

Agenda Item	12.
Report No	EDU/21/22

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Education Committee

Date: 23 November 2022

Report Title: Review of the statutory consultation exercise to establish Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Plockton Primary School and Lochcarron Primary School

Report By: Executive Chief Officer, Education and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following conclusion of the statutory consultation process, this report and accompanying information sets out a recommendation to formally establish Gaelic Medium (GM) catchment areas for Plockton Primary School and Lochcarron Primary School.
- 1.2 The proposal was advanced in line with statutory guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which recommends that local authorities create catchment areas for Gaelic Medium education (GME). Within the Plockton Associated School Group (ASG) Plockton Primary School and Lochcarron Primary School offer GME. It is proposed that the GM catchment for Lochcarron PS is the same as the school's English Medium (EM) catchment. The Applecross PS catchment is excluded due to the travel time to Lochcarron, and the nature of the route. The proposed GM catchment for Plockton PS would encompass the current EM catchments for Plockton PS, Kyle PS, Kyleakin PS, Auchtertyre PS and Loch Duich PS. The Glenelg PS catchment is excluded on the grounds it is beyond reasonable travelling distance. There would also be a presumption that any travel to access GME from other school catchments would be via existing buses travelling to Plockton High School.
- 1.3 The recommended catchments set out at paragraph 1.2 above are the same as those set out in the Council's Proposal Paper, a copy of which is at Appendix A. The proposal also gives formal effect to informal arrangements that have grown up locally over a number of years.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. consider the proposal set out within the Consultation Report (Appendix 1) and associated appendices.

- ii. consider the representations received at the public meeting (Appendix 2, and in writing (Appendices 3i-3xi); and the report from Education Scotland (Appendices 4 and 5).
- iii. agree to recommend to the Council the creation of Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Plockton Primary School and Lochcarron Primary School on the basis set out at Paragraph 1.2 above.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – It is intended to use the existing transport to Plockton High School to meet any additional transport requirements arising from the new GM catchment to Plockton Primary. No additional costs are expected to arise.
- 3.2 Legal - The statutory consultation has been taken forward as per the requirements of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – None
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – None
- 3.5 Risk – None
- 3.6 Gaelic – The Proposal will provide clarity to local parents, in respect of entitlement to GME.

4. Overview

- 4.1 **Appendix 1** is the proposal for decision. The original proposal issued for consultation, and relevant documents for consideration by the Committee, are all also circulated as appendices to this Paper. They provide details of all consultation comments received, the note of the public meeting, the report from Education Scotland, and the Council’s response to comments arising from the consultation.
- 4.2 The proposal was widely circulated to parents, pupils and others. There were 11 written responses received during the consultation period. One of these requested that the response be treated as confidential to Highland councillors and Council officials, so has been circulated separately from the appendices to this Report. Four responses were on behalf of organisations - Comann nam Pàrant, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Applecross Community Council and Dornie and District Community Council. The remaining 7 responses were from local parents or residents. These are addressed in the “Responses” section of **Appendix 1** (pages 4-9) of Appendix 1). A list of those who attended the public meeting can be found at the head of the note of the meeting, at **Appendix 2**.
- 4.3 With respect to the Lochcarron element of the consultation, there was general agreement that the exclusion of Applecross from the GM catchment is inevitable due to the nature of the route between the two communities. The community of Applecross subsequently made a request for GME in Applecross PS, under the terms of the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education. In line with the requirements of the Statutory Guidance, the Council has taken steps to implement provision and recruit to the required post, albeit at this time has not been able to do so.
- 4.4 With respect to the Plockton element of the consultation, there was no disagreement

about the scope of the GM catchment. All of the issues raised in consultation concerned the transport arrangements to GME at Plockton Primary School. Whilst significant to the affected parents, the detailed arrangements for transport within the new GM catchment are an operational issue. Transport contracts are subject to tender and within the ASG the precise configuration of school transport will vary according to the number of pupils travelling and their home addresses. The Council has managed to address some of the concerns raised by parents, although in considering this issue, the Council must take a balance between convenience and cost to the taxpayer. Many of the issues raised are under the constraints of current transport contractual arrangements and other practicalities.

- 4.5 In their report, Education Scotland agreed that the proposal has potential to result in educational benefits. They also identified two issues arising from the consultation that merited further consideration. Again, these are addressed in the “Responses” section of Appendix 1 (pages 6-7) of Appendix 1).

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The legislation requires that any proposal for decision must be published at least 3 weeks in advance of the meeting at which any decision may be made, to allow time for further representations. The proposal was published on 1 November 2022. Any further representations that are received will be tabled for consideration by Members.
- 5.2 As this report relates to a statutory consultation, any decision taken by this Committee will be considered by the full Highland Council before being implemented.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer – Education and Learning

Date: 01 November 2022

Author: Ian Jackson, Education Officer

Appendices: Appendix 1: Report reviewing the Consultation Exercise
Appendix 2: Note of Public Meeting
Appendix 3: List of Responses to Consultation Exercise
Appendix 3i: Response from David Guillermet
Appendix 3ii: Response from Ruth Mockett
Appendix 3iii: Response from Dornie and District CC
Appendix 3iv: Response from Karen MacRae
Appendix 3v: Response from Comann nam Pàrant
Appendix 3vi: Response from Applecross CC
Appendix 3vii: Response from Bòrd na Gàidhlig
Appendix 3viii: Redacted from Website at Author’s Request
Appendix 3ix: Response from Krissy Lothian
Appendix 3x: Response from Sophie MacRae
Appendix 3xi: Response from Ngaire Mackerlich
Appendix 4: Report from Education Scotland (in English)
Appendix 5: Report from Education Scotland (in Gaelic)

- Appendix A: Original Proposal Paper issued for Consultation
- Appendix B: Map accompanying Proposal Paper, with proposed GM catchment area for Plockton PS
- Appendix C: Map accompanying Proposal Paper, with proposed GM catchment area for Lochcarron PS



HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND LEARNING SERVICE

REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREAS FOR PLOCKTON PRIMARY SCHOOL AND LOHCARRON PRIMARY SCHOOL

This report has been prepared following a review of the proposal to establish Gaelic Medium (GM) catchment areas for Plockton Primary School and Lochcarron Primary School.

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period.
- Oral representations made to it (by any persons) at the public meeting held online on 8 December 2021.
- The report from Education Scotland.

This document has been issued by the Highland Council under the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

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Appendices

Appendix 2 - Minute of public meeting held online on 9 March 2022

Appendix 3 - List of Respondents to Statutory Consultation

Appendix 3i-3xi – Copies of individual responses (one redacted at author's request)

Appendix 4 - Report from Education Scotland (English language version)

Appendix 5 - Report from Education Scotland (Gàidhlig language version)

Appendix A - The proposal document

Appendix B - Proposed GM catchment for Plockton Primary School

Appendix C – Proposed GM catchment for Lochcarron Primary School

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Highland Council's Education Committee, at its meeting on 24 February 2022, agreed that a statutory consultation be undertaken on the proposal to establish Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Plockton Primary School and Lochcarron Primary School.
- 1.2 The Proposal Paper suggested that the new GM catchment for Plockton PS will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of Plockton Primary School, Kyle of Lochalsh Primary School, Kyleakin Primary School, Auchtertyre Primary School, and Loch Duich Primary School. Particular arrangements will apply for transport to Plockton from the other catchment areas. The new GM catchment for Lochcarron PS will be identical to the school's English Medium catchment.
- 1.3 The Proposal Paper also suggested formalising the current arrangements relating to Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME) in Plockton High School, under which the catchment area for Plockton High School would apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium education.

1.4 **Appendix A** is the original consultative paper and provides full details of the above proposal. **Appendices B** and **C** are also appendices to the original proposal.

2.0 Consultation process

2.1 The formal consultation period ran from Tuesday 1 March 2022 to Friday 29 April 2022. Written representations on the proposal were sought from interested parties as defined within the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

2.2 In accordance with statutory requirements, the following were consulted:

- (i) Parents of pupils attending Plockton Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (ii) Parents of pupils attending Lochcarron Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (iii) Parents of pupils attending Kyle of Lochalsh Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (iv) Parents of pupils attending Kyleakin Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (v) Parents of pupils attending Auchtertyre Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (vi) Parents of pupils attending Loch Duich Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (vii) Parents of pupils attending Glenelg Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (viii) Parents of pupils attending Applecross Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (ix) The Parent Councils of each of the above schools, and the Parent Council of Plockton High School.
- (x) All staff of the schools listed above.
- (xi) Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.
- (xii) Trade union representatives.
- (xiii) All Community Councils for the areas covered by the Proposal.
- (xiv) Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- (xv) Comann nam Pàrant.
- (xvi) Education Scotland.

2.3 The proposal document was advertised on the Highland Council website.

2.4 A public meeting was held online on 9 March 2022. The meeting was advertised in advance on the Highland Council website and in the *West Highland Free Press*. The note of the meeting is at **Appendix 2**.

2.5 Following receipt of written representations received by Highland Council and consideration of oral representations made at the public meeting, officials reviewed the proposals.

2.6 The outcome of this review process is reflected in the response, conclusion and recommendations outlined below.

3.0 Responses received

3.1 A list of those who responded in writing during the public consultation is at **Appendix 3**. There were 3 written responses received during the consultation period. Copies of these responses can also be found at **Appendices 3i-3xi**. Four responses were submitted on behalf of organisations (Comann nam Pàrant, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Dornie and District Community Council, and Applecross Community Council). The other 7 responses were all from individual parents/local residents. One of these requested that the response be treated as confidential to Highland councillors and Council officials, so has been circulated separately from the appendices to this Report.

4.0 Issues raised during public consultation

4.1 The issues raised in writing during the consultation exercise are summarised below, together with the responses from the Council.

Issue 1

Support the initiative to promote Gaelic Medium Catchment, but it is not in the best interests of the pupils to have such a centralised approach forcing the kids to travel out of school. Due to the geography of the area and the same centralisation to access a town by bad roads, kids already have to travel during the week to practice sport and activities creating tiredness. Add into the week almost an hour of bus travel is unlikely to be in the interest of the Pupils and worst it could strongly limit their motivation to practice Gaelic.

It is clearly in the best interest of the pupils AND Gaelic promotion to decentralise by creating more local "hubs".

It would be good to see a review of GME in Lochalsh as the numbers are increasing at Plockton. After summer there will be 5 children travelling an hour by bus to the school. The nursery is at capacity and parents are having to delay entry or look at alternative education settings.

Travelling times may continue to be a deterrent to families in some parts of the proposed catchment and it may be the case that parents request GMPE provision in another school within the catchment at a future date. We would consider such a request to be reasonable, given the distances and travel times for some families to Plockton Primary, in particular from the Loch Duich catchment.

Transport concerns coupled with the fact the Sgoil Araich is already at capacity with parents having to delay entry and look for alternative nurseries I think highlights a requirement to perhaps have a review of the setting for GME in the area with a view to looking at whether another more

central setting would provide a greater reach, making GM far more accessible. I believe this would be a huge step forward for the future of the Gaelic language in this area.

I would welcome a review of GME provision in Lochalsh. The numbers in Plockton have increased and as of August there will be 5 children travelling approximately 1 hour by bus. The nursery is currently at capacity and parents are having to look at alternative provisions.

I am aware the proposed catchment area is not changing. This is unfortunate that due to travelling times with the school being in Plockton it excludes Glenelg. Otherwise the catchment area is suitable.

I feel the caveat that the transport is to be the same as the high schools is a major issue. This means that the proposed method of transport for the Auchtertyre and Loch Duich catchment areas will result in 4- and 5-year-olds travelling for well over an hour and transferring at the high school with older students having responsibility for them. The current set up is a deterrent to GME and places very young children into potentially dangerous situations. This has probably never been an issue before as uptake from these areas was limited. But also this is probably why uptake was limited as its a massive sacrifice for parent and children to send them so far. Especially on a high school bus.

It would be ideal to see a review of GME in Lochalsh as the numbers are increasing at Plockton. After summer there will be 5 children travelling an hour by bus to the school. With 2 more the year after. The nursery is at capacity and parents are having to delay entry or look at alternative education settings. This is causing unrest in the village as families local to Plockton are having to send their children to Auchtertyre or Kyle as the demand for Sgoil Araich is increasing.

