

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	11.
Report No	EDU/20/23

Committee:	Education
Date:	7 September 2023
Report Title:	Review of Statutory Consultation Exercise – Closure of Struan Primary School
Report By:	Executive Chief Officer, Education & Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following conclusion of the statutory consultation process, this report seeks Members' agreement to a recommendation to discontinue the provision of education at Struan Primary School, which has been "mothballed" since April 2022.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Recommend that the Highland Council discontinues education at Struan Primary School, transferring its catchment to that of Dunvegan Primary School. Struan Primary has not been operational since 2022, and a closure decision would formalise the current operational situation.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – These are set out at **Appendix F** of the original proposal issued for consultation.
- 3.2 Legal – The proposed closure has been taken forward under the provisions of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 1980
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) - The Equalities and Rural impacts were assessed at Sections 17 and 18 of the original Proposal (**Appendix A**). An Island Community Impact has been added at Response 9 of **Appendix 1** (pages 9-10 of that Appendix). The Proposal is not anticipated as having any effect on poverty issues. The Proposal Paper at **Appendix A** also assessed the community implications – See Section 15.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever - The attached report details the implications in relation to school buildings and school transport. It is estimated that in terms of the Council's carbon emissions, the proposal will see a net reduction.

- 3.5 Risk - The main risks associated with the recommendation relate to the potential for call-in by Scottish Ministers. Officials have sought to mitigate the risk through review and evaluation to ensure that procedurally the requirements of the Act and statutory consultation process have been met.
- 3.6 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people) - None
- 3.7 Gaelic - The proposed closure would have no effect on Gaelic Medium Education (GME) which was not offered at Struan Primary School prior to the school being mothballed. GME is offered at Dunvegan Primary School. Pupils from the Struan Primary School catchment were able to opt for GME at Dunvegan Primary School prior to Struan being mothballed.

4. Overview

- 4.1 **Appendix 1** is the proposal for decision. The original proposal 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 views of pupils attending Dunvegan Primary School (including the Struan pupils) can be viewed at **Appendix 3iv**. There were 47 responses from pupils. Three pupils thought the Council should re-open Struan Primary School, whilst 44 thought the school should be permanently closed. None of the pupils supported continued mothballing.
- 4.3 There were 3 written responses received from other stakeholders. None of these objected to the closure of the school, but rather raised issues about the proposal to re-assign the Struan catchment to that of Dunvegan Primary School. Two of the responses suggested re-assigning the Struan catchment to that of Carbost Primary School, and the other suggested re-assigning it to that of Portree Primary School or Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort-Rìgh, depending on whether children were accessing English Medium or Gaelic Medium Education.
- 4.4 The public meeting was well-attended, given the small size of the local community. Although sadness was expressed over the demise of the school, there was a general feeling that closure was inevitable due to the lack of the children in the area. The bulk of the questions raised concerned the future of the building following confirmation of the school closure, even though officials made it clear that closure could not be assumed.
- 4.5 In their report, Education Scotland agree that The Highland Council's proposal will result in educational benefits for the children of Struan Primary School catchment area. They note that the council is responding to a decline in demand for education in the catchment area of Struan Primary School, and that there is a consensus among those consulted that the closure of the school is inevitable and that the school building could be used to benefit the community. They further noted that the consultees with whom HM Inspectors met supported assigning the catchment area to Dunvegan Primary School.

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 9 August 2023. Any further

representations that are received will be tabled at the meeting for the attention of Members.

5.2 Following consideration by the Committee, if the recommendation is agreed, the following timeline will be followed as required by the legislation.

- The recommendation of the Committee will be considered by the full Highland Council.
- If ratified by full Council, the Council must, within 6 working days of the Committee decision, advise Scottish Ministers of the decision it has reached, provide them with the proposal paper and consultation report, and publish a notice stating that Ministers have been advised and the process through which representations may be made to Ministers regarding call-in of the proposal.
- From the date of the Council decision, there is a period of 3 weeks in which representations to Scottish Ministers regarding call-in of the proposal can be made by any interested party.
- Scottish Ministers then have a further up to 5 weeks in which to decide whether they will issue a call-in notice.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Education

Date: 23 August 2023

Author: Ian Jackson, Education Officer (Resources)

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Review of Consultation Report
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Appendix C – School Roll Forecasts for the Portree ASG
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Appendix F – Financial Analysis



HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND LEARNING SERVICE

REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AT STRUAN PRIMARY SCHOOL, RE-ASSIGNING ITS CATCHMENT AREA TO THAT OF DUNVEGAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

This report has been prepared following a review of the proposal:

- To discontinue education provision at Struan Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Dunvegan 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 person) at the public meeting held at Struan Primary School on 20 March 2023.
- The report from Education Scotland.

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

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 Highland Council's Education Committee, at its meeting on 15 February 2023, agreed that a statutory consultation be undertaken on the proposal to discontinue the provision of education at Struan Primary School, re-assigning its catchment to that of Dunvegan Primary School.

- 1.2 **Appendix A** is the original consultative paper and provides full details of the above proposal. **Appendices B - E** are the appendices to the original proposal.
- 1.3 Struan Primary School has been mothballed since April 2022, when the school roll fell to two.
- 1.4 Having once again reviewed the status of Struan Primary, it is the Council's view that there is a lack of children of suitable age in the Struan catchment, who wish to attend Struan Primary School, and that consequently the school is no longer viable. Further details on this are provided in Sections 6 and 10 below.
- 1.5 Struan Primary School is designated as a rural school under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. In that context, the Council has had special regard to:
- any viable alternative to the closure proposal; alternatives were considered at Sections 6-10 of the Proposal Paper (**Appendix A**) and have been reconsidered again in the light of responses received to consultation – see Sections 5-10 below.
 - the likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal (if implemented), with reference in particular to (a) the sustainability of the community, (b) the availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community. The effect on the local community was considered at Section 15 of the Proposal Paper (**Appendix A**) and is further considered at Sections 8 and 10 below, taking into account representations received during consultation.
 - the likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the proposal (if implemented) with reference in particular to;
 - the effect caused by such travelling arrangements including (in particular), (i) that on the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities, (ii) any environmental impact. The effects on school transport were considered at Section 13 of the Proposal Paper, (**Appendix A**) and reconsidered again in the light of responses received to consultation – see Sections 6 and 10 below.

2.0 Consultation process

- 2.1 The formal consultation period Thursday 23 February 2023 to Friday 21 April 2023. 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 Dunvegan and Carbost Primary Schools; including parents of pre-school pupils.
 - (ii) The Parent Councils of Dunvegan and Carbost Primary Schools
 - (iii) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.
 - (iv) Staff of Dunvegan and Carbost Primary Schools.

(v) Trade Union representatives.

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

2.4 A public meeting was held at Struan Primary School on 20 March 2023. The meeting was advertised in advance on the Highland Council website, Twitter Account and Facebook page, and in the *West Highland Free Press*. The minute of the meeting is at **Appendix 2**.

3.0 Review of proposals following the consultation period

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

3.2 The feedback from the consultation was considered by a range of Council officials. This ensured that the Council met the requirements of the 2010 Act.

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

4.0 Responses received

4.1 A list of those who responded in writing during the public consultation is at **Appendix 3**. There were 3 written responses (not including the pupil questionnaires). Copies of these responses can also be found at Appendices 3i-3iii.

4.2 The views of pupils at Dunvegan Primary School (which included the pupils living within the Struan catchment area) were sought by means of an age adapted questionnaire. Appendix 3iv summarises their views, which are also discussed at Section 5 below.

5.0 Overview of Issues raised during the consultation period

5.1 There were 47 responses from pupils. Three pupils thought the Council should re-open Struan Primary School, whilst 44 thought the school should be permanently closed. None of the pupils supported continued mothballing. The detailed comments from pupils can be viewed at Appendix 3iv.

