Primary Teacher for Applecross Primary School was advertised to help establish this new GMPE Provision. The recruitment was unsuccessful and a second attempt to recruit is currently in process. No changes can be made to provision at the school until a teacher has been appointed.

## 7 3-18 Feasibility Study

- 7.1 Bun-Sgoil Ghaidhlig Inbhir Nis (Inverness Gaelic Primary School) has been highly successful and has already been extended twice since it was built in 2007. It was the first purpose built standalone Gaelic Medium Primary School in Scotland; and its numbers have increased to the extent that a feasibility study on a 3-18 GME Campus in Inverness is underway.
- 7.2 Projections and analysis in respect of school rolls and capacity undertaken by Highland Council have indicated significant pressures are building up across the school estate, in terms of both Primary and Secondary provision, and particularly in relation to primary capacity in Inverness.
- 7.3 Whilst there has been an increasing trend in the number of Primary school pupils in GME the same cannot be said for Secondary GME. This accords with the national situation whereby there is a significant drop in the number of pupils progressing from Primary GME to Secondary Senior Phase GME. There are various factors involved: lack of curriculum resources, lack of Gaelic Secondary school teachers, limited number of subjects and a perceived risk on the part of parents on the extent of the curriculum available at this level for their children.

A 3-18 Gaelic school campus and associated local and national measures would aim to address some of these challenges and maintain Highland Council's position as the leading Local Authority in Scotland in the provision of Gaelic Medium education as well as serve as an international exemplar for minority language education.

- 7.4 The Highland Council received £4M in two tranches from the Scottish Government to "provide support for project to deliver new Gaelic School provision in Inverness". This was considered as part of the review of the capital programme in 2018, but no additional capital funding was identified at that time pending further work on assessing options. There remains an aspiration to establish a 3-18 Campus in the future, which may be subject to the Scottish Government providing additional funding.

An internal working group has been established and consultation with parents and other stakeholders will be undertaken. Discussions have taken place previously with UHI and HIE regarding a potential site at the university campus and these matters are still under discussion.

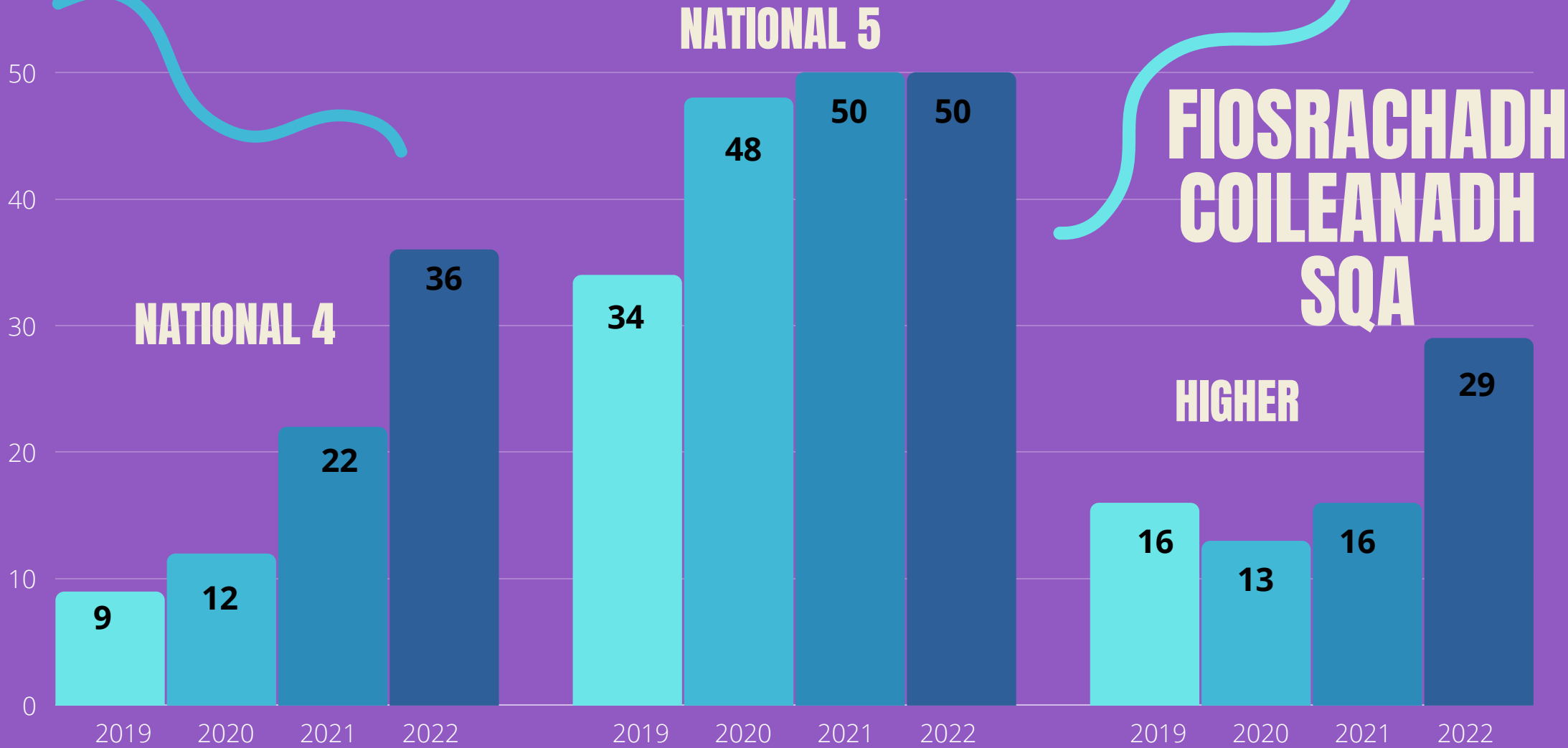
The Highland Council is represented at the Inverness Comann nam Pàrant group by a Community and Learning Development Officer to ensure ongoing engagement with interested stakeholders.

Designation: ECO Performance and Governance

Date:17/08/2022

Author: Lena Walker

LUCHD-IONNSACHAIDH ——— GAELIC LEARNERS



**SQA ACHIEVEMENT DATA**

**GÀIDHLIG**

**FLUENT**

**FIOSRACHADH  
COILEANADH  
SQA**