Response 1

Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education has been published by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which lays down a process by which parents can request an assessment of the need for Gaelic medium primary education (GMPE) in their local area. This would apply to any school within the Plockton ASG, and parents from Applecross recently made such a request.

The process is set out on the Highland Council website:

[Making a request for Gaelic Medium Primary Education in your local area | Gaelic medium education | The Highland Council](#)

GME is currently offered at two of the eight primary schools in the ASG, and we have sought to create a third at Applecross, in response to a request from local parents. The Plockton ASG is therefore well-provisioned with GME, relative to most others in Highland. It remains open to parents

though, to request additional provision provided the minimum criteria are met. This issue is discussed further at Response 7.

Issue 2

It is very fair to include Kyleakin within this arrangement. However, consideration needs to be given to the transport situation especially as the role in Plockton Primary increases. My daughter is in Gaelic medium in Plockton Primary and the only reason I considered this is because I have an older daughter at the high school who helps her when necessary with the transport. There have been times when she has needed to get 3 buses to get to school. At one point she was changing buses at a junction with a main road. She now gets a separate bus from her sister although they both leave from the same place and go to Plockton High school (surely this is not cost effective). She leaves our house just after 8 in the morning and isn't home till after 4. Considering the school is only 6 miles from our house this seems an unnecessarily long day.

The transition from one bus to another is a worry for many parents, with quite a few choosing not to put their children on the bus. This therefore leads to a bigger build-up of cars by the school which has little space. As you consider this change in catchment area a change in bus arrangements needs to be part of the discussion. There is definitely a strong argument for a separate bus for Gaelic medium pupils which would guarantee a safer and quicker (and potentially more cost effective) means of transport to school.

We would like to pass on our concerns with the lack of suitable transport and the longer journey time (one hour) from the Dornie & Inverinate area for these young children to the Plockton GM unit. In summary the current arrangement of using the high school bus and secondary minibus at Plockton High is not suitable.

We appreciate the consultation is solely with the catchment area but access & travel to GM is an important factor which must be considered by Highland Council to achieve equality to all.

While I do not disagree with the proposed catchment area, I have concerns about the proposed method of transport for the Auchtertyre and Loch Duich catchment areas. The current set up is a deterrent to GME as the length of the journey is too long by the current transport arrangement, and forces children into uncomfortable and potentially dangerous situations by having to transfer at the high school.

We are aware of the current issues with transport for some pupils currently travelling to GME in Plockton Primary and it will be essential that parental concerns be addressed in order to encourage uptake of GME from all areas of the proposed catchment.

I am in agreement with the proposed catchment area in general, however, I have concerns regarding the current transport arrangements in place. With the current arrangements in place, my child travelling in the High School transport, she would be required to change buses twice, with the first change currently involving a five-minute wait at a bus stop next to a very busy main road, her journey taking just over an hour. Obviously, I am assuming adjustments will be made before she starts.

I do not object to the proposed catchment area for Plockton Primary. However I do hold some concerns regarding the proposed method of travel for young pupils. The current set up utilising high school transport requires pupils to transfer at the high school to complete their journey to the Primary.

This transfer at the high school is a potentially dangerous situation as it involves young children who arrive on several different high school buses transferring unsupervised onto one minibus to complete their journey to the primary school. This step also extends what can already be a long journey. I think this is a barrier to people considering GME.

Response 2

Since these issues were raised the transport contracts have been re-tendered. The primary school age pupils from Auchtertyre, Dornie, Inverinate etc are now able to travel on the bus from Glenelg to Plockton HS, which is the vehicle that continues on to Plockton PS. This has adequately addressed the main concern of the parents of children travelling from the Dornie and Auchtertyre direction.

Journeys to GME from other parts of the ASG will continue to use transport to Plockton HS, with a changeover at Plockton High. The rural nature of the Highlands means that there are large areas where it is only practical, for both financial and logistical reasons, to run one vehicle for the children in an area. From an environmental perspective, not running additional vehicles also keeps the levels of emissions down. This means that Plockton High School and primary school aged children are required to travel on one bus. With the lack of services available in rural areas, together with an increasing reduction in driver availability, this is something that is likely to become more common rather than less so. The practice is common across the Highland Council area.

Transport contracts are subject to tender and within the ASG the precise configuration of school transport will vary according to the number of pupils travelling and their home addresses. The Council normally tries to balance convenience with efficiency,

Issue 3

Comann nam Pàrant welcomes the formalisation of school catchment areas for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) for Plockton and Lochcarron Primary

Schools. The setting of a catchment area will provide clarification for parents on their entitlement to GME, and although this is not the equivalent of having provision in each locality, we hope it will encourage more families to consider GME.

Response 3

The Council notes and welcomes this response.

Issue 4

As more families commit to GME, for pupils to have continuity in Gaelic provision 3-18, the GM on offer in Plockton High School must be developed.

Response 4

Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan outlines strategic priorities for GME Education in line with the National Plan. This includes providing support towards developing the offer of Gaelic Medium Immersion in Secondary Gaelic Medium Education within the scope of the resources available in which to deliver on this priority.

Issue 5

In the proposed Lochcarron catchment we note the exclusion of Applecross and hope that the recent request for GMPE in Applecross will result in delivery of GME in Applecross Primary School.

Response 5

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.

Issue 6

We agree that Lochcarron is too far for Applecross primary children to travel for Gaelic medium (and anyway Applecross would not be in the Lochcarron catchment area).

Response 6

The Council notes and agrees with this comment.

Issue 7

1. The Bòrd in principle agrees with the defining of catchment areas for the Plockton ASG.
2. Bòrd na Gàidhlig does not agree with the statement in 7.10 that existing travel arrangements are acceptable for GME services in the Plockton ASG.
3. Bòrd na Gàidhlig proposes that a full strategic review of GME service provision for the Plockton, Lochcarron, Loch Duich, Glenelg and Applecross areas should now take place with a focus on the following issues:
 - i) Transport arrangements for all GME services which review time for travel, safety issues, weather dependant routes and the complexity of travel (including multiple bus changes).
 - ii) The provision and development of GME across the area, including developing GME provision in Applecross and Glenelg and developing GME Early Years Services. We note GME Early Years provision is now at capacity in Plockton and requires further development (5.5)
 - iii) Continuity of provision across 3-18 should be at the heart of the strategic review. We note the comment in 8.4 regarding transition drop out and recommend that issues relating to transition are addressed quickly.
 - iv) The strategic review engages with parents and the community in devising a plan to incrementally develop GME services across the area and that evidence of success is closely monitored to ensure that the percentage of parents opting for GME increases annually.

Response 7

Response 1 above sets out that it is possible for any parent to request the provision of GME in their local school, provided there is evidence of demand.

Highland Council regularly audits its provision of GME as part of its annual reporting to the Scottish Government about the number of pupils accessing GME. In addition, the staggered exercise creating GM catchment areas across Highland has in each case, resulted in a review of the numbers involved in each ASG, and of the school capacity available.

The Plockton ASG contains 8 primary schools, all of which are small rural schools. The current rolls for each school are as follows.

Applecross PS - 12
 Auchtertyre PS – 48
 Glenelg PS – 11
 Kyle of Lochalsh PS – 31

Kyleakin PS - 33
 Loch Duich PS – 15
 Lochcarron PS - 56
 Plockton PS - 39

Currently therefore, there are a total of 245 primary school pupils in the ASG. Relative to other ASGs in Highland, the Plockton ASG is well-served with GME, as it is offered in two of the eight primary schools. Of the 29 ASGs in Highland, the Portree High School Group has the largest number of primary schools offering GME, but the Plockton ASG is the only other that offers GME in more than one primary school. The area is therefore relatively well-served with GM provision at present, and the small rolls of the local schools tend to militate against further expansion.

At national level, there are ongoing recruitment pressures relating to Gaelic teachers to staff GME, and conducting a review of GM provision within the Plockton ASG would run the risk of engendering expectations that would be difficult for the Authority to meet.

For the above reason, the Council does not, at present, propose to undertake a specific review of the provision of GME within the Plockton ASG.

The percentages of pupils attending GME are reported bi-annually to Scottish Government. Where numbers are seen to be decreasing, the Gaelic Team in the Highland Council, work closely with the school and community to address the reasons for any potential decrease.

The numbers of GME pupils in both Lochcarron and Plockton Primary schools has increased by an overall of 8 pupils in the last session. Applecross Primary School is currently actively recruiting a GME teacher. This evidences that Highland Council is incrementally developing GME across the area.

Issue 8

I disagree with item 11.1 that there is not expected to have any impact on the wider local communities, either at Plockton or Lochcarron. The proposal will have a negative impact on Applecross Community, as access to GME will not be available.

Applecross has a strong Gaelic culture and heritage. Gaelic language was once a key part of our community, however currently there are no people under 30 who speak Gaelic. I believe that without access to GME, the language is at risk of being lost in our community forever.

Response 8

The Council is sympathetic to these concerns, and has sought to recruit a teacher to deliver GME at Applecross PS. See Response 5.

The nature of the journey between Applecross and Lochcarron means it is not practical to include Applecross within the Lochcarron GM catchment.

4.2 The note of the public meeting is at Appendix 2. All of the questions raised concerned the transport issues that were also raised in the written responses.

5.0 Summary of the issues raised by Education Scotland

5.1 In line with legislative requirements, Education Scotland was invited to submit comments on the Council's proposals. An English language copy of the report from Education Scotland is at **Appendix 4**. A Gaelic language copy is at **Appendix 5**.

5.2 In their report, Education Scotland agree that the council's proposal is of educational benefit to children and parents who reside within the catchment areas for Plockton High School. The proposal gives clarity to parents on how to access Gaelic Medium Education. They added that the council needs to specify safe and reasonable travel arrangements in its final report, and that the Council should also share more of its long-term local vision for the curriculum through Gaelic.

5.3 The transport issue raised by Education Scotland is addressed in Section 4 above.

5.4 The Council's long-term vision for Gaelic Education (which includes Gaelic learner as well as Gaelic Medium education) is set out in the Council's Gaelic Language Plan, and includes the following targets:

- That The Highland Council increases the percentage of pupils in GME from potential enrolment figures at key transition points.
- That The Highland Council increases the percentage of pupils undertaking Gaelic through the Primary Language Learning programme, based on the 1+2 Language Learning Approach and subsequently through secondary Gaelic Learner Education across The Highland Council area.
- That The Highland Council creates a Gaelic education transitions strategy for retaining children in 0–3/childcare to nursery, nursery to primary, primary to secondary 1, and the Broad General Education to senior phase.
- That The Highland Council develops a curriculum and workforce plan for the delivery of Gaelic education at all levels (0–3, nursery, primary and secondary) including clear signposting to www.teagasg.com and early year's recruitment via The Highland Council's website.
- That The Highland Council undertakes a Highland-wide survey of existing Gaelic education staff to identify career-long professional learning needs, particularly in relation to Gaelic language skills, and develops a programme of

training and support.

- That The Highland Council ensures that Gaelic education is considered as part of the school estates capital development whenever possible.

7.0 Effects on the Community

7.1 The Proposal will not have any impact on the wider community.

8.0 Effects on School Transport

8.1 Since receiving representations on the subject of school transport, the Council has responded by implementing new arrangements in respect of pupils from the Inverinate, Dornie and Auchtertyre areas, as requested by the parents. In other respects, the proposal does not change the existing arrangements for school transport.

9.0 Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements

9.1 The proposal is not expected to have any impact on staff and school management arrangements.

10.0 Alleged omissions or inaccuracies

10.1 There were no alleged omissions or inaccuracies.

11.0 Overall Review of Consultation Exercise

11.1 With respect to the Lochcarron element of the consultation, there is general agreement that the exclusion of Applecross from the GM catchment is inevitable due to the nature of the route between the two communities. The community of Applecross has made a request for GME in Applecross PS. The Council has sought to deliver this, but at the time of writing had not been able to recruit a member of staff.

11.2 With respect to the Plockton element of the consultation, there was no disagreement about the scope of the GM catchment. All of the issues raised in consultation concerned the transport arrangements to GME at Plockton Primary School. The Council has managed to address some of these concerns, although in considering this issue, the Council must take a balance between convenience and cost to the taxpayer.

11.3 Some of those who responded to the consultation suggested that the Council should review the provision of GME in the Lochalsh area. As set out in Response 1 above, it is open to parents to formally request the provision of GME in their local school, provided there is evidence of demand.