5.2 Education Scotland Inspectors who visited the school reported that almost all the children at Dunvegan Primary School who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposals. They looked forward to having more friends.

5.3 The arguments advanced by the pupils in favour of re-opening the school, are set out at Issues 1-3 below, together with arguments put forward in support of closure. The responses encountered by Education Scotland are set out at paragraph 7.4 below.

- 5.4 There were 3 written responses received from other stakeholders. None of these objected to the closure of the school, but rather raised issues about the proposal to re-assign the Struan catchment to that of Dunvegan Primary School. Two of the responses suggested re-assigning the Struan catchment to that of Carbost Primary School, and the other suggested re-assigning it to that of Portree Primary School or Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort-Rìgh, depending on whether children were accessing English Medium or Gaelic Medium education.
- 5.5 The public meeting was well-attended, given the small size of the local community. Although sadness was expressed over the demise of the school, there was a general feeling that closure was inevitable due to the lack of the children in the area. The bulk of the questions raised concerned the future of the building following confirmation of the school closure, even though officials made it clear that closure could not be assumed.
- 5.6 The main arguments put forward are summarised below, together with the responses from the Council. Where different responses raise similar issues, these have been “grouped” for the purposes of the response.

6.0 Responses to the Issues raised in Public Consultation

- 6.1 Arguments advanced by the children in favour of continued mothballing are set out at Issues 1-3 below, and addressed at Responses 1-3.

Issue 1

It has a really good football pitch and other facilities – it would be a shame for kids not to use it.

Response 1

If the school closes, the community are interested in taking over the site, so there might still be an opportunity for local children to use some of the facilities.

Issue 2

It's not fair to force someone to go elsewhere if they don't want to.

Response 2

Almost all the parents who live in Struan have sent their children elsewhere anyway, and it is better for children to attend other schools where there are more children.

Issue 3

The extra travel might be an issue for some families.

Response 3

Anyone who is old enough for school will get school transport to Dunvegan from Struan, paid for by the Council.

- 6.2 Arguments advanced by the children in favour of closing Struan Primary School are set out at Issues 4-5 below, and addressed at Responses 4-5.

Issue 4

There will be more opportunities to make lots of friends if they come to Dunvegan instead.

They will have more friends when they move on to High School.

It would be nice to have more children at Dunvegan.

Response 4

The Highland Council agrees with these comments.

Issue 5

The school could be turned into something for the community such as a laser tag space, a community centre with lots of different things going on, houses for people, a playgroup or lots of apartments for people needing a house.

Response 5

If the school closes, the community are interested in taking over the site. If that happens the community could put their own ideas for the site into practice.

- 6.3 The arguments advanced in written responses are set out at Issues 6-7 below, and addressed at Responses 6-7.

Issue 6

Can consideration please be given to the catchment for Struan children being Portree Primary and Bun Sgoil Ghaidhlig Phort Righ?

The majority of children in Struan already attend school or nursery in Portree, this being their preferred option to Dunvegan.

This could potentially save money for Highland Council due to a school bus already travelling on the Struan to Portree route.

The Portree schools offer considerably more opportunities for children from both schools to socialise together at numerous after school clubs in the area.

In terms of educational benefit Portree offers standalone EM and GME options as opposed to mixed schools, which in terms of GM immersion clearly increases the quality of their language and education.

Response 6

In respect of Portree Primary School, the comparative distances and travel times from the current Struan Primary are, 8.8 miles and 15 minutes to Dunvegan, or 11.3 miles and 27 minutes to Portree via the most direct route, which is on single track roads. The alternative route via Sligachan is 23.3 miles and 36 minutes.

Whilst therefore, Portree does offer some advantages in terms of access to after-school activities, there is a clear geographical argument for Dunvegan to be the receiving school for the Struan children.

In respect of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort-Rìgh, HM Inspectors comment, in their report, that *“The council, in making its final decision, should be clear on parents’ access to total immersion as well as immersion alongside English Medium Education.”*

In line with the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, Highland Council has been undertaking a programme of creating Gàidhlig medium catchment areas for those schools that offer GME. The GM catchment areas for Dunvegan and for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort-Rìgh were defined in 2018 after a statutory consultation exercise which included public meetings in both communities, and which involved Education Scotland as required by legislation. At that time the Struan area was zoned to Dunvegan for the purposes of GME.

Highland Council’s scheme of school enrolment is based on the principle of catchment areas, and of automatic enrolment in the designated school for a pupil’s home address. In the case of a Gàidhlig medium pupils from Struan, this is Dunvegan Primary School, and has been since 2018.

The above catchment definitions could only be changed via a further statutory consultation. It is not Highland Council policy to allow pupils to have a choice of two catchment schools.

Parents can of course submit placing requests for their children to attend a school other than the designated catchment school.

Issue 7

We are concerned about the future of Carbost Primary with regard to intake numbers. Our school roll will drop to 18 children next school year. We

understand that some areas of the Struan catchment are closer to Dunvegan but feel that south of Struan, Coillore (causeway) and settlements towards Carbost (such as Gesto, Sumardale and Meadle) should be in the Carbost Primary catchment area. We need to attract families to our school and area, but to do this we need nursery and school-age children in the first place. We are concerned at the unequal balance afforded by one school getting larger, having a larger budget, more resources to offer children, to the detriment of the other. Our children used to benefit from Struan pupils visiting, widening social opportunities for children; a big plus when sometimes there may be only 1 child in a school year group.

Re-aligning the catchment to Carbost would be supporting a small school which we hear nothing but good things about and praise from other parents. I think Highland council should strongly consider Struan area to be taken it Carbost catchment than pushing pupils to Dunvegan which as far as I'm aware already have healthy pupil numbers. If the council themselves don't push to support small schools this could potentially lead to another closure which would result in a long travel for pupils from that area. My understanding at present there isn't any children from Struan area attending Carbost primary but the ones that attend Dunvegan were already there before moving to the Struan area. My personal preference would be should we removed our child from Gaelic would be Carbost primary.

Response 7

The Council is mindful that there is some merit in the arguments set out above, and is appreciative of the position at Carbost Primary. Having carefully considered the issue, we are however minded to maintain the suggestion made in the Proposal Paper, that the Struan catchment should be re-allocated to Dunvegan Primary School. In coming to this view we have considered the following factors:

- Amongst the parents of children currently within the Struan catchment, there is a clear preference for sending children to Dunvegan rather than Carbost;
- HM Inspectors considered this issue and reported that *"The consultees with whom HM Inspectors met supported assigning the catchment area to Bunscoil Dhùn Bheagain - Dunvegan Primary School. They did not feel that assigning some of the catchment area of Struan Primary School to that of Carbost Primary School would bring educational benefits to children currently attending Carbost Primary School, or in the future."*
- Children from the Struan catchment who already attend Dunvegan Primary School are unlikely to move to Carbost Primary School. The number of pre-school children within the Struan catchment is so small that in practical terms the decision is unlikely to have a significant impact on the roll.
- Dunvegan Primary School is itself a small rural school, albeit one with a larger roll than Carbost.

7.0 Summary of the issues raised by Education Scotland

- 7.1 In line with legislative requirements, Education Scotland was invited to submit comments on the Council's proposals. A copy of the report from Education Scotland is appended – **Appendix 4**.
- 7.2 In their report, Education Scotland agree that The Highland Council's proposal will result in educational benefits for the children of Struan Primary School catchment area. They note that the council is responding to a decline in demand for education in the catchment area of Struan Primary School, and that there is a consensus among those consulted that the closure of the school is inevitable and that the school building could be used to benefit the community.
- 7.3 Education Scotland further noted that the consultees with whom HM Inspectors met supported assigning the catchment area to Dunvegan Primary School. They did not feel that assigning some of the catchment area of Struan Primary School to that of Carbost Primary School would bring educational benefits to children currently attending Carbost Primary School, or in the future.
- 7.4 The following issues were identified for further consideration, and are set out below.