12.0 Legal issues

12.1 Throughout this statutory consultation Highland Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

13.0 Conclusion

- 13.1 The consultation process has complied fully with legislative requirements and has provided an opportunity for all parties to identify key issues of concern. These issues have been fully considered and the Council's response detailed in sections 4 and 6 above.
- 13.2 The Education Scotland Inspector held discussions with relevant consultees and gathered a range of views. Education Scotland also had the opportunity to review in detail the proposal document, all written responses, and the note of the public meeting.
- 13.3 On reviewing all of the submissions, the note of the meeting, and the Education Scotland report; officials conclude that the Proposal to create GM catchment areas for Plockton Primary School and Lochcarron Primary School offers educational benefits and should be implemented.

14.0 Recommendation

- 14.1 It is therefore recommended that Highland Council proceeds with the course of action set out at Paragraph 13.3 above.

Nicky Grant

Executive Chief Officer, Education

xxxxxxxxx 2022

CONSULTATION MEETING – GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREAS FOR PLOCKTON AND LOHCARRON PRIMARY SCHOOLS

HELD ON TEAMS – 9 March 2022 – 6.30pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Panel

Cllr. Ian Cockburn - Chairperson
Ian Jackson, Education Officer, Resources
Don Esson, Area Education Manager

Also Attending

Cllr. Isabelle Campbell
Cllr. Alex MacInnes
Susan Galloway, HT, Plockton HS/Plockton PS
Jennifer Maclean, HT, Kyle and Kyleakin Primaries
Kirsteen Hotchkiss, HT, Lochcarron and Applecross Primaries
Shona Paterson, Community Learning and Development Officer, Highland Council
Jim Whannel, BnaG
Innes MacCuinn, CnaG
Lisa Marie McDonnell
Carrie Gill
Karen Macrae
Krissie Lothian
Ngaire Mackerlich
A representative of Dornie Community Council

Apologies: Lena Walker, Gaelic Development Manager
Alison MacLennan, Head Teacher, Auchtertyre PS
Melanie Sinclair, Depute Head Teacher, Plockton 3-18 cluster.

Chair - Cllr. Ian Cockburn introduced himself as Chair of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Area Committee. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the protocol for Teams meetings.

Cllr. Cockburn - The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the proposal to formally establish Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Plockton Primary School and Lochcarron Primary School, as set out in the recommendation to the Proposal Paper.

The Proposal has been issued as a result of statutory guidance on Gaelic Education, produced by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The Council officials present tonight are Don Esson, Area Education Manager and Ian Jackson, Education Officer, (Resources). Ian Jackson will now describe the consultation process and the detailed reasons for issuing the Proposal.

Ian Jackson

As indicated by the Chairperson, the Council is required to introduce GM catchment areas under the terms of Statutory Guidance issued by BnaG. The setting up of catchment areas involves a statutory consultation, of which this meeting is part. We are currently in the initial phase of that consultation, which is due to end on Friday 29 April, and I would urge anyone who wants to submit views in writing to do so by that date. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to gather views, and we will try to answer any questions that are raised.

The formal process has a number of stages and gives ample opportunity for views to be expressed to the Council before any final decision is made. Once the public consultation ends on 29 April, Education Scotland becomes involved. They will look at the Proposal Paper, the note of the meeting tonight, and any written representations, and will form a view on the educational benefits of the proposal. Education Scotland will contact Plockton and Lochcarron Primary Schools, and they will be keen to hear from any parents who wish to make their views known. The Council has to take account of Education Scotland's view on the educational benefits and respond to any points raised by their report, as well as any representations received as a result of the consultation process. Following the completion of that stage, the Council will prepare a Report reviewing the consultation exercise and present it to the Council's Education Committee. The Review Report will be published at least 3 weeks before it is submitted to Committee, and anyone who responded in writing to the initial consultation will be invited to make "further representations" during those 3 weeks. Any that are made are submitted to the members of the Committee, either in advance or tabled on the day, so that members are fully informed of any issues that may have arisen. Members will also see copies of the original responses and the note of this meeting.

Because of the Statutory Guidance we mentioned earlier, the Council has to set up Gaelic Medium catchments. What is up for debate is its extent of that catchment. The GM catchment we are proposing for Plockton PS covers the catchments of Plockton PS, Kyle PS, Kyleakin PS, Auchtertyre PS and Loch Duich PS. We do not propose to include the Glenelg catchment due to the travel time and distance between Glenelg and Plockton. Up to now there has been a "custom and practice" arrangement in respect of any children who wanted to attend Gaelic Medium education from outwith the Plockton Primary catchment itself, and at the present time we do have children from outwith Plockton attending GME at the school. To an extent therefore, this Proposal is simply formalising arrangements which have already been operating in practice for Plockton PS.

In respect of Lochcarron, we are proposing to set a GM catchment that is the same as Lochcarron's EM catchment. The only other school that might be included is Applecross PS, and again we propose to exclude that catchment due to the distance and travel time between Applecross and Lochcarron.

I'm aware that in the lead up to this meeting there have been some comments about the nature of the transport to the GM provision at Plockton. It won't be long before the Chair opens the meeting for questions and comments, and people are free to make comments about the transport, but I would stress that this consultation is about creating catchment areas, and it's not about the transport arrangements within that catchment. I don't personally deal with the detailed arrangements for transport but these will vary over time, and none of us can say what those arrangements will be like in say 10 years from now. We can however pass on any concerns about transport to our colleagues.

The Chairperson then explained that Mr Esson and Mr Jackson were available to answer questions.

Q1 – I am a parent of a child who attends the GM class at Plockton, as well as a child at Sgoil-araich. Although Ian has said that the consultation is about a defining a catchment and not about transport, it does say in the Proposal Paper that transport will be via the High School bus. Whilst I don't have an issue with defining a catchment area, I have an issue with the clause that's being added in about the transport arrangements. If the consultation is not about transport, then why is that caveat included in the consultation?

A1 – Ian Jackson - That's a fair point actually. What we were trying to do with the Proposal Paper was not mislead parents. The transport is subject to tender and the precise arrangements will vary according to the number of pupils travelling and their home addresses. The Council normally tries to balance convenience with efficiency, and that comment was included in the Proposal Paper to make it clear what parents might expect. However, your point is well made.

Don Esson – I agree with Ian that it's a good point. In a sense we are formalising what's been in place for the local area, and that's the same with the transport, which is already in place. As an authority we have to look at Best Value, as well as our carbon footprint, but we fully appreciate where you are coming from.

Cllr. Campbell commented that officials had provided advice to parents about transport, via email. **Don Esson** added that the Council was happy to address any other queries raised via email.

Q2 – It might be beneficial for me to set out some of the correspondence we've already had with Don and Ian. There's a group of parents that are from the Loch Duich and Auchtertyre catchment areas, who have been highlighting the concerns

that we have about the transport. We don't necessarily have an issue with the catchment area, because we recognise that Plockton has been running for a long time as the GM school for the area, but all of the primary school children have to change buses at the High School, and some of the children have to change buses twice on their route. Also the journey time is over an hour. There's a bit of irony in saying that the distance from Applecross to Lochcarron is deemed too far for children to travel, when it's a similar distance to the journey that some children have to travel from Loch Duich and Auchtertyre, though I do acknowledge that the children from Applecross would have the Bealach to cope with, which is a special circumstance.

We feel that the current transport for Loch Duich and Auchtertyre children is not necessarily safe, and that accidents could happen to children when they change buses. The changeover at the High School is supervised by High School pupils. Are they really equipped to carry out that role? We feel that if the Loch Duich and Auchtertyre children could get onto the minibus that is already travelling down to the primary school then it would save them having to change buses and make their journey shorter. It would be putting the primary school children first, before considering the High School children. At the moment it feels the other way around, and that the primary school children are just an add-on. The whole point of creating the catchment area is to encourage parents to send their children to GME, and I feel the transport is a barrier to that. I had to reduce my work hours to permit me to send my children to GME, and that has had financial implications for us as a family. Not all families would have that option.

The Chair commented that the officials present were not the best people to deal with transport queries, as they were from the Education Service rather than the Transport Department. Different people would have to be at the meeting to resolve transport queries.

He added that the Council was currently looking at all of its transport arrangements and the cost of transport contracts. However the core issue for this meeting was the catchment area, rather than how the transport arrangements worked with that area.

Q3 – The transport arrangements are a big part of the catchment area. Leaving aside the changes etc, the actual distances are a big factor. Plockton is at the extreme end of its own proposed GM catchment, and given that, there have to be suitable arrangements for transport. I'm not necessarily saying the catchment area is too big, but the transport is something that has to be taken into consideration. What happens if an area is outwith the GM catchment? Does that mean those children would have no entitlement to Gaelic medium education?

A3 - Ian Jackson - To answer the last point, the Council's school enrolment process is based on the principle of catchment areas. Every address in Highland is allocated to an English Medium catchment and we are expanding that to define those areas where we can offer Gaelic medium education. Anyone with a GM catchment will

have the right to enrol in GME in the relevant school and to receive school transport, assuming they qualify on distance. If you are outwith a GM catchment you would not have the right to enrol in GME or to receive transport, and would have to put in a placing request to attend GME. Whilst it's not for me to say how parents should respond to the consultation, I would recommend that people think carefully before suggesting that a particular area is taken out of the proposed GM catchment, and that's for the reasons given.

If there are concerns about travel times, one possibility would be for parents to look for some form of new GM provision within the locality. There is a procedure for assessing such requests. If a certain number of parents were to request GME in their local school, Highland Council would have to consider that, and that might be a better solution than simply removing certain areas from the GM catchment.

Going back to the earlier question, we know there is shortly to be a tendering exercise for the school transport routes. The new tenders are due to come into effect next April, but there's a long lead-in process to that. We need to pass on the message that, in respect of the new tenders, parents in the area are very concerned to have an improved arrangement in terms of how their children are transported to Plockton for GME. One of those improvements could be through use of the Glenelg bus.

Q4 – I just want to clarify that I am not advocating reducing the catchment area. I'm not trying to cut myself off from transport! More consideration though should be given to what the transport within the catchment involves for children as young as four.

A4 – Ian Jackson – The purpose of a consultation is to listen to local views. That's why we are here tonight, to hear views, take them away and consider them.

Don Esson - We recognise the huge commitment of the parents to GME, and the huge logistical issues around accessing it. We welcome any suggestions for ways in which we can enhance provision and support GME, including by means of transport.

Q5 - Cllr. Campbell asked whether the focal point for GME had to be in Plockton, or could it be in one of the other schools that was more accessible?

A5 – Ian Jackson – I think Highland Council would be very loath to move the provision from Plockton to any other school, and in fact that would require a statutory consultation as it would represent the closure of the GM department at Plockton Primary. What might be more realistic would be to add another provision within the ASG, on top of Plockton. There might be some downsides to that, in terms of reducing the numbers at each GM provision, but it could potentially be done. I would say that possibly Kyle Primary doesn't have suitable accommodation for expansion into GME, particularly with respect to the nursery. Auchtertyre might possibly be a

better location, but there's a variety of factors we would have to look at, and there's a process for that.

Cllr. Campbell – Additional provision is actually what I meant.

Q6 – I agree that additional GM provision might result in a reduction of pupils at Plockton, but there's also the potential to attract more pupils to an additional provision. After the summer there will be 6 pupils starting GME at Plockton from Loch Duich and Auchtertyre, but of course if they were in new provision they would lose the advantage of learning from the older pupils. In terms of nursery, there is the "issue" of capacity at Plockton Nursery. Myself and other parents have not been able to send our children to sgoil-araich when we wanted to, and I believe there were only 5 spaces available for after this summer. This needs to be looked at if GME in Lochalsh is going to expand.

A6 – Ian Jackson – You raise a number of good points. You're right about the capacity of the nursery at Plockton, and if there is demand from parents, the Council would have to look at additional provision with an open mind.

Q7 – Cllr. Campbell – I have great concerns about the suggestion that the pupils change buses under the supervision of senior pupils. I would like to ask Don and Ian whether they knew about this?

A7 – Don Esson – We have been advised by the Transport Unit that the pupils are supervised when changing buses at Plockton High, as well as at any other changeovers. Also, as mentioned, the retendering process provides an opportunity to re-examine our arrangements.

Q8 – In the past parents have been told that it's not feasible to put on specific buses for GME in this area, but I was just wondering whether this had actually been costed out? Has any specific funding source been investigated that could help out – such as ring-fenced funding for specifically for Gaelic education? I know there are funds available for promoting GME.