Issue 8

At the meetings with HM Inspectors, there was some further interest shown by the consultees in enabling parents in the Struan area to have an option for their children to attend Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh. This is to experience the benefits of total immersion approaches in the language. The council, in making its final decision, should be clear on parents' access to total immersion as well as immersion alongside English Medium Education.

Response 8

See Response 6 above.

Issue 9

The council has produced equalities and rural impact assessments to inform their approaches. The Council should also consider undertaking an island community impact assessment.

Response 9

The Council has considered the island location of Struan Primary School, but has concluded that the proposed closure is not likely to have an effect on the island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities. As Skye is a large island, it offers alternative educational provision at distances similar to other rural locations in Highland, and indeed significantly closer than the alternatives available to some mainland

communities. The circumstances of Struan Primary School are not noticeably different from those of other rural schools in Highland.

As set out in the Proposal Paper, the nearest alternative provision to Struan Primary School is Dunvegan Primary School, located 8.8 miles away. The travel time between Struan Primary School and Dunvegan Primary School is approximately 14 minutes, a figure well within the normal range of travel for school pupils in the Highland Council area.

The proposal will provide educational benefits and greater opportunities for socialisation for children from the Struan area, and these opportunities will continue to be offered within the context of the island environment of Skye.

Issue 10

The Council should provide further reassurances to parents at Carbost Primary School on the rationale for realignment of catchment areas.

Response 10

See Response 7 above.

Issue 11

It will be important that the council continues to collaborate with the local community of Struan in realising their ambitions for the school building and land, should the proposal be approved. The council should do this in a timely manner to maintain momentum for the community's proposed use of the building, and to avoid the condition of the building deteriorating from not being used.

Response 11

The Council accepts and agrees with this recommendation.

8.0 Effects on the Community

- 8.1 Paragraphs 15.1 - 15.3 of the Proposal Paper set out the Council's assessment of the effects of closure on the local community, and advised that Highland Council would be keen to work with the local community to see whether the current school building and site could be turned over to community use.
- 8.2 The future of the site and building was one of the main issues that arose in the consultation exercise. As previously discussed, the Council cannot prejudge the outcome of the current consultation by agreeing any future use of the building at this stage. In the event the closure is approved, the Council would welcome a community bid for the future use of the building and site.

8.3 The consultation exercise did not identify any other effects on the community from the proposal.

9.0 Alleged omissions or inaccuracies

9.1 There were no alleged omissions or inaccuracies.

10.0 Further Review of Alternatives to Closure

10.1 Throughout the consultation the Council has had special regard to the provision for rural schools within Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. In particular, the Council has had special regard to the following:

- any viable alternative to the closure proposal;

Sections 6-10 of the Proposal Paper identified and discussed the following alternatives to closure:

- i. To continue with the current “mothballing” arrangement.
- ii. To re-open Struan Primary School with its current catchment area.
- iii. To re-open Struan Primary School with an expanded catchment area.
- iv. To re-open Struan Primary School as a school offering Gaelic Medium Education

10.2 Sections 7 and 8 of the Proposal Paper set out the Council’s consideration as to why Options i and ii above would not be viable options for Struan Primary School. No additional suggestions were made during consultation.

10.3 Similarly, in respect of option (iii) in paragraph 10.1 above, Section 9 of the original Proposal Paper set out the reasons why an expanded catchment area would not be a viable option for Struan Primary School. Again, no suggestion to this effect was made during consultation. The comments made in consultation concerning catchment areas were about how to re-allocate the former Struan catchment once the school is closed, and not to expand the current catchment.

10.4 Section 10 of the Proposal Paper set out why it is not be viable to re-open Struan Primary School as a school offering GME only. The public consultation exercise did not identify any support for such a proposal.

10.5 Having reconsidered each of the alternatives identified at Sections 6-10 of the Proposal Paper, the Highland Council has concluded that the alternatives to closure would not deliver the educational benefits of the proposal.

10.6 No further alternative approaches were suggested during the consultation exercise:

10.7 The Council has also reconsidered the likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal (if implemented), with reference in particular to;

(a) the sustainability of the community, (b) the availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community;

The potential community impact of the proposal was considered at Section 15 of the Proposal Paper and is further considered at Section 8 above.

- 10.8 The Council has further reconsidered the likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the proposal (if implemented) with reference in particular to (a) the effect caused by such travelling arrangements including (in particular), (i) that on the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities, (ii) any environmental impact, (b) the travelling arrangements are those to and from the school of (and for) the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities.

The impact of the proposal on travel time was considered at Section 13 of the original proposal paper. Since Struan Primary School has been mothballed since April 2022, implementation of the proposal would not require the introduction of any different travelling arrangements for pupils or staff. Whilst it is accepted that the travel times would be shorter were Struan Primary School to re-open, the travel times to Dunvegan are not excessive and are well within the normal range of school journeys in Highland.

11.0 Procedure for Call-in by the Scottish Ministers

- 11.1 As set out in The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Highland Council is required to notify the Scottish Ministers of its decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Paper and Consultation Report. The Scottish Ministers have an eight-week period from the date of that final decision on 14 September 2023 to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Within the first three weeks of that eight-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Therefore, anyone who wishes to make representations to the Scottish Ministers can do so up until midnight on 4 October 2023. The Scottish Ministers will have until midnight on 8 November 2023 to take a decision on the call-in of the Closure Proposal.
- 11.2 Anyone wishing to make a representation to the Scottish Ministers requesting them to call-in the decision to close Struan Primary School is asked to email schoolclosure@gov.scot or to write to **School Infrastructure Unit, Learning Directorate, The Scottish Government, Area 2A South, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ by midnight on 4 October 2023.**
- 11.3 Until the outcome of the eight-week call-in process has been notified to Highland Council, it will not proceed to implement the Proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal, it will be referred to a School Closure Review Panel.

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, as amended.

12.2 As provided for in section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, it is the duty of the Council to ensure adequate and efficient provision of school education within Highland, such education to be directed towards the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of children or young persons to their fullest potential (Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000). As with all Council duties, the Council also has a duty to make arrangements to secure best value, and in securing best value the Council is required to maintain an appropriate balance between, inter alia, the quality of its performance of its functions and the cost to the authority of that performance (Local Government in Scotland Act 2002, section 1). Each of the above, and all other legislative requirements, have been taken into account in the preparation of this Report.

13.0 Financial Implications

13.1 Advice on the financial implications of the proposal was issued as Appendix F to the Proposal Paper.

14.0 Equality Impact Assessment

14.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was issued with the proposal paper and can be found at Section 17 of the Proposal Paper. The consultation exercise did not identify any additional equality issues.

15.0 Rural Impact Assessment/Island Community Impact Assessment

15.1 A Rural Impact Assessment was issued with the proposal paper and can be found at Section 18 of the Proposal Paper. The public consultation exercise did not identify any additional rural issues, but HM Inspectors, in their report, recommended that the Highland Council carry out an Island Community Impact Assessment, to complement that undertaken for Rural Impact. The results of that assessment are outlined at Response 9 above.

16.0 Effects on School Transport

16.1 The effects on school transport were considered at Section 13 of the Proposal Paper. As there are no pupils currently attending Struan Primary School, there are no differing school transport arrangements to take into account.

17.0 Mitigation of Adverse Effects

17.1 Adverse effects were considered at S.19 of the proposal Paper, and none were identified. Again, this assessment takes into account the fact that there are currently no pupils attending Struan Primary School.

18.0 Conclusion

18.1 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 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 above. For the reasons set out in detail in sections 5-10 above, Highland Council considers that implementation of the closure proposal is the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal.