A8 – Don Esson – I know that the Transport Unit have looked at the cost implications of putting in dedicated transport, and they are very significant. All LAs face huge funding challenges, but we could investigate the possibility of additional funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig. At the moment I don't know.

Jim Whannel, Director of Education at Bòrd na Gàidhlig, advised that the Bòrd does not have any ability to fund educational provision. However, the LA can apply to the Scottish Government for funding under Gaelic Specific Grant, so that might be an avenue for the LA to consider.

The Chair commented that if we were setting up a Gaelic catchment, we need to sort out the transport for that catchment. A lot of good questions had been raised tonight and Don and Ian will take these away for further consideration.

I would like to thank everything for coming. Can I remind everyone that representations should be sent to Ian Jackson, email Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk (address circulated in the letter), or via the online form, to arrive **no later than the 29^h of April 2022**.

Finally, I am to advise you that the record of the meeting will be made available at least 3 weeks before the meeting of the Education Committee where it is intended that the report of the meeting, plus any submissions/representations and the view of Education Scotland on the proposal, will be considered.

List of Respondents to Statutory Consultation Exercise – Proposal to Create Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Plockton Primary School and Lochcarron Primary School

1. David Guillemet
2. Ruth Mockett
3. Dornie and District Community Council
4. Karen MacRae
5. Comann nam Pàrant
6. Applecross Community Council
7. Bòrd na Gàidhlig
8. Name Redacted at Author's Request
9. Krissy Lothian
10. Sophie MacRae
11. Ngaire Mackerlich

To Ian Jackson:

Sir,

I support the initiative to promote Gaelic Medium Catchment.

But I think it is not in the best interest of the Pupils to have such centralised approach forcing the kids to travel out of School.

Due to the geography of the area and **the same centralisation to access a town by bad roads**, kids already have to travel during the week to practice sport and activities created tiredness due to .

Add in the week almost an hour of bus is unlikely to be in the interest of the Pupils and worst it could strongly limit their motivation to practice Gaelic.

It is clearly in the best interest of the Pupils AND Gaelic promotion to decentralise by creating more local "hubs" or give to the School the means to have additional Catchment within the walls of their own School.

Best regards.

David Guillemet

Father of Theoden Guillemet

Loch Duich Primary School.

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David GUILLEMET
Torlisheach Cottage
Glenshiel
Kyle
IV40 8HU
UK

Name of consultation: Plockton and Lochcarron GM Catchment

Your comments: Regarding the catchment area for Plockton Primary Gaelic medium. I think it is very fair to include Kyleakin within this arrangement. However, consideration needs to be given to the transport situation especially as the role in Plockton Primary increases. My daughter is in Gaelic medium in Plockton Primary and the only reason I considered this is because I have an older daughter at the high school who helps her when necessary with the transport. There have been times when she has needed to get 3 buses to get to school. At one point she was changing buses at a junction with a main road. She now gets a separate bus from her sister although they both leave from the same place and go to Plockton High school (surely this is not cost effective). She leaves our house just after 8 in the morning and isn't home till after 4. Considering the school is only 6 miles from our house this seems an unnecessarily long day.

The transition from one bus to another is a worry for many parents, with quite a few choosing not to put their children on the bus. This therefore leads to a bigger build up of cars by the school which has little space. As you consider this change in catchment area a change in bus arrangements needs to be part of the discussion. There is definitely a strong argument for a separate bus for Gaelic medium pupils which would guarantee a safer and quicker (and potentially more cost effective) means of transport to school.

Thank you

Upload documents or letters :

I am commenting as: Parent

I am commenting on behalf of:

Name:

Title	First name	Last name
Mrs	Ruth	Mockett

Address:

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
IV53 8UP	Taigh Allt An Dochais Braeintra, Strome Ferry, IV53 8UP	Yes

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing on behalf of Dornie & District Community Council to express our views with regard to the Statutory Consultation on Plockton and Lochcarron GM catchments.

Following communication received from members of the public to the cc and echoing the comments made by Mrs Macrae & Mrs Gill at the public meeting, we would like to pass on our concerns with the lack of suitable transport and the longer journey time (one hour) from the Dornie & Inverinate area for these young children to the Plockton GM unit. In summary the current arrangement of using the high school bus and secondary mini bus at Plockton High is not suitable.

We appreciate the consultation is solely with the catchment area but access & travel to GM is an important factor which must be considered by Highland Council to achieve equality to all.

yours faithfully,

Alison Jack

Secretary

Dornie & District Community Council.

Good morning,

In response to the consultation on the Plockton Primary ASG.

While I do not disagree with the proposed catchment area, I have concerns about the proposed method of transport for the Auchtertyre and Loch Duich catchment areas. The current set up is a deterrent to GME as the length of the journey is too long by the current transport arrangement, and forces children into uncomfortable and potentially dangerous situations by having to transfer at the high school.

It would be good to see a review of GME in Lochalsh as the numbers are increasing at Plockton. After summer there will be 5 children travelling an hour by bus to the school. The nursery is at capacity and parents are having to delay entry or look at alternative educational settings.

Regards,

Karen MacRae

Gaelic Medium catchment areas for Plockton and Lochcarron Primary Schools

Comann nam Pàrant welcomes the formalisation of school catchment areas for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) for Plockton and Lochcarron Primary Schools.

The setting of a catchment area will provide clarification for parents on their entitlement to GME, and although this is not the equivalent of having provision in each locality, we hope it will encourage more families to consider GME.

As more families commit to GME, for pupils to have continuity in Gaelic provision 3-18, the GM offer in Plockton High School must be developed.

In the proposed Lochcarron catchment we note the exclusion of Applecross and hope that the recent request for GMPE in Applecross will result in delivery of GME in Applecross Primary school.

We are aware of the current issues with transport for some pupils currently travelling to GME in Plockton Primary and it will be essential that parental concerns be addressed in order to encourage uptake of GME from all areas of the proposed catchment.

However, travelling times may continue to be a deterrent to families in some parts of the proposed catchment and it may be the case that parents request GMPE provision in another school within the catchment at a future date. We would consider such a request to be reasonable, given the distances and travel times for some families to Plockton Primary, in particular from the Loch Duich catchment.

Therefore, although we agree with the setting of the catchment, we welcome the assurance in the introduction to the proposal that, should parents in the catchments of any of the other associated schools submit a request in the future for GME in line with the Education Act (Scotland) 2016, Highland Council will follow the process for requests as set out in Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education.

M. Wentworth
28 Giblean 2022

Name of consultation: Plockton and Lochcarron GM Catchment

Your comments: Applecross Community Council wishes to make the following points regarding the consultation:

- We agree that Lochcarron is too far for Applecross primary children to travel for Gaelic medium (and anyway Applecross would not be in the Lochcarron catchment area).
- We recognise that Gaelic culture is an important part of Applecross culture.
- We as a council would support the majority decision of the Applecross parents whose children would be affected by any decision regarding Gaelic medium in Applecross.

Upload documents or letters :

I am commenting as: Secretary of the community council

I am commenting on behalf of: Community Council

Name of Community Council: Applecross Community Council

Name:

Title	First name	Last name
Mrs	Sarah	Paramor

Address:

postcode_search	Did you find the address on the list above?	Address line 1	Address line 2	Address line 3	Town	Postcode
IV54 8LX	No	9 Culduie	Applecross		Strathcarron	IV54 8LX

Email address: communitycouncilapplecross@gmail.com

<p>Freagairt Bhòrd na Gàidhlig airson Co-chomhairleachadh air Sgìre-sgoile airson Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig xxxxx</p> <p>27mh An Giblean 2022</p>	<p>Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Response on the Highland Council Consultation on GME Catchment Areas within for Plockton Associated School Group.</p> <p>27th April 2022</p>
<p>1. Ro-ràdh</p> <p>Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' cur fàilte air an iomairt gus sgìre-sgoile a chur air bhonn airson Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig ann an sgìre Gleann Urchadain. Tha am Bòrd ag aithneachadh gu bheil Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' gluasad gu sgìrean-sgoile airson FtG a stèidheachadh air feadh sgìre na Comhairle.</p> <p>Tha Am Plana Cànan Nàiseanta Gàidhlig 2018-23 agus an Stiùireadh Reachdail airson Foghlam Gàidhlig mar bhunait airson na freagairt seo. San Stiùireadh Reachdail, far a bheil barrachd mìneachaidh air na ceumannan seo, 's e bunait na cùise gun bu chòir adhartas is fàs a bhith air Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig.</p>	<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>Bòrd na Gàidhlig welcomes in principle the initiative to establish a school catchment area for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) within the Plockton Associated Schools Group. The Bòrd recognises that Highland Council is moving to the establishment of catchment areas where there is existing GME provision in the Council's area.</p> <p>The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education and the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 form the basis for the Bòrd's response to this consultation. The Statutory Guidance, where there is further detail on the steps involved, has as its basis that GME should develop and grow.</p>
<p>2. Fiosrachadh sa Cho-chomhairleachadh</p> <p>Tha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd ag ràdh gu bheil iad airson sgìre-sgoile a stèidheachadh airson nan adhbharan a leanas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tha an Stiùireadh Reachdail a' moladh gun tèid sin a chur air dòigh; • Tha mì-chinnt ann a thaobh sgìrean-sgoile airson FtG a tha a' ciallachadh nach eil pàrantan cinnteach am faigh iad FtG airson an cuid chloinne; agus • Tha cleachdadh aig a' Chomhairle gum bi iad a' libhrigeadh còmhail taobh a-staigh sgìre a tha reusanta agus gu h-àbhaisteach tha seo a' ciallachadh nas lugha de 15 mìltean airson 'turas gu sgoil'. 	<p>2. Consultation Information</p> <p>The Highland Council says they want to establish a catchment area for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Statutory Guidance recommends that one be developed • There is lack of clarity for parents about the entitlement to GME for their children; and • The Council has used the practice of providing transport within a reasonable travelling distance and generally this has been understood to mean within 15 miles of the school.
<p>3. Moladh na Comhairle</p> <p>Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' toirt fa-near do na leanas anns an fhiosrachadh co-chomhairleachaidh a thug Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd seachad:</p> <p>a) Tha FtG na phrìomh eileamaid foghlaim sa Phloc agus ann an Loch Carrann le mu 65% de chloinn anns a' Phloc (5.1)</p>	<p>3. Council Recommendation</p> <p>Bòrd na Gàidhlig notes the following in the Consultation Information provided by Highland Council:</p> <p>A) GME is a crucial delivery method within Plockton and Loch Carron with approximately 65% of children in</p>

<p>agus 30% de chloinn ann an Loch Carrann (6.1) clàraichte ann am FtG.</p> <p>b) Tha am Bòrd a' toirt taic ann am prionnsapal ri bhith a' sònrachadh sgìrean-sgoile airson a h-uile seirbheis FtG agus a' toirt fa-near dhan amas ainmichte ann an Earrann 1.1 gum bu chòir an cruthachadh ann an dòigh a tharraingeas teaghlaichean gu FtG agus aig a bheil ullachaidhean siubhail reusanta.</p> <p>c) Tha rèiteachaidhean siubhail reusanta cuideachd air am mineachadh ann an Earrann 2.2.</p> <p>d) Tha am Bòrd a' cur fàilte chridheil air a' ghealladh a chaidh ainmeachadh gu FtG a leasachadh air feadh Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte a' Phluic agus sgìrean eile (7.6).</p> <p>e) Tha an t-Ùghdarras Ionadail air co-dhùnadh gu bheil a' Chomraich taobh a-muigh na sgìre siubhail air sgàth astair agus amannan siubhail (7.4). Tha teaghlaichean air a' Chomraich air iarrrtas a chur a-steach fon Stiùireadh Reachdail air Foghlam Gàidhlig. Tha am Bòrd a' toirt taic do sholarachadh FtG air a' Chomraich agus tha e a' moladh, mar fhreagairt do na beachdan ann an 7.4, gum freagair Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd gu fàbharach agus gun toir iad seachad Seirbheis FtG Bun-sgoile sa Chomraich bhon Lùnastal 2022.</p> <p>f) Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' toirt fa-near do na beachdan air Loch Dubhthaich agus Gleann Eilg (7.8; 7.5). Ann an Earrann 4 den fhreagairt againn tha sinn a' dèanamh mholaidhean sònraichte a thaobh na slighe air adhart</p>	<p>Plockton (5.1) and 30% of children in Loch Carron (6.1) registered in GME.</p> <p>B) The Bòrd supports in principle the defining of catchment areas for all GME services and notes the stated objective in Section 1.1 that these should be created in a manner that attracts families to GME and involves reasonable travelling arrangements.</p> <p>C) Reasonable travelling arrangements are furthermore highlighted in Section 2.2.</p> <p>D) The Bòrd warmly welcomes the stated commitment to developing GME across the Plockton ASG and other areas (7.6).</p> <p>E) The Local Authority has deemed that Applecross is outwith the scope of the potential catchment due to distance and travelling times (7.4). Families in Applecross have submitted an application for GME primary provision under the Statutory Guidance for Gaelic. The Bòrd supports the provision of GME in Applecross and recommends that in response to the comments in 7.4 Highland Council responds positively and delivers a GME Primary Service in Applecross from August 2022.</p> <p>F) Bòrd na Gàidhlig notes the comments on Loch Duich and Glenelg (7.8 ; 7.5). In Section 4 of our response we make specific recommendations regarding the way forward.</p>
<p>4. Stiùireadh Reachdail airson Foghlam Gàidhlig</p> <p>Tha an Stiùireadh Reachdail airson Foghlam Gàidhlig a' moladh gun tèid sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh airson sgoiltean far a bheil Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig (FtG) ri fhaighinn (Earrann 2.53 is 2.54).</p>	<p>4. Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education</p> <p>The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education recommends that catchment areas are established for schools where Gaelic-medium education (GME) is provided (Section 2.53 & 2.54).</p>