- 18.2 The most significant reason for closure is that all the available evidence suggests that the number of children who would attend a re-opened Struan Primary School would be too low to make the school viable, and that there would consequently be educational disadvantages arising from such a decision. Lastly, Dunvegan Primary School is itself a rural school.
- 18.3 Education Scotland staff visited Dunvegan Primary School, to speak to parents, pupils and staff. They also had the opportunity to review in detail the proposal document and all written responses. They agree that The Highland Council's proposal will result in educational benefits for the children of Struan Primary School catchment area.
- 18.4 The Executive Chief Officer (Education), on reviewing all of the submissions, the note of the meeting, and the Education Scotland report; and having had special regard to alternatives to closure, to the community impact and to the impact of travelling arrangements; concludes that the proposal offers educational benefits and that implementation of the Proposal in full is the most appropriate response to the reason for formulating the Proposal. The reasons for this conclusion are set out at Sections 5-10 above.

19.0 Recommendation

- 19.1 It is therefore recommended that Highland Council approves the proposal to discontinue education provision at Struan Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Dunvegan Primary School.

Nicky Grant
Executive Chief Officer (Education)
9 August 2023

**MINUTE OF PUBLIC MEETING HELD AT STRUAN PRIMARY SCHOOL ON 20
MARCH 2023**

**CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE THE PROVISION OF
EDUCATION AT STRUAN SCHOOL**

Panel

John Finlayson, Councillor (Chair)
Mhairi MacDonald, Area Education Manager (West)
Ian Jackson, Education Officer, Highland Council

Joan Esson, HMIE

1 journalist

16 members of the public attended the meeting.

The Chairperson began by welcoming everyone to the meeting and introducing the officials present. He advised that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposal to formally close Struan Primary School, (as set out in the recommendation to the Proposal Paper). The proposed change, if approved, will take place immediately after the conclusion of the statutory process relating to school closures. Copies of the Proposal Paper and appendices were distributed. The Proposal Paper identified various options, and the Chairperson explained that we could also discuss any other options or alternatives to closure which those present would like to raise. The Chairperson then asked Ian Jackson to describe the consultation process.

Ian Jackson - Since April 2022 Struan PS has been in what we term a “mothballed” status, which means it is not operational, but neither is it permanently closed. The permanent closure of the school, which is what the Council is now proposing, is subject to a statutory consultation process, of which this meeting is part. We are currently in the initial phase of that consultation, which is due to end on Friday 21 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.

My colleague Mhairi MacDonald will shortly set out the educational basis for the Council’s proposal to formally close Struan PS, but before that I will briefly describe the rest of the consultation process.

The formal process has a number of stages. Once the public consultation ends on 21 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 their own view on the educational benefits of the proposal. Education Scotland will contact the Head Teacher of Dunvegan and Carbost 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 further representations 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.

After all that, there would still be a further opportunity for representations to be made to Scottish Ministers. All school closures in Scotland have to be ratified by Ministers, and they have 8 weeks from the date of the Council's decision to themselves decide whether to ratify the proposal or to refer it to what's called a school closure review panel. During the first 3 weeks of that 8-week period, Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person on whether the decision should be called in, or not called in, for review by a panel. Advice about how to make those representations will be provided at the relevant time.

In summary, I would say that the consultation process provides multiple opportunities for views to be expressed to the Council before any final decision is made

The Chairperson then asked Mhairi MacDonald to explain the educational aspects of the proposal.

Mhairi MacDonald – Pages 12 and 13 of the Proposal Paper you have in front of you illustrate the educational benefits that arise from the Proposal, and the reasons why we are meeting here tonight. The evidence we have suggests there is no realistic prospect of a viable roll coming back to Struan PS. We have thought about this long and hard, and there are clear advantages from the closure in terms of social interaction and collaborative learning. This may not be just a matter of numbers, but also of the mix of families at the school. For example, if there were a single family with four children, then the same issues would arise in terms of socialisation. For those of you that know me, I was Head Teacher of Carbost and Struan at one time, and I saw the roll at Struan school gradually falling over the years.

The Chairperson then opened the meeting to the Q and A session.

Q1 – What numbers of children are there aged between 0-4 in the Struan catchment area?

A1 (Ian Jackson) – We know that the numbers are very small and I understand any children of that age group have already opted for GM nursery provision in either

Dunvegan or Portree. Our feeling is that there would be no children of that age group whose parents would be interested in attending Struan Primary.

Q2 – Is there any thought about the potential benefit of reallocating the catchment to Portree rather than Dunvegan, since the majority of children in the area are already attending school in Portree? Also, they use the school bus which is already going to Portree, so you wouldn't need any extra taxis to Dunvegan. If the catchment were allocated to Portree, parents could have the choice of the English and Gaelic schools there.

A2 – Chairperson (Cllr. John Finlayson) – I think that would be unlikely, as we have to look at the sustainability of the schools that currently exist. We currently have clearly defined catchment areas for both EM and GM education.

(Ian Jackson) – We do, and currently Struan is included within the Dunvegan GM catchment. That, I think, provides an argument for saying the EM catchment should be included within Dunvegan as well. There is another argument, as mentioned by the Chair, in that Dunvegan is also a rural school with a small roll, and the children from Struan could be a help to that, albeit there are only very small numbers. However, the purpose of tonight's meeting is to listen to the points raised, and it would be useful to hear whether there are any other views on this one.

Q3 – (follow-up) – Currently there is one child going to GME at Dunvegan and one going to EME at that school, but there are several more going to Portree, who are able to take advantage of transport that is already in place, with the High School bus. Children going to Portree are able to socialise with far more children, and there is much more on offer for sports and after-school activities. There is just more going on in Portree for children.

(Ian Jackson) – Which way does the bus go? Is it via Sligachan?

(follow-up) – Yes. They meet another bus at the junction, and then they all travel together to Portree.

(Chairperson) – It's important to remember there are plans for a new school in Dunvegan. That will change the whole profile of what families in the area want. When a new school is built and the learning environment changes, that makes a huge difference to how parents perceive a school, and very clearly, when the new school is built, there will be new sporting facilities in Dunvegan. All the points you raise are up for discussion and consideration, but personally I wouldn't want to see us build a new school in Dunvegan and all the population of this area go to Portree.

(follow-up) – The attraction of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort-Rìgh is not so much the new school as the prospect of total immersion in Gaelic.

(Chairperson) – I would say both are contributory factors.

Q4 – I would just like to say that if the school closes it will be the end of an era. I was at school here, and my children were all schooled here. It's just such a pity there are so few children in the community of school age.

A4 (Chairperson) – That's very true of course, although if we do come to that decision, it's good that we are having the discussion now. Sometimes when we mothball schools, we don't go through the consultation process until some time afterward. When the school building is left vacant for too long, there is no prospect of it becoming an asset to the community. If we do get to a position where we agree to close the school, we then want to get to a position where this building, with all its history, can move onto another phase.

Q5 – I think the closure is inevitable. The facts are there. Quite simply there aren't the children in the area anymore. We all know the school has been there for many generations, but things change. The community are ambitious to do something with the building if the school closes, and to me it's inevitable that it does.

A5 – (Chairperson) – Mhairi referred earlier to pages 12 and 13 and the educational benefits. It's important that people read these. We need to make sure we are offering our young people the right type of education in the right environment. It's well summarised in the Proposal Paper.

Q6 – If we close the school, how long would it take for the community to take it over?

A6 – (Ian Jackson) – For the school closure process, the current consultation lasts until 21 April, then Education Scotland will prepare their assessment during May. We are almost into the school holidays then. The Education Committee that Cllr. Finlayson chairs meets 4 times a year, and there is a meeting in November. I am anticipating taking a report to that meeting for a final decision. That decision must be confirmed by the full Highland Council in December, after which it goes to Scottish Ministers for 8 weeks, so early 2024 would be the earliest timescale for a decision on the school closure part of the process. Once a school is closed, there is a separate process for how a community would go about obtaining the asset, if that's what the community wanted to do. It's not really my area of work, but there is what's known as community empowerment legislation, which does give certain rights to communities in terms of obtaining assets which are surplus to Council requirements.