Sgìrean-sgoile FtG is Stiùireadh airson Àiteachan a Ghlèidheadh do Sgoilearan

Bu chòir do dh'ùghdarrasan foghlaim sgìrean-sgoile a stèidheachadh airson FtG, agus dh'fhaodadh gum bu mhiann leotha beachdachadh air an iarrtas a th' ann airson FtG nuair a bhios iad a' stèidheachadh stiùireadh airson nan àiteachan a thèid a ghlèidheadh do sgoilearan ann am FtG.

A rèir 2.54:

Bu chòir do sgìre-sgoile airson sgoil le FtG a bhith na sgìre far a bheil an t-ùghdarras foghlaim den bheachd gu bheil e reusanta do chloinn san sgìre sin, a tha airson a dhol gu FtG, siubhal don sgoil, agus bu chòir coltas a bhith air an sgìre sin gun tèid pàrantan a thàladh gu bhith cur an cuid chloinne gu FtG.

Moladh bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig

1. Tha am Bòrd ann am prionnsabal ag aontachadh ri bhith a' sònrachadh sgìrean-sgoile airson Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte a' Phluic.
2. Chan eil Bòrd na Gàidhlig ag aontachadh ris an aithris ann an 7.10 gu bheil na rèiteachaidhean siubhail a th' ann mar-thà airson seirbheisean FtG ann am Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte a' Phluic iomchaidh.
3. Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' moladh gum bu chòir làn sgrùdadh ro-innleachdail a dhèanamh air solar seirbheis FtG a-nis le fòcas air na cùisean a leanas:

i) Ullachaidhean còmhdhail airson a h-uile seirbheis FtG a bhios a' dèanamh ath-sgrùdadh air ùine siubhail, cùisean sàbhailteachd, slighean air a bheil an aimsir a' toirt buaidh mhòr, agus iom-fhillteachd siubhail (a' gabhail a-steach iomadach atharrachadh eadar busaichean)

ii) Solarachadh is leasachadh FtG air feadh na sgìre, a' gabhail a-steach cruthachadh solar FtG sa Chomraich is Gleann Eilg agus a' leasachadh Seirbheisean Tràth-bhliadhnaichean FtG. Tha sinn a' toirt fa-near gu bheil solar Foghlam Tràth-bhliadhnaichean FtG a-nis làn agus gu bheil feum air barrachd leasachaidh (5.5).

iii) Gum bu chòir leantail solar bho 3-18 a bhith aig cridhe an ath-bhreithneachaidh ro-

GME Catchment Areas and Placing Guidelines

Education authorities should establish catchment areas for GME provision and may wish to consider demand for GME when setting guidelines for placing pupils in GME provision.

2.54 states:

A catchment area of GME provision should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME provision for their children.

Recommendation from Bòrd na Gàidhlig

1. The Bòrd in principle agrees with the defining of catchment areas for the Plockton ASG.
2. Bòrd na Gàidhlig does not agree with the statement in 7.10 that existing travel arrangements are acceptable for GME services in the Plockton ASG.
3. Bòrd na Gàidhlig proposes that a full strategic review of GME service provision for the Plockton, Lochcarron, Loch Duich, Glenelg and Applecross areas should now take place with a focus on the following issues:

i) Transport arrangements for all GME services which review time for travel, safety issues, weather dependant routes and the complexity of travel (including multiple bus changes).

ii) The provision and development of GME across the area, including developing GME provision in Applecross and Glenelg and developing GME Early Years Services. We note GME Early Years provision is now at capacity in Plockton and requires further development (5.5)

iii) Continuity of provision across 3-18 should be at the heart of the strategic review. We note the



innleachdail. Tha sinn a' toirt fa-near dhan bheachd ann an 8.4 a thaobh clann a bhith a' fàgail FtG eadar diofar ìrean agus tha sinn a' moladh gun tèid dèiligeadh gu sgiobalta ri cùisean co-cheangailte ri eadar-ghluasad.

iv) Gum bi an t-ath-sgrùdadh ro-innleachdail a' dol an sàs le pàrantan agus a' choimhearsnachd ann a bhith a' dealbh plana gus seirbheisean FtG a leasachadh mean air mhean air feadh na sgìre agus gum bithear a' cumail sùil gheur air fianais soirbheachais gus dèanamh cinnteach gun àrdaich an àireamh sa cheud de phàrantan a tha a' taghadh FtG gach bliadhna.

comment in 8.4 regarding transition drop out and recommend that issues relating to transition are addressed quickly.

iv) The strategic review engages with parents and the community in devising a plan to incrementally develop GME services across the area and that evidence of success is closely monitored to ensure that the percentage of parents opting for GME increases annually.



Name of consultation: Plockton and Lochcarron GM Catchment

Your comments: I am in agreement with the proposed catchment area in general, however, I have concerns regarding the current transport arrangements in place. My four year old is currently at Sgoil Araich and is due to start P1 in August. With the current arrangements in place, travelling in the High School transport, she would be required to change buses twice, with the first change currently involving a five minute wait at a bus stop next to a very busy main road, her journey taking just over an hour. Obviously I am assuming adjustments will be made before she starts.

These transport concerns coupled with the fact the Sgoil Araich is already at capacity with parents having to delay entry and look for alternative nurseries I think highlights a requirement to perhaps have a review of the setting for GME in the area with a view to looking at whether another more central setting would provide a greater reach, making GM far more accessible. I believe this would be a huge step forward for the future of the Gaelic language in this area.

Upload documents or letters :

I am commenting as: Parent

I am commenting on behalf of:

Name:

Title	First name	Last name
Miss	Krissy	Lothian

Address:

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
IV40 8EA	Old Croft House Camusluinie, Kyle, IV40 8EA	Yes

Name of consultation: Plockton and Lochcarron GM Catchment

Your comments: I do not object to the proposed catchment area for Plockton Primary.

However I do hold some concerns regarding the proposed method of travel for young pupils.

The current set up utilising high school transport requires pupils to transfer at the high school to complete their journey to the Primary.

This transfer at the high school is a potentially dangerous situation as it involves young children who arrive on several different high school buses transferring unsupervised onto one minibus to complete their journey to the primary school. This step also extends what can already be a long journey. I think this is a barrier to people considering GME.

I would welcome a review of GME provision in Lochalsh. The numbers in Plockton have increased and as of August there will be 5 children travelling approximately 1 hour by bus. The nursery is currently at capacity and parents are having to look at alternative provisions.

Upload documents or letters :

I am commenting as: Parent

I am commenting on behalf of: Myself

Name:

Title	First name	Last name
Mrs	Sophie	MacRae

Address:

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
IV40 8HQ	Taigh À Chlachair 5 Inchnacroe, Inverinate, IV40 8HQ	Yes

Name of consultation: Plockton and Lochcarron GM Catchment

Your comments: Hi

Concerning the consultation on the Plockton Primary GM catchment.

I am aware the proposed catchment area is not changing. This is unfortunate that due to travelling times with the school being in Plockton it excludes Glenelg. Otherwise the catchment area is suitable.

I feel the caveat that the transport is to be the same as the high schools is a major issue. This means that the proposed method of transport for the Auchtertyre and Loch Duich catchment areas will result in 4 and 5 year old travelling for well over an hour and transferring at the high school with older students having responsibility for them. The current set up is a deterrent to GME and places very young children into potentially dangerous situations. This has probably never been an issue before as uptake from these areas was limited. But also this is probably why uptake was limited as its a massive sacrifice for parent and children to send them so far. Especially on a high school bus.

It would be ideal to see a review of GME in Lochalsh as the numbers are increasing at Plockton. After summer there will be 5 children travelling an hour by bus to the school. With 2 more the year after. The nursery is at capacity and parents are having to delay entry or look at alternative education settings. This is causing unrest in the village as families local to Plockton are having to send their children to Auchtertyre or Kyle as the demand for Sgoil Araich is increasing.

Thankyou for your time.

Upload documents or letters :

I am commenting as: Parent

I am commenting on behalf of: Myself

Name:

Title	First name	Last name
Mrs	Ngaire	Mackerlich

Address:

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
IV40 8EY	Shingle Bay 11 Upper Ardelve, Ardelve, IV40 8EY	Yes

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The Highland Council to establish a catchment area for Gaelic Medium Education at Lochcarron Primary School, Plockton Primary School and Plockton High School. This has three parts.

- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Plockton Primary School. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium catchments of Plockton Primary School, Kyle of Lochalsh Primary School, Kyleakin Primary School, Auchtertyre Primary School, and Loch Duich Primary School. Particular arrangements will apply for transport to Plockton from the other catchment areas.
- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Lochcarron Primary School, the Gàidhlig Medium catchment to be identical to the school's English Medium catchment.
- To formalise the current arrangements relating to Gàidhlig Medium Education in Plockton High School, under which the catchment area for Plockton High School will apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium Education.

May 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of The Highland Council's proposal to establish a catchment area for Gaelic Medium Education at Lochcarron Primary School, Plockton Primary School and Plockton High School. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the 2010 Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the virtual public meeting held on 9 March 2022 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- discussions with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

2.1 The Highland Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The formal consultation ran from 1 March 2022 to 29 April 2022. The proposal paper was distributed to staff, Parent Councils and parents of pupils attending the schools detailed within the proposal paper. It was also sent to members of the United Kingdom and Scottish Parliaments, trade unions, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comann nam Pàrant and community councils. A notice was placed in local press. Information was available on the council's website and on social media.

2.3 The council hosted a virtual public meeting, at which officers set a rationale for the proposals, discussed high-level educational benefits, and invited attendees' views. Fourteen members of the public attended the virtual public meeting. Attendees raised questions on travel

connected to attending Gaelic Medium Education at Plockton Primary School. They also asked about available nursery placings through the medium of Gaelic. The council received 11 written responses. Most of these raised similar issues to those aired at the public meeting. Bòrd Na Gàidhlig is a statutory consultee for changes to arrangements for Gaelic Medium Education provision. They welcomed that a catchment area was being set for Gaelic Medium Education but identified areas that the council should address, including transport. Comann nam Pàrant welcomed the proposal. They were reassured by the further enactment of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016. Comann nam Pàrant highlighted the importance of continuity in 3-18 learning through the medium of Gaelic. Children were clear of the benefits to them of a catchment area.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The Highland Council continue to implement the statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017. The council's proposed catchment areas for Gaelic Medium Education will overlay the catchment areas of almost all primary schools associated with Plockton High School. This proposal assists the council in clarifying parents' entitlement and admission arrangements to Gaelic Medium Education. It also assists the council with duties to providing best value and statutory planning for Gaelic.

3.2 Almost all consultees support the council in establishing a catchment area for Gaelic Medium Education. They agreed that this would result in educational benefits. There are a few issues arising from the consultation that require further action. Gaelic Medium Education is growing in Plockton High School's associated school group. The council expect further educational benefits from these proposals. In collaboration with parents, the council should continue to plan longer term. They should ensure that parents' voices continue to be heard, with any potential equity and equality barriers to Gaelic Medium Education addressed. These include ensuring that Gaelic Medium Education nursery places are consistently available to support parents into work, study, or training. Children should make quicker progress in developing their fluency in Gaelic by having an option to attend a total immersion nursery. There is also an interest in more learning through Gaelic being provided at the secondary stages. Parents are concerned about the travel time required for relatively short distances to attend Gaelic Medium Education at Plockton Primary School. Further, primary-aged children require to change buses, with waiting time for the next bus. The council in its final report needs to outline how children are kept safe while travelling for Gaelic Medium Education. They should also outline how travel arrangements will not be a barrier to attracting and sustaining growth in Gaelic Medium Education. The proposal paper should clarify whether children attending Gaelic Medium Education at Lochcarron Primary School receive free transport. The council asked for views on whether all of Loch Duich's Primary School catchment area be included in the Gaelic Medium Education catchment area. HM Inspectors' view is that this should be the case, with free transport provided.

3.3 HM Inspectors recognise that the council continue to enact their statutory duties to promote Gaelic. Since commencing this statutory consultation, the council informed HM Inspectors that they are setting up Gaelic Medium Education in Applecross Primary School. In its final report, the council should outline how parents in rural areas, such as Glenelg, will access their right to an assessment of the future need for Gaelic Medium Primary Education. This should include when it may not be possible for parents of five children to be requesting Gaelic Medium Education. This is as specified in legislation.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the council's proposal is of educational benefit to children and parents who reside within the catchment areas for Plockton High School. The proposal gives clarity to parents on how to access Gaelic Medium Education. The council needs to specify safe and

reasonable travel arrangements in its final report. They should also share more of their long-term local vision for the curriculum through Gaelic. This would strengthen the educational benefits from this proposal.

HM Inspectors
May 2022

Achd Sgoiltean (Co-chomhairleachadh) (Alba) 2010

Aithisg le Luchd-sgrudaidh an Rìgh a' dèiligeadh ri taobhan foghlaim den mholadh le Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd gus sgìre-foghlaim Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a stèidheachadh airson Bun-sgoil Loch Carrainn, Bun-sgoil a' Phluic agus Àrd-sgoil a' Phluic. Tha trì earrannan an seo.

- Gus sgìre-foghlaim Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a stèidheachadh airson Bun-sgoil a' Phluic. Gabhaidh an sgìre-foghlaim ùr seo thairis na sgìrean-foghlaim tro mheadhan na Beurla de Bhun-sgoil a' Phluic, Bun-sgoil Chaol Loch Aillse, Bun-sgoil Chaol Àcainn, Bun-sgoil Uachdar Thìre agus Bun-sgoil Loch Dhubhthaich. Bidh ullachaidhean sònraichte ann airson còmhdhail chun a' Phluic bho na sgìrean-foghlaim eile.
- Gus sgìre Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a stèidheachadh airson Bun-sgoil Loch Carrainn, feumaidh an sgìre Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a bhith co-ionann ris an sgìre Foghlam Meadhan Beurla.
- Gus na h-ullachaidhean a tha ann an-dràsta airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig ann an Àrd-sgoil a' Phluic fhoirmealachadh, far am bi an sgìre-foghlaim airson Àrd-sgoil a' Phluic a' buntainn ri Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig agus Beurla.

An Cèitean 2022

1. Ro-ràdh

1.1 Chaidh an aithisg seo bho Fhoghlam Alba ullachadh le Luchd-sgrùdaidh Foghlaim an Rìgh (Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh) ann an co-rèir ri teirmichean [Achd Sgoiltean \(Co-chomhairleachadh\) \(Alba\) 2010](#) (“Achd 2010”). 'S e adhbhar na h-aithisg seo beachdachadh neo-eisimeileach agus neo-phàirteach a libhrigeadh air moladh Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd gus sgìrean-foghlaim a stèidheachadh airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig airson Bun-sgoil Loch Carrainn, Bun-sgoil a' Phluic agus Àrd-sgoil a' Phluic. Tha mion-fhiosrachadh goirid ann an Roinn 2 na h-aithisg air a' phròiseas chonaltraidh. Tha Roinn 3 na h-aithisg a' mineachadh beachdachadh Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh air taobhan foghlaim a' mholaidh, a' gabhail a-steach beachdan cudromach aig luchd-comhairle. Tha Roinn 4 a' toirt geàrr-chunntas air àrd-shealladh Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh air a' mholadh. Nuair a gheibhear an aithisg seo, tha Achd 2010 ag iarraidh air a' chomhairle beachdachadh air agus an uair sin aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannach ullachadh. Bu chòir gum bi an aithisg seo an lùib aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannach na comhairle, còmhla ri mineachadh air ciamar, ann an crìoch a chur air a' mholadh, a rinneadh ath-sgrùdadh air a' chiad mholadh, a' gabhail a-steach geàrr-chunntas air puingean a chaidh a thogail anns a' phròiseas conaltraidh agus freagairt na comhairle riutha. Feumaidh a' chomhairle an aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannach aca fhoillseachadh trì seachdainean mus gabh iad an co-dhùnadh mu dheireadh.

1.2 Bheachdaich Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh air:

- na buaidhean a dh'fhaodadh a bhith aig a' mholadh air clann agus òganaich sna sgoiltean; agus luchd-cleachdaidh sam bith eile; clann a bhios nan sgoilearan taobh a-staigh dà bhliadhna bho chaidh am pàipear molaidh fhoillseachadh; agus clann agus òganaich eile ann an sgìre na comhairle;
- buaidhean sam bith eile a dh'fhaodadh a bhith aig a' mholadh;
- ciamar a tha a' chomhairle an dùil buaidhean dona sam bith a dh'fhaodadh tighinn am bàrr bhon mholadh a lùghdachadh no a sheachnadh; agus
- na buannachdan foghlaim a tha a' chomhairle an dùil a thig bho thoirt gu buil a' mholaidh, agus adhbharan na comhairle airson nam beachdan seo a ruigsinn.

1.3 Ann a bhith ag ullachadh na h-aithisg seo, ghabh Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh na gnìomhachasan seo os làimh:

- làthaireachd aig a' choinneimh phoblaich bhìortail air a chumail air 9 Màrt 2022 a thaobh molaidhean na comhairle;
- beachdachadh air a h-uile sgrìobhainn iomchaidh a chaidh a sholarachadh leis a' chomhairle a thaobh a' mholaidh, gu sònraichte aithris nan sochairean foghlaim agus sgrìobhainnean co-chomhairleachaidh ceangailte, freagairtean sgrìobhte agus labhairteach bho phàrantan is eile; agus
- conaltraidhean le luchd-conaltraidh iomchaidh.

2. Pròiseas Co-chomhairleachaidh

2.1 Ghabh Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd co-chomhairleachadh air a' mholadh/na molaidhean aca os làimh a thaobh [Achd Sgoiltean \(Co-chomhairleachadh\) \(Alba\) 2010](#).

2.2 Ruith an co-chomhairleachadh foirmeil bho 1 Màrt 2022 gu 29 Giblean 2022. Chaidh am pàipear co-chomhairleachaidh a sgaoileadh gu luchd-obrach, Comhairlean Phàrant agus pàrantan sgoilearan a tha a' frithealadh nan sgoiltean a tha air an ainmeachadh sa phàipear molaidh.

Chaidh a chuir cuideachd do bhuill Phàrlamaidean na RA agus na h-Alba, aonaidhean ciùird, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comann nam Pàrant agus comhairlean coimhearsnachd. Chaidh fiosrachadh fhoillseachadh sna pàipearan naidheachd ionadail. Bha fiosrachadh ri fhaotainn air làrach-lìn na comhairle agus air na meadhanan sòisealta.

2.3 Chùm a' chomhairle coinneamh phoblach bhiortail, far an do stèidhich oifigearan feallsanachd airson nam molaidhean, bheachdaich iad air àrd-bhuannachdan foghlaim agus dh'iarr iad beachdan bhon luchd-frithealaidh. Bha ceithir duine deug den phoball an làthair aig a' choinneimh bhiortail phoblach. Thog an fheadhainn a bha an làthair ceistean mu shiubhal co-cheangailte ri bhith a' frithealadh Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig aig Bun-sgoil a' Phluic. Dh'fhaighnich iad cuideachd mu àitichean a bha rim faotainn san sgoil-àraich tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Fhuair a' chomhairle 11 freagairtean ann an sgrìobhadh. Bha a' mhòr-chuid dhiubh sin a' togail chùisean coltach ris an fheadhainn a chaidh a thogail aig a' choinneimh phoblaich. Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig mar cho-chomhairliche reachdail airson atharrachaidhean air na h-ullachaidhean airson solar Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Chuir iad fàilte gun robhar a' suidheachadh sgìre-foghlaim airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig ach chomharraich iad raointean ris am bu chòir dhan chomhairle dèiligeadh, a' gabhail a-steach còmhdhail. Chuir Comann nam Pàrant fàilte air a' mholadh. Bha iad air an ath-mhisneachadh le tuilleadh cur an sàs de dh'Achd an Fhoghlaim (Alba) 2016. Shoilleirich Comann nam Pàrant cho cudromach 's a bha leantainneachd ann an ionnsachadh 3-18 tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Bha clann soilleir mu na buannachdan a bha ann an sgìre-foghlaim dhaibh.

3. Taobhan foghlaim a' mholaidh

3.1 Tha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' leantainn air adhart leis an Stiùireadh Reachdail air Foghlam Gàidhlig, 2017. Bidh na sgìrean-foghlaim a tha a' chomhairle a' moladh airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a' tar-chòmhdach sgìrean-foghlaim cha mhòr a h-uile bun-sgoil a tha co-cheangailte ri Àrd-sgoil a' Phluic. Tha am moladh seo a' cuideachadh na comhairle ann a bhith a' soilleireachadh còir phàrantan agus ullachaidhean inntigidh gu Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Tha e cuideachd a' toirt taic dhan chomhairle le dleastanasan a thaobh a bhith a' tabhann an luach as fheàrr agus planadh reachdail airson na Gàidhlig.

3.2 Tha cha mhòr a h-uile co-chomhairleach a' toirt taic dhan chomhairle a thaobh a bhith a' stèidheachadh sgìre-foghlaim airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Dh'aontaich iad gun tigeadh buannachdan foghlaim mar thoradh air seo. Tha dhà no trì chùisean a dh'èirich bhon cho-chomhairleachadh a tha a' cur feum air tuilleadh obrach. Tha Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig a' meudachadh sa bhuidheann-sgoile a tha co-cheangailte ri Àrd-sgoil a' Phluic. Tha a' chomhairle a' sùileachadh gun tig tuilleadh buannachdan foghlaim às na molaidhean sin. Ann an co-obrachadh le pàrantan, bu chòir dhan chomhairle cumail a' dol le bhith a' dèanamh planadh airson ùine nas fhaide. Bu chòir dhaibh dèanamh cinnteach gun leanar ri guthan phàrantan a chluinntinn, agus gu bheil a' dèiligeadh ri bacaidhean ceartais agus co-ionannachd a dh'fhaodadh a bhith ann a thaobh Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig. Tha iad sin a' gabhail a-steach a bhith a' dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil àitichean sgoil-àraich Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig ann gu cunbhalach gus taic a thoirt do phàrantan a thaobh obair, fèin-ionnsachadh, no trèanadh. Bu chòir dhan chloinn adhartas nas luaithe a dhèanamh ann a bhith a' leasachadh am fileantas sa Ghàidhlig le roghainn a bhith aca a dhol gu sgoil-àraich làn-bhogadh. Tha ùidh ann cuideachd ann a bhith ag ionnsachadh barrachd tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig aig ìrean na h-àrd-sgoile. Tha uallach air pàrantan mun tìde a bheir e ann a bhith a' siubhal astaran nach eil ro fhada airson a bhith a' frithealadh Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig aig Bun-sgoil a' Phluic. A thuilleadh air sin, feumaidh clann aig aois bun-sgoil am bus atharrachadh, agus bidh aca ri feitheamh greis airson an ath bhus. Feumaidh a' chomhairle san aithisg dheireannach aca mìneachadh ciamar a tha clann gu bhith air an cumail sàbhailte nuair a bhios iad a' siubhal gu Foghlam Meadhan na Gàidhlig. Bu chòir dhaibh cuideachd mìneachadh mar nach bi na h-ullachaidhean siubhail nam bacadh ann a bhith a' tàladh agus a' cumail suas fàs

ann am Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Bu chòir dhan phàipear co-chomhairleachaidh soilleireachadh am faigh a' chlann a bhios a' frithealadh Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig aig Bun-sgoil Loch Carrainn còmhaidh an-asgaidh. Dh'iarr a' chomhairle beachdan air am bu chòir dhan sgìre-foghlaim Bun-sgoil Loch Dhubhthaich air fad a bhith air a ghabhail a-steach anns an sgìre-foghlaim airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Is e beachd Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh gum bu chòir, le còmhaidh an-asgaidh air a thoirt seachad.