(Chairperson) – The community and the Council are discussing a lease of the building anyway. Ian referred to community empowerment legislation and community asset transfer requests, and Elected Members from Skye would be supportive of this becoming a community facility. It's important that a building that has been here for so long, and has been used by the community, should continue to be of value to the community.

Q7 – Can you explain what an asset transfer is?

A7 – (Chairperson) – It's where an asset, which in this case is the school building, is transferred to community ownership and use. There can be a financial transaction involved, but often the financial transaction is nominal. We have had cases in Highland where we have mothballed schools, and we have left them mothballed for too long, so that when the building does become available, it has fallen into disrepair. The legislation around community asset transfers basically puts the power into the hands of the community who want to make use of that asset.

Q8 - Who maintains the asset after that?

A9 (Chairperson) – If it's a community asset transfer, it's no longer anything to do with the Council, as we will have transferred ownership to the community.

Q10 – Does that include all the grounds surrounding the building as well?

A10 (Chairperson) – In most cases it's the whole footprint.

There being no other comments, the **Chairperson** thanked everyone for coming and for the thoughtful and measured comments made. He reminded those present of the closing date for responses – 21 April 2023 – and of where responses should be sent, either via letter or via email, or by using the online form. A record of this meeting would be made available at least 3 weeks before the meeting of the Education Committee that considered the results of consultation. The members of the Committee would have a chance to see the note and all other representations before the meeting. Following the decision of the Committee, the minutes would be submitted to the full Council for ratification.

MEETING CLOSED

**List of Respondents to Statutory Consultation Exercise – Proposal to
Discontinue Education at Struan Primary School**

1. Katherine Tindall
2. Carbost Primary School Parent Council
3. Jennifer Munro
4. Pupil Responses - Dunvegan PS

Name of consultation: Struan Primary

Your comments: Can consideration please be given to the catchment for Struan children being Portree Primary and Bun Sgoil Ghaidhlig Phort Righ?

The majority of children in Struan already attend school or nursery in Portree, this being their preferred option to Dunvegan.

This could potentially save money for Highland Council due to a school bus already travelling on the Struan to Portree route.

The Portree schools offer considerably more opportunities for children from both schools to socialise together at numerous after school clubs in the area.

In terms of educational benefit Portree offers stand alone EM and GME options as opposed to mixed schools, which in terms of GM immersion clearly increases the quality of their language and education.

Upload documents or letters :

I am commenting as: Parent

I am commenting on behalf of:

Name:

Title	First name	Last name
Mrs	Katherine	Tindall

Address:

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
IV56 8FD	The Byre 7 Ullinish, Struan, IV56 8FD	Yes

Good afternoon,

I write on behalf of the Carbst Primary Parent Council. We discussed your proposal to discontinue education at Struan Primary and transfer the entire catchment to Dunvegan Primary at our recent meeting and would like our comments below noted.

We are concerned about the future of Carbst Primary with regard to intake numbers. Our school roll will drop to 18 children next school year. We understand that some areas of the Struan catchment are closer to Dunvegan but feel that south of Struan, Coillore (causeway) and settlements towards Carbst (such as Gesto, Sumardale and Meadle) should be in the Carbst Primary catchment area. We need to attract families to our school and area, but to do this we need nursery and school-age children in the first place. We are concerned at the unequal balance afforded by one school getting larger, having a larger budget, more resources to offer children, to the detriment of the other. Our children used to benefit from Struan pupils visiting, widening social opportunities for children; a big plus when sometimes there may be only 1 child in a school year group.

Kind regards,
Naomi Cain

Treasurer - For and on behalf of Carbst Primary Parent Council

Name of consultation: Struan Primary

Your comments: We live in the struan area at present our 3 year old is attending Sgoil Arraich in Portree but originally we had enrolled him for Carbost Nursery. We decided to give him a chance to try Gaelic with us making a final decision of which way to go for him starting P1. Should we decide we think he would be better suited to Gaelic we personally would like him to go to Carbost Primary. This is supporting a small school which we hear nothing g but good things about and praise from other parents. I think Highland council should strongly consider Struan area to be taken it Carbost catchment than pushing pupils to Dunvegan which as far as I'm aware already have healthy pupil numbers. If the council themselves don't push to support small schools this could potentially lead to another closure which would result in a long travel for pupils from that area. My understanding at present there isn't any children from Struan area attending carbost primary but the ones that attend Dunvegan were already there before moving to the struan area. My personal preference would be should we removed our child from Gaelic would be Carbost primary.

Upload documents or letters :

I am commenting as: Parent

I am commenting on behalf of:

Name:

Title	First name	Last name
Mrs	Jennifer	Munro

Address:

postcode_search	Choose address	Did you find the address on the list above?
IV56 8FD	Sonas 9 Ullinish, Struan, IV56 8FD	Yes

HELLO EVERYONE!

CAN YOU HELP HIGHLAND COUNCIL WITH AN IMPORTANT DECISION?

For a while Highland Council has been trying out an idea for pupils from Struan to go to Dunvegan or Carbost Primary, instead of Struan Primary.

Now we have to decide what to do for the future. We have 3 choices:

1. Close Struan Primary for good, with children from Struan going to Dunvegan Primary instead.
2. Re-open Struan Primary, so any children from Struan would go to that school and not to Dunvegan.
3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Struan Primary for good.	44 votes
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Struan Primary.	3 votes
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	0 Votes

2. Why did you give the answer above?

The majority of children think that it is a good idea to close the school for the following reasons:

1. There will be more opportunities to make lots of friends if they come to Dunvegan instead.
2. They will have more friends when they move on to High School.
3. It would be nice to have more children at Dunvegan.
4. The school could be turned into something for the community such as a laser tag space, a community centre with lots of different things going on, houses for people, a playgroup or lots of apartments for people needing a house.

Some children think that the school should stay open for the following reasons:

1. It has a really good football pitch and other facilities – it would be a shame for kids not to use it.
2. It's not fair to force someone to go elsewhere if they don't want to.
3. The extra travel might be an issue for some families.

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The Highland Council to discontinue education provision at Struan Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain - Dunvegan Primary School.

May 2023

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 discontinue education provision at Struan Primary 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 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. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers and the special provisions that apply to proposals to close a rural school.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people who live in the catchment area of Struan Primary School; 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 public meeting held on 20 March 2023 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;
- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal; and
- visits to the site of Struan Primary School and Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain - Dunvegan Primary School and Nursery Class, including discussion with relevant consultees. Stakeholders from neighbouring schools and the community were invited to attend discussions.

1.4 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of any reasonable alternatives to closure of Struan Primary School, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements resulting from the proposed closure.

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 Struan Primary School was mothballed in April 2022 when the total school roll reduced to two pupils. The Highland Council consulted parents in making this decision. There are currently no children of primary school age in Struan Primary School catchment area who require the educational services of the school. A very small number of children attend other schools. This is either as a placing request and/or to access Gaelic Medium Education. Struan Primary School did not provide Gaelic Medium Education. Children who reside in Struan and the surrounding area are in a designated Gaelic Medium catchment area for Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain - Dunvegan Primary School.

2.3 The council fulfilled duties to regularly review the mothballed arrangements for Struan Primary School. The council considered future predictions of Struan Primary School's roll. These show that from 2023 to 2037 there will be one pupil or no pupils within the school's catchment area. There were no children attending the nursery class at Struan Primary School prior to mothballing. There is no known change of local circumstance to suggest that the school roll would increase significantly. The council met with Struan Community Council in November 2022. Struan Community Council agreed that the council should progress to a statutory consultation on discontinuing education at the primary school.

2.4 The statutory consultation for the closure of Struan Primary School ran from 23 February to 21 April 2023. The Highland Council undertook a full range of consultation activities during this period. A public meeting was held on 20 March 2023. This meeting was attended by 16 people. Attendees viewed the closure of the school as inevitable due to the very small number of primary-aged children residing within Struan Primary School's catchment area. A question was raised about the proposed realignment of neighbouring catchment areas, should Struan Primary School be closed. They requested that children have an option to attend the all-Gaelic immersion school at Portree, Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh. This view was also received in a written response to the statutory consultation. Currently, children may attend Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh only as a placing request. The council was receptive to considering the request to access all-Gaelic immersion schooling. They also responded on the importance of sustaining other very rural schools in this area of Skye whose catchment areas would be expanded, should the council close Struan Primary School.

2.5 Four written responses were received to the statutory consultation, one of which has been referenced above. Two responses agreed with discontinuing education but suggested some realignment to the proposed catchment areas to benefit Carbost Primary School. This is a neighbouring school which is classified as very rural. Parents and the Parent Council made this request to safeguard their school roll. They also focused on issues of equity should Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain - Dunvegan Primary School have increased resources from having a larger school roll than Carbost Primary School. Children's views on the proposed discontinuing education at Struan Primary School were summarised in a written response. Almost all children agreed with the proposal to discontinue education at Struan Primary School and realign the catchment area with that of Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain - Dunvegan Primary School.

2.6 The community's strong interest in acquiring the school building was clear at the public meeting, should the council proceed with the proposal. Struan Community Council confirmed they are clear on the reasoning and rationale for the proposal. They support the proposal, as do Struan Community Development Group.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council is responding to a decline in demand for education in the catchment area of Struan Primary School. The council have consulted the school and wider community to arrive at a consensus that keeping Struan Primary School open or mothballed is not viable. HM Inspectors agree that there are educational benefits to progressing with the proposal to discontinue education at Struan Primary School and to realigning the catchment area. HM Inspectors do not agree with all of the educational benefits statements produced by the council. The council should continue using educational research in producing educational benefit statements. HM Inspectors met with staff, children, members of the community and Struan Community Development Group. Consultees were supportive of the proposals. HM Inspectors also met with the headteacher of Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain – Dunvegan Primary School, Carbost Primary School and Struan Primary School. As a cluster headteacher, she was able to share with HM Inspectors an overview of the impact of the proposal across the cluster of schools.

3.2 Almost all the children at Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain – Dunvegan Primary School who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposals. They looked forward to having more friends. Children reflected on avoiding long travel times to school. The consultees with whom HM Inspectors met supported assigning the catchment area to Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain - Dunvegan Primary School. They did not feel that assigning some of the catchment area of Struan Primary School to that of Carbost Primary School would bring educational benefits to children currently attending Carbost Primary School, or in the future. The council have already considered this option in how the catchment area may be reallocated. They should explain further to parents their reasoning for retaining the current catchment area of Carbost Primary School.

3.3 Struan Community Council confirmed in writing to HM Inspectors that they are clear on the reasoning and rationale for the proposed decision. They support the proposal, as do Struan Community Development Group.

3.4 At the meetings with HM Inspectors, there was some further interest shown by the consultees in enabling parents in the Struan area to have an option for their children to attend Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh. This is to experience the benefits of total immersion approaches in the language. The council, in making its final decision, should be clear on parents' access to total immersion as well as immersion alongside English Medium Education.

3.5 As the proposal may lead to closing a rural school, HM Inspectors also considered the factors to which the council should give special regard. The council has produced equalities and rural impact assessments to inform their approaches. They should also consider undertaking an island community impact assessment. The council have considered best value through a financial analysis and the implications on the environment from discontinuing education at Struan Primary School. Their proposal is not reported to increase adversely children's travel time to Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain – Dunvegan Primary School. The council presented four alternative options to discontinuing education at the school. These options included designating Struan Primary School for Gaelic Medium Education. The council's options on how Struan Primary School may remain open, are not viable because of pupil numbers declining in the area.

3.6 The council have acknowledged the community's interest in securing the school building for community use, should the proposal go ahead. HM Inspectors heard from consultees of a range of ways that local people may benefit from acquiring the building. Consultees highlighted that Struan does not have a village hall or community centre. The school building is an important public space, and the only practical location for community meetings. Struan Community Council are active users of the school building since the school was mothballed. They have managed the school building since January 2023, with an interim lease setting out detailed arrangements. The

Highland Council have stated that they remain committed to working with the local community over the future use of the building and land. They have advised that any such proposal for continued community use would be progressed within the terms of the council's current asset management arrangements.

4 Summary

HM Inspectors agree that The Highland Council's proposal will result in educational benefits for the children of Struan Primary School catchment area. There is a consensus among those consulted that the closure of the school is inevitable and that the school building could be used to benefit the community. The council in making its final decision should clarify further for parents their interest in accessing an all-Gaelic school without making a placing request. They should also provide further reassurances to parents at Carbost Primary School on the rationale for realignment of catchment areas. It will be important that the council continues to collaborate with the local community of Struan in realising their ambitions for the school building and land, should the proposal be approved. The council should do this in a timely manner to maintain momentum for the community's proposed use of the building, and to avoid the condition of the building deteriorating from not being used.

HM Inspectors
May 2023

Achd Sgoiltean (Co-chomhairleachadh) (Alba) 2010

Aithisg le Foghlam Alba a' dèiligeadh ri taobhan foghlaim den mholadh le Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd gus crìoch a chur air solar foghlaim aig Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain, agus a' cur na sgìre-sgoile aice ri sgìre-sgoile Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain.

An Cèitean 2023

1. Ro-ràdh

1.1 Chaidh an aithisg seo le Foghlam Alba ullachadh le Luchd-sgrùdaidh Foghlaim an Rìgh (Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh) a rèir cumhaichean [Achd Sgoiltean \(Co-chomhairle\) \(Alba\) 2010](#) (“Achd 2010”). ’S e adhbhar na h-aithisg seo beachdachadh neo-eisimeileach agus neo-phàirteach a libhrigeadh air moladh Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd gus solar foghlaim a thoirt gu ceann aig Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain. Tha mion-fhiosrachadh goirid ann an Roinn 2 na h-aithisge air a’ phròiseas chonaltraidh. Tha Roinn 3 na h-aithisge ag innse beachdachadh Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh air taobhan foghlaim a’ mholaidh, a’ gabhail a-steach beachdan cudromach aig luchd-co-chomhairleachaidh. Tha Roinn 4 a’ toirt geàrr-chunntas air àrd-shealladh Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh air a’ mholadh. Nuair a gheibhear an aithisg seo, tha an Achd ag òrdachadh gum beachdaich a’ chomhairle oirre agus an uair sin gun ullaich iad aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannach. Bu chòir gum bi an aithisg seo an lùib aithisg co-chomhairleachaidh dheireannach na comhairle, còmhla ri mìneachadh 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 chonaltraidh 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. Far a bheil comhairle a’ moladh sgoil a dhùnadh, feumaidh i na dleastanasan reachdail air fad a tha ann an Achd 2010 a leantainn, a’ gabhail a-steach fios gu Ministearan taobh a-staigh sia làithean obrach an dèidh dhi a thighinn chun a’ cho-dhùnaidh dheireannaich agus mìneachadh do luchd-co-chomhairleachaidh gu bheil cothrom aca air riochdachaidhean a dhèanamh chun nam Ministearan agus na h-ullachaidhean spèisealta a tha co-cheangailte ri molaidhean a thaobh sgoil dhùthchail a dhùnadh.