3.3 Tha Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ag aithneachadh gu bheil a' chomhairle a' leantainn air adhart ag achdachadh an dleastanasan reachdail a thaobh adhartachadh na Gàidhlig. On thòisich an co-chomhairleachadh reachdail seo, dh'innis a' chomhairle do Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh gu bheil iad a' cur air chois Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig ann am Bun-sgoil na Comraich. San aithisg dheireannaich aca, bu chòir don chomhairle cur an cèill mar a gheibh pàrantan ann an sgìrean dùthchail, leithid Gleann Eilg, cothrom air a' chòir aca measadh a dhèanamh air an fheum san àm ri teachd air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig sa Bhun-sgoil. Bu chòir dhan seo a bhith a' gabhail a-steach nuair nach biodh e comasach do phàrantan còignear chloinne a bhith a' dèanamh iartas airson Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Tha seo a rèir is mar a tha e san reachdas.

4. Geàrr-chunntas

Tha Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ag aontachadh gu bheil moladh na comhairle na bhuannachd foghlaim do chlann is pàrantan a tha a' còmhaidh anns na sgìrean-foghlaim airson Àrd-sgoil a' Phluic. Tha am moladh a' soilleireachadh do phàrantan mar a gheibh iad cothrom air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Feumaidh a' chomhairle ullachaidhean siubhail sàbhailte agus reusanta a chomharrachadh san aithisg dheireannaich aca. Bu chòir dhaibh cuideachd barrachd den lèirsinn ionadail fad-ùine aca a cho-roinn airson a' churraicealam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Neartaicheadh seo na buannachdan foghlaim a thigeadh às a' mholadh seo.

Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh An Cèitean 2022

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

The proposal is to establish Gaelic Medium catchment areas for schools within the Plockton Associated School Group

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

THIS IS A PROPOSAL PAPER PREPARED IN TERMS OF THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY'S AGREED PROCEDURE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

INTRODUCTION

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

- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium (GM) catchment area for Plockton Primary School. The new catchment will overlay the current English Medium (EM) catchments of Plockton Primary School, Kyle of Lochalsh Primary School, Kyleakin Primary School, Auchtertyre Primary School, and Loch Duich Primary School. Particular arrangements will apply for transport to Plockton from the other catchment areas.
- To establish a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area for Lochcarron Primary School, the GM catchment to be identical to the school's English Medium catchment.
- To formalise the current arrangements relating to Gàidhlig Medium Education (GME) in Plockton High School, under which the catchment area for Plockton High School will apply to both Gàidhlig Medium and English Medium education.

If implemented as drafted, the two proposed GM catchments will include 6 of the 8 primary school catchments within the Plockton ASG. The remaining 2 primary schools are Glenelg Primary and Applecross Primary. The distances and travel times between Plockton and Glenelg, and between Applecross and Lochcarron, make it impractical to include them within the suggested GM catchments.

This Proposal was originally issued for public consultation in March 2020, but the consultation exercise was abandoned after the national lockdown was imposed. The Council is now re-issuing the Proposal.

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

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

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

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

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Proposal Paper Published

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

- Plockton Primary School
- Lochcarron Primary School
- Kyle of Lochalsh Primary School
- Kyleakin Primary School
- Auchtertyre Primary School
- Loch Duich Primary School
- Glenelg Primary School
- Applecross Primary School
- Plockton Library
- Lochcarron Library
- Skye and Lochalsh Mobile Library

and published on the Highland Council website:

www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

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

Business Support Team

Care and Learning Office

Camaghael Hostel

Fort William

PH33 7NE

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

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, audio formats, or suitable language, please also contact the Business Support Team, Camaghael Hostel, Fort William, PH33 7NE

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

Formal notice of the Proposal and relevant information will be given and be made available, free of charge, to the consultees listed as follows:

- (i) Parents of pupils attending Plockton Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (ii) Parents of pupils attending Lochcarron Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (iii) Parents of pupils attending Kyle of Lochalsh Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (iv) Parents of pupils attending Kyleakin Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (v) Parents of pupils attending Auchtertyre Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (vi) Parents of pupils attending Loch Duich Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (vii) Parents of pupils attending Glenelg Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (viii) Parents of pupils attending Applecross Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (ix) The Parent Councils of each of the above schools, and the Parent Council of Plockton High School.
- (x) All staff of the schools listed above.
- (xi) Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.
- (xii) Trade union representatives.
- (xiii) All Community Councils for the areas covered by the Proposal.
- (xiv) Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- (xv) Comann nam Pàrant.
- (xvi) Education Scotland.

Advertisement in Local Media

A notice announcing the public meetings will be placed in the *West Highland Free Press* and on the Highland Council's website and Facebook page.

Consultation Period

The consultation for this Proposal will run from 1 March 2022 and will end on 29 April 2022. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

Public Meetings

A public meeting will be held, the detail of which is set out below:

9 March 2022 at 6.30pm, location to be advised.

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. Electronic invitations will be sent to all statutory consultees and the link for the meeting will be made available to others.

The meeting will provide opportunities for the public to hear more about the proposal; to ask questions about the proposal; and to have the views of all stakeholders recorded so that they can be taken into account. A note will be taken of questions asked and views expressed. The note will be published on the Council website. The meeting may be recorded.

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

Responses to the Proposals

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

Area Care and Learning Office

Camaghael Hostel

Fort William

PH33 7NE

Email: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

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

www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

When responding, you are invited to state your relationship with the school – for example, “pupil”, “parent”, “carer”, “relative”, “former pupil”, “teacher in school”, “member of the community” etc. However it is not compulsory to do so.

Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically should know that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be made publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: "I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Councillors and Council Officers of Highland Council". Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available. All written responses must be received by the last day of the consultation period, 29 April 2022 at 5.00pm.

Involvement of Education Scotland

When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland by the Council. Education Scotland will also be sent, by 9 May 2022, a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period. Education Scotland will also receive summary notes of the public meetings that will be held and so far as is practicable a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 27 May 2022. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may visit the affected schools and make such enquiries of people there as they consider appropriate.

Review of Consultation Exercise

Highland Council will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland Report, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made at the public meetings. It will then prepare a Consultation Report. This Report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be sent to anyone who submitted a written representation during consultation. It will be available on the Council website as well as at the affected school and local library, free of charge. The Report will include a summary of the written and oral representations made during consultation and a copy of the Education Scotland Report, together with the Council's considered response to the issues raised. The Report will include details of details of any alleged inaccuracies and/or omissions and how these have been handled. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to being submitted to the Council's Education Committee, who will make a recommendation to the full Highland Council.

In publishing the report the Council will invite any person or party to make further representations to the Committee prior to its meeting. A notice to this effect will also be published on the Highland Council website.

The Council intends to publish its Report in October 2022 prior to submission to the Council's Education Committee in December 2022. However, this timescale may change depending on the nature of issues raised during consultation, and the need to give full consideration to those issues. In the latter event, the Report may not be submitted until a later Committee meeting.

Any proposal approved by the Education Committee would require to be confirmed by a subsequent meeting of the full Highland Council.

Note on Corrections

If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this Proposal Paper, either by the Council or any other person, the Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or, if the paper contains an inaccuracy. The Council will then take appropriate action, which may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of the Proposal or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period, if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and HMI will be advised.

PROPOSAL

Legislative Background

- 1.1 The proposal is advanced within the context of all applicable legislation. Amongst other duties, education authorities are required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (S.1 of the Education Act 1980); to publish or otherwise make available information as to their arrangements for the placing of children in schools under their management (S.28 of the 1980 Act) and to promote and support Gaelic Medium education and learning (S.15 of The Education (Scotland) Act 2016. Statutory Guidance issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig early in 2017 specifies that local authorities should establish catchment areas for Gàidhlig Medium education, and the Council must comply with this Guidance. A catchment area for GME provision should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school, and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME provision for their children. Catchment areas for GME will normally overlay a number of school catchment areas.
- 1.2 In common with all public bodies in Scotland, the Highland Council also has a duty to provide Best Value. This includes making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost; and, in making those arrangements and securing that balance, to have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities requirements and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Reason for the Proposal

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

generally interpreted as meaning up to 15 miles, but there are numerous variations.

Informal Consultation

- 3.1 Informal discussions were held with local elected councillors at the time of the original consultation in 2020, as well as with the Head Teachers of each of the primary schools in the area, and the Head Teacher of Plockton High School. Contact was also made with the Parent Councils of each of the above schools, and with all the local Community Councils. An explanation of the Proposal was provided and comments were invited. Only Loch Duich Community Council responded to the informal approach made in 2020. They expressed concern that Loch Duich Primary School's catchment area extends beyond Inverinate village to Cluanie and Letterfearn. If young children from 5 years of age were attending and had to travel on the secondary school bus, this would involve lengthy journeys of more than 1 hour at both ends of the day.
- 3.2 There is no compulsion on pupils from any other catchment to attend GME. The Proposal merely seeks to provide the opportunity to do so.
- 3.3 Local Members, Head Teachers within the ASG, and local community councils have all been given advance notice of the Council's intention to re-issue the Proposal for consultation.

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

- 4.1 There are 8 primary schools within the ASG. Two of these, Plockton Primary and Lochcarron Primary offer GME at the primary stage. Plockton High also offers GME.

Plockton Primary School

- 5.1 Plockton Primary is located within the village of the same name. Presently the school has 23 pupils across P1-7 in Gàidhlig Medium and 13 pupils across P1-7 in English Medium. There are also 11 children in Sgoil-àraich (Gàidhlig Medium pre-school nursery).
- 5.2 The 23 GM pupils in P1-7 at present have home addresses from within the Plockton Primary School catchment, the Kyle Primary School catchment, the Auchtertyre PS catchment the Kyleakin PS catchment.
- 5.3 The pupils in the GM nursery at Plockton Primary from the Plockton PS catchment, the Auchtertyre PS catchment, the Kyle PS catchment and the Loch Duich PS catchment.

- 5.4 The school is located a few hundred yards from Plockton High School, on the main road through the village of Plockton. It was opened as an independent unit in 1975 in refurbished old school buildings. The main building is a single-storey listed building and comprises one classroom, currently being used by an English medium class, a resource room, nursery, staffroom, office, and boys' and girls' toilets. The Gaelic medium class is situated in a separate building, the other half of which is for the P3-7 EM class at present. There is a separate room available used as a dining and assembly hall. The main building of the school was refurbished in 2015 and has new windows and heating, toilets and décor. The playground comprises an asphalted vehicle-free area which surrounds the school buildings and a school garden area which was developed by the pupils, staff and parents of the school. The High School playing field and games hall facilities are also used at various times throughout the year.
- 5.5 Currently the GM nursery at Plockton is operating at capacity, but we do not anticipate that the creation of the formal catchment will affect this, as the catchment merely formalises the existing practice under which children from the surrounding area are admitted to the GM provision at Plockton.

Lohcarron Primary School

- 6.1 **Lohcarron Primary School** serves the village of Lochcarron and the surrounding rural area. The traditional building is situated on the shores of Lochcarron on the main road through the village. The original school, built in 1876, was closed and demolished and replaced by the present building in 1937. The accommodation consists of the main building and two prefabricated units. The main building has two teaching rooms and a dining room which doubles up as a general purpose room. The kitchen and toilets are also situated in the main building. The tarred playground area and grass playing field offer facilities for sports and games, and there is an adventure playground to the side of the main building.
- 6.2 Presently the school has 38 pupils across P1-7 in English Medium classes and 17 pupils in the Gàidhlig Medium class. At the time of writing there are also 9 children in the English medium nursery. All 17 pupils accessing GME are from within the Lochcarron catchment

Proposed School Catchments for GME

- 7.1 Approximate travel distances and times to Plockton Primary from the other schools are set out below:
- Auchtertyre Primary – Plockton Primary – 7.5 miles, 16 minutes travel time.