1.2 Bheachdaich Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh air:

- na buaidhean a dh’fhaodadh a bhith aig a’ mholadh air clann agus òganaich a tha a’ fuireach ann an sgìre-sgoile Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain; 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 coltach sam bith eile 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 gnìomhan seo os làimh:

- làthaireachd aig a’ choinneimh phoblaich bhiortail a chaidh a chumail air 20 Màrt 2023 mu dheidhinn 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
- beachdachadh air tuilleadh bheachdan air an cur gu dìreach gu Foghlam Alba air taobhan foghlaim buntainneach den mholadh. Agus tursan bhiortail gu làrach Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain agus Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain agus an Sgoil-àraich, a’ gabhail a-steach conaltradh ri luchd-co-chomhairleachaidh iomchaidh. Chaidh cuireadh a thoirt do luchd-ùidhe bho sgoiltean a tha faisg air làimh agus dhan choimhearsnachd a bhith an làthair aig na conaltraidhean.

1.4 Leis gum bi am moladh a' leantainn air adhart gu dùnadh sgoil dhùthchail, ghabh Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh cunntas air beachdachadh na comhairle mu roghainnean reusanta sam bith eile seach a bhith a' dùnadh Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain, a' bhuaidh a dh'fhaodadh a bhith aige air a' choimhearsnachd ionadail agus a' bhuaidh a dh'fhaodadh a bhith aig an dùnadh a bha air a mholadh air ullachaidhean siubhail eadar-dhealaichte sam bith.

2. Pròiseas Co-chomhairleachaidh

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

2.2 Chaidh Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain a dhùnadh car-ùine sa Ghiblean 2022 an uair a thàinig àireamh nan sgoilear air fad sìos gu dà sgoilear. Rinn Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd co-chomhairleachadh ri pàrantan ann a bhith a' tighinn chun a' cho-dhùnaidh seo. Aig an àm a tha làthair chan eil clann sam bith aig aois bun-sgoile ann an sgìre-sgoile Bhun-sgoil an t-Sruthain a tha a' cur feum air seirbheisean foghlaim na sgoile. Tha glè bheag de chloinn a' frithealadh sgoiltean eile. Tha seo mar iarrtas airson àite suidheachaidh agus/no airson cothrom air Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Cha robh Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain a' tabhann Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig. Tha a' chlann a tha a' fuireach san t-Sruthan agus san sgìre mun cuairt anns an sgìre-sgoile Foghlam Meadhan Gàidhlig airson Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain.

2.3 Choilean a' chomhairle a dleastanas a bhith a' lèirmheasadh gu riaghailteach nan ullachaidhean airson a bhith a' dùnadh Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain car-ùine. Bheachdaidh a' chomhairle air tairgreachdan an ama ri teachd a thaobh àireamh sgoilearan Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain. Chomharraich iad sin ann an 2023 gu 2037 nach biodh ach aon sgoilear no nach biodh gin de sgoilearan ann an sgìre-sgoile na sgoile. Cha robh clann sam bith a' frithealadh na sgoil-àraich aig Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain mus deach a dùnadh car-ùine. Chan eilear mothachail air atharrachadh sam bith san t-suidheachadh ionadail a mholadh gun tigeadh atharrachadh mòr sam bith air àireamh nan sgoilearan. Choinnich a' chomhairle ri Comhairle Coimhearsnachd an t-Sruthain san t-Samhain 2022. Dh'aontaich Comhairle Coimhearsnachd an t-Sruthain gum bu chòir dhan chomhairle leantainn air adhart gu co-chomhairleachadh reachdail a thaobh a bhith a' toirt gu ceann foghlam aig a' bhun-sgoil ionadail.

2.4 Bha a' cho-chomhairleachadh reachdail a thaobh a bhith a' dùnadh Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain a' ruith bho 23 Gearran gu 21 Giblean 2023. Ghabh Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd os làimh làn raon de ghnìomhan co-chomhairleachaidh rè an ama seo. Chaidh coinneamh phoblach a chumail air 20 Màrt 2023. Bha 16 ball den phoball an làthair aig a' choinneimh. Bha an luchd-frithealaidh a' meas gun robh an dùnadh do-sheachanta mar thoradh air an àireamh bhig de chloinn aois bun-sgoile a bha a' fuireach ann an sgìre-sgoile Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain. Chaidh ceist a thogail mun ath-thaobhadh a bhathar a' moladh mu na sgìrean-sgoile a bha mun cuairt, nan deigheadh Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain a dhùnadh. Dh'iarr iad gum biodh an roghainn aig a' chloinn a dhol dhan sgoil far am faigheadh iad làn bhogadh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann am Port Rìgh, Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh. Chaidh am beachd seo fhaighinn cuideachd ann am freagairt ann an sgrìobhadh don cho-chomhairleachadh reachdail. Aig an àm a tha an làthair, faodaidh clann Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh a fhrithealadh dìreach mar iarrtas suidheachaidh. Bha a' chomhairle deònach beachdachadh air an iarrtas a thaobh cothrom fhaighinn air làn-bhogadh ann an sgoil tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Thug iad freagairt cuideachd air cho cudromach 's a bha e a bhith a' cumail suas sgoiltean air leth dùthchasach eile san sgìre seo den Eilean Sgitheanach far am biodh an sgìrean-sgoile air an leudachadh, nan dùineadh a' chomhairle Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain.

2.5 Chaidh ceithir freagairtean ann an sgrìobhadh fhaighinn mun cho-chomhairleachadh reachdail, agus tha aon dhiubh air ainmeachadh gu h-àrd. Bha dà fhreagairt ag aontachadh ri

solar foghlaim a thoirt gu ceann ach bha iad a' moladh beagan ath-thaobhadh ris na sgìrean-sgoile a bhathar a' moladh a chùim buannachd a thoirt do Bhun-sgoil Charboist. Is e sgoil a tha seo a tha faisg air làimh agus a tha air a meas mar a bhith air leth dùthchail. Rinn na pàrantan agus Comhairle nam Pàrant an t-iarrrtas seo gus an rola sgoile aca a dhìon. Chuimsich iad cuideachd air cùisean co-ionannachd nam biodh barrachd stòrasan aig Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain leis gum biodh rola sgoile na bu mhotha aice seach na bha aig Bun-sgoil Chàrraboist. Bha geàrr-iomradh air a thoirt ann am freagairt sgrìobhte air beachdan na cloinne air a' mholadh gun leantainn air adhart le foghlam aig Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain. Cha mhòr nach robh a' chlann air fad ag aontachadh ris a' mholadh gus solar foghlaim a thoirt gu ceann aig Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain agus an sgìre-sgoile a chur ri sgìre-sgoile Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain.

2.6 Bha e soilleir aig a' choinneimh phoblaich gun robh ùidh mhòr aig a' choimhearsnachd togalach na sgoile fhaotainn, nan leanadh a' chomhairle air adhart leis a' mholadh. Dhearbh Comhairle Coimhearsnachd an t-Sruthain gu bheil iad soilleir mun reusanachadh agus am feallsanachd air cùl a' mholaidh. Tha iad a' toirt taic dhan mholadh, mar a tha Buidheann Leasachaidh Coimhearsnachd an t-Sruthain.