Glenelg Primary – Plockton Primary – 26.8 miles, 49 minutes travel time. The road from Glenelg to Plockton passes over the Bealach Ratagain, a steeply rising road that reaches a height of around 1150’.

Kyle of Lochalsh Primary – Plockton Primary – 5.5 miles, 13 minutes travel time.

Kyleakin Primary – Plockton Primary – 7.9 miles, 19 minutes travel time.

Loch Duich Primary – Plockton Primary – 15.3 miles, 26 minutes travel time.

- 7.2 The approximate distance and travel time from Applecross Primary to Lochcarron Primary is 21.2 miles/56 minutes. The Applecross to Lochcarron road is over the Bealach na Bà, which rises steeply to 2054’ and is often adversely affected by winter weather.
- 7.3 The statutory guidance specifies that a catchment area for GME provision should be an area in which the education authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME provision to travel to school, and should have the potential to attract parents to choose GME provision for their children.
- 7.4 The distance involved in travelling from Applecross to Lochcarron, and more importantly the nature of the route, means that the Applecross catchment would not be included within the Lochcarron GM catchment.
- 7.5 Similarly the distance involved in travelling from Glenelg to Plockton, and again the nature of the route, means that the Glenelg catchment would not be included within the Plockton GM catchment.
- 7.6 The Council is sympathetic to the idea that Gàidhlig Medium Education should be accessible as many pupils Highland as possible, provided it is practical and reasonable to provide access.
- 7.7 The Council therefore proposes that the GM catchment for Plockton Primary will overlay the English Medium catchments of Plockton Primary, Kyle Primary, Kyleakin Primary, Auchtertyre Primary, and Loch Duich Primary, but with restrictions on transport as set out below. Meanwhile the GM catchment for Lochcarron Primary will be the same as the English Medium catchment for that school
- 7.8 It should be noted though that the Loch Duich PS catchment covers a wide area, and travel from the furthest end of the catchment will be considerably longer than the distances and times given above. The Council would welcome views on whether the whole of the Loch Duich catchment should be included in the proposed GM catchment.
- 7.9 In considering the principles of Best Value – see paragraph 1.2 above - Highland Council has noted that to provide dedicated transport from the areas

outwith Plockton, but within the Plockton GM catchment, could result in an unacceptably high level of additional cost to the taxpayer.

- 7.10 The Council therefore proposes that school transport to GME at Plockton Primary will be on the basis of utilising the existing transport for Plockton High School, wherever it is practicable to do so. Dedicated transport by taxi or minibus will not normally be provided.
- 7.11 The map at **Appendix B** shows the proposed GM catchment for Plockton Primary School (outlined in blue), with the existing EM catchments outlined in red. **Appendix C** shows the proposed GM catchment for Lochcarron PS, (identical to the current EM catchment).
- 7.12 No changes are proposed for these catchments in respect of English Medium education.
- 7.13 For the purposes of GME, the Plockton High School catchment will be the same as the school's existing catchment.

Educational Benefits

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

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

Effects on School Transport

- 9.1 There will no impact on transport arrangements to Lochcarron Primary.
- 9.2 Within the Plockton Primary School catchment, pupils attending GME are offered school transport on the same basis as children attending English Medium education. Paragraph 7.10 above explains why no other effects on school transport are anticipated.

Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements

- 10.1 At the present time there are 22 children attending GME at Plockton Primary and 17 at Lochcarron Primary. Currently Highland Council provides 2 teachers where a primary school has 20-47 pupils and 1.5 teachers where a primary school has 16-19 pupils. It is possible therefore that the numbers

attending GME at Lochcarron will increase to a point that requires more staffing in future.

Effect on the Local Communities

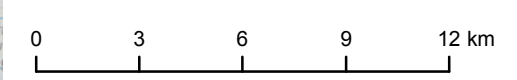
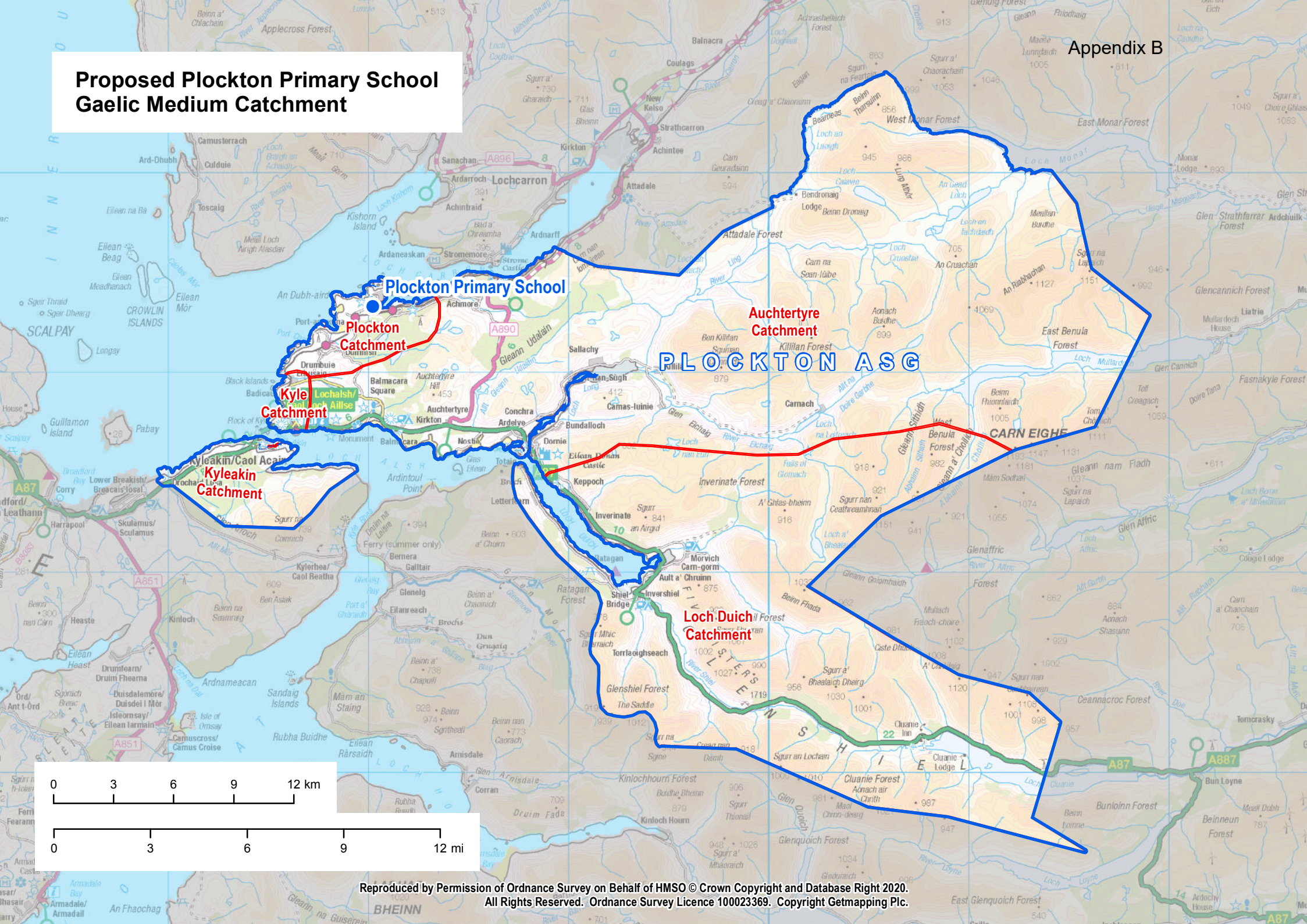
- 11.1 The proposal is not expected to have any impact on the wider local communities, either at Plockton or Lochcarron.

Recommendation

- 12.1 Highland Council recommends the adoption of Gàidhlig Medium catchment areas for Plockton Primary School and Lochcarron Primary School, along the lines set out in this paper.
- 12.2 This consultation paper is issued in terms of the authority's procedures to meet the relevant statutory requirements. Following the consultation period, a report and submissions received will be presented to the Education Committee of the Highland Council.

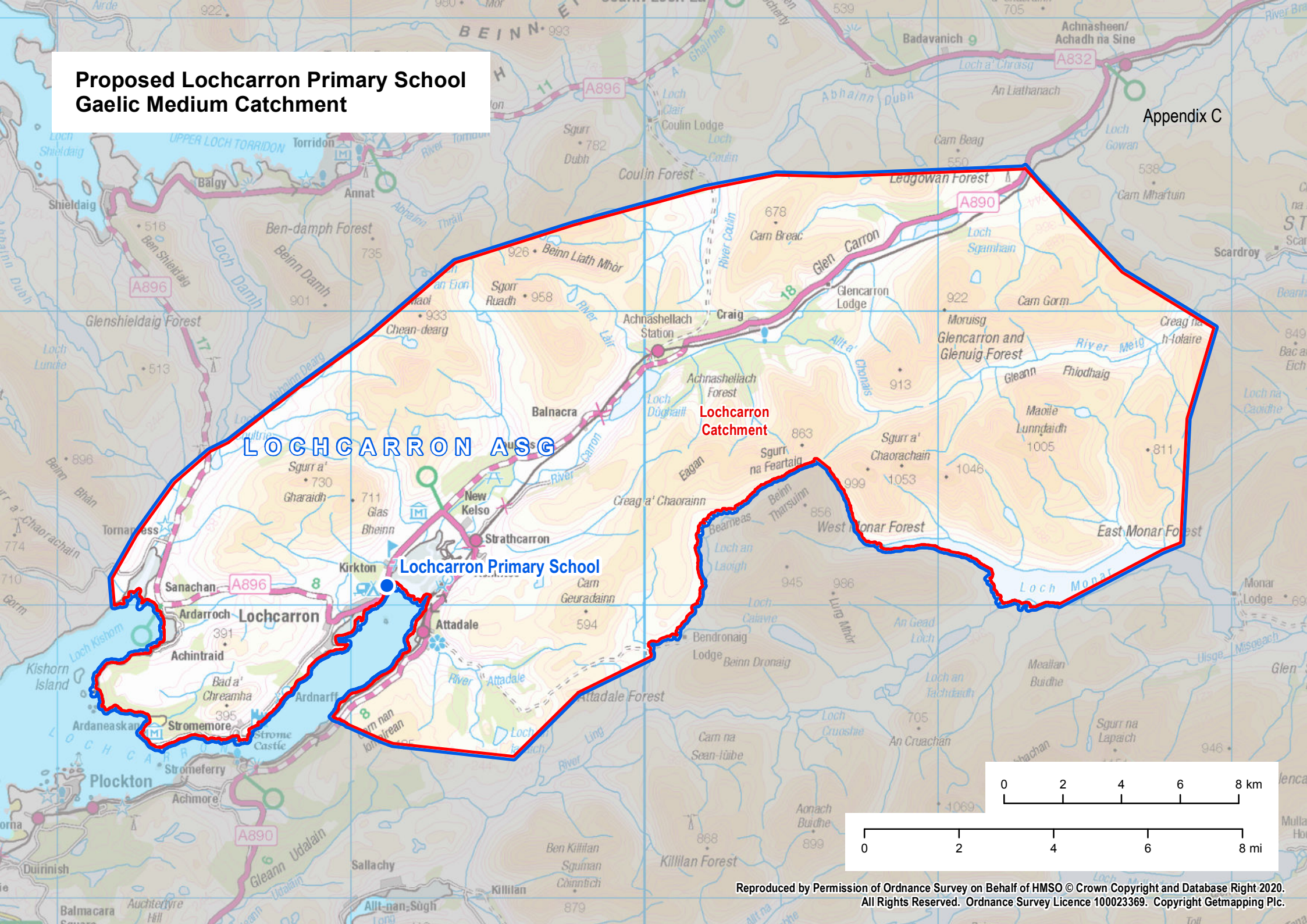
END OF PROPOSAL PAPER

Proposed Plockton Primary School Gaelic Medium Catchment



Proposed Lochcarron Primary School Gaelic Medium Catchment

Appendix C



LOHCARRON ASG

Lohcarron
Catchment

Lohcarron Primary School