3. Taobhan foghlaim a' mholaidh

3.1 Tha a' chomhairle a' dèiligeadh ris a' chrìonadh a tha air a thighinn air an iarrrtas aison foghlam ann an sgìre-sgoile Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain. Tha a' chomhairle air co-chomhairle a chur ris an sgoil agus ris a' choimhearsnachd nas fharsainge gus a thighinn gu co-aonta nach biodh e ion-obrachail Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain a chumail fosgailte no a cumail dùinte car-ùine. Tha Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ag aontachadh gu bheil sochairean foghlaim ann a bhith a' gluasad air adhart leis a' mholadh gus solar foghlaim a thoirt gu ceann aig Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain agus a bhith ag ath-thaobhadh na sgìre-sgoile. Chan eil Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ag aontachadh ris na h-aithrisean air fad mu na sochairean foghlaim a dh'ullaich a' chomhairle. Bu chòir dhan chomhairle leantainn air adhart a' cleachdadh rannsachadh foghlaim ann a bhith ag ullachadh aithrisean mu shochairean foghlaim. Choinnich Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ri luchd-obrach, clann, buill den choimhearsnachd agus ri Buidheann Leasachaidh Coimhearsnachd an t-Sruthain. Bha an luchd-co-chomhairleachaidh a' toirt taic do na molaidhean. Choinnich Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ri ceannard Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain, Bun-sgoil Chàrraboist agus Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain. Mar cheannard-sgoile clustair, bha e comasach dhi tar-shealladh a cho-roinn le Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh den bhuidhean a bhiodh aig a' mholadh thar a' chlustair de sgoiltean.

3.2 Cha mhòr nach robh a' chlann air fad aig Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain a choinnich ri Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh a' toirt taic dha na molaidhean. Bha iad a' coimhead air adhart ri tuilleadh charaidean a bhith aca. Bha a' chlann a' meòrachadh air a bhith a' seachnadh amannan siubhail fada chun na sgoile. Bha na co-chomhairlichean ris an do choinnich Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh a' toirt taic do bhith a' cur na sgìre-sgoile ri Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain. Cha robh iad dhen beachd nan deigheadh pàirt de sgìre-sgoile Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain a chur ri sgìre-sgoile Bun-sgoil Chàrraboist gun toireadh sin sochairean foghlaim do chlann a tha a' frithealadh Bun-sgoil Chàrraboist aig an àm a tha an làthair, no san àm ri teachd. Tha a' chomhairle air beachdachadh air an roghainn seo a-cheana a thaobh mar a dh'fhaodadh an sgìre-sgoile a bhith air a roinn. Bu chòir dhaibh tuilleadh mìneachaidh a dhèanamh do pàrantan mun reusanachadh aca a thaobh a bhith a' cumail ris an sgìre-sgoile a tha ann aig an àm a tha an làthair airson Bun-sgoil Chàrraboist.

3.3 Dhearbh Comhairle Choimhearsnachd an t-Sruthain ann an sgrìobhadh gu Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh gu bheil iad soilleir mun reusanachadh agus an fheallsanachd airson a' cho-dhùnaidh a thathar a' moladh. Tha iad a' toirt taic don mholadh, mar a tha Buidheann Leasachaidh Coimhearsnachd an t-Sruthain.

3.4 Aig na coinneamhan le Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh, bha tuilleadh ùidh air a nochdadh leis an luchd-co-chomhairleachaidh ann a bhith ga dhèanamh comasach do phàrantan a bha ann an sgìre an t-Sruthain, roghainn a bhith ann don chloinn aca Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh a fhrithealadh. Tha seo airson is gum faodadh iad sochairean làn bhogaidh sa chànan fhaotainn. Bu chòir dhan chomhairle a bhith soilleir, ann a bhith a' tighinn gu a cho-dhùnadh deireannach, mun chothrom a tha aig pàrantan air làn bhogadh cho math ri bogadh taobh ri taobh ri Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Beurla.

3.5 Leis gu faodadh am moladh leantainn air adhart gu dùnadh sgoil dhùthchail, ghabh Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh cuideachd cunntas de bheachdachadh na comhairle air na h-eileamaidean dham bu chòir dhaibh aire shònraichte a thoirt. Tha a' chomhairle air measaidhean ullachadh a thaobh co-ionannachdan agus buaidh dhùthchail gus fios a chur ris na modhan-obrach aca. Bu chòir dhaibh cuideachd beachdachadh air a bhith a' gabhail os làimh measadh air a' bhuidhe air a' choimhearsnachd eileanach. Tha a' chomhairle air beachdachadh air an luach as fheàrr tro anailis ionmhasail agus a' bhuidhe air an àrainneachd bho bhith a' cur às do fhoghlam aig Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain. Chan eil e air aithris gu bheil am moladh aca gu bhith a' meudachadh àm siubhail na cloinne gu mòr gu Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain. Thaisbein a' chomhairle ceithir roghainnean eadar-dhealaichte a thaobh a bhith a' cur às do fhoghlam aig an sgoil. Bha na roghainnean sin a' gabhail a-steach a bhith a' comharrachadh Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain airson Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Chan eil roghainnean na comhairle mu dheidhinn mar a dh'fhaodadh Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain fuireach fosgailte, ion-obrachail leis mar a tha àireamh nan sgoilearan san sgìre air crìonadh.

3.6 Tha a' chomhairle air gabhail ri ùidh na coimhearsnachd ann a bhith a' faighinn togalach na sgoile airson a bhith air a chleachdadh leis a' choimhearsnachd, ma thèid am moladh air adhart. Chuala Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh bho luchd-co-chomhairleachaidh mu raon de dhòighean anns am faigheadh muinntir na sgìre buannachd bho bhith a' faighinn an togalaich. Chomharraich an luchd-co-chomhairleachaidh nach eil talla baile no ionad coimhearsnachd san t-Sruthan. Is e àite poblach cudromach a tha ann an togalach na sgoile, agus is e seo an t-aon làrach phractaigeach airson coinneamhan coimhearsnachd. Tha Comhairle Coimhearsnachd an t-Sruthain air a bhith gu gnìomhach a' cleachdadh togalach na sgoile on a chaidh an sgoil a dùnadh car-ùine. Tha iad air a bhith a' rianachd togalach na sgoile on Fhaoilleach 2023 le aonta eadar-amail a' cur an cèill ullachaidhean mionaideach. Tha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd air a ràdh gu bheil iad dealasach mu bhith ag obair leis a' choimhearsnachd ionadail a thaobh cleachdadh an togalaich 's an fhearainn san àm ri teachd. Tha iad air comhairle a thoirt gum biodh a leithid de mholadh airson cleachdadh leantainneach leis a' choimhearsnachd air a chur air adhart taobh a-staigh cumhaichean na comhairle airson ullachaidhean làithreach rianachd so-mhaoin.

4 Geàrr-chunntas

Tha Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh ag aontachadh gu bheil comas aig a' mholadh buannachdan foghlaim a libhrigeadh do chlann sgìre-sgoile Bun-sgoil an t-Sruthain. Tha co-aonta eadar an fheadhainn a bha an sàs sa cho-chomhairleachadh nach eil dòigh às bho bhith a' dùnadh na sgoile agus gum faodadh togalach na sgoile a bhith air a chleachdadh a chùim buannachd na coimhearsnachd. Ann a bhith a' tighinn gu a co-dhùnadh deireannach, bu chòir dhan chomhairle tuilleadh soilleireachaidh a dhèanamh do phàrantan a thaobh an ùidh ann a bhith a' faighinn cothrom air sgoil tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig gun aca ri bhith a' cur iarrtas a-steach air a shon. Bu chòir dhaibh cuideachd tuilleadh ath-mhisneachaidh a thoirt do phàrantan aig Bun-sgoil Chàrraboist mun fheallsanachd a thaobh ath-thaobhadh de sgìrean-sgoile. Bidh e cudromach gum bi a' chomhairle a' leantainn air adhart a' conaltradh ri coimhearsnachd ionadail an t-Sruthain ann a bhith a' coileanadh an amasan airson togalach agus fearann na sgoile, nam biodh am moladh

air aontachadh. Bu chòir dhan chomhairle seo a dhèanamh ann an àm cheart gus astar-mheud a chumail suas a thaobh a' chleachdaidh a bha a' choimhearsnachd a' moladh airson an togalaich, agus gus suidheachadh an togalaich a sheachnadh bho bhith a' dol nas miosa leis nach eil e air a chleachdadh.

Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh An Cèitean 2023

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

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

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

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

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

- To discontinue education provision at Struan Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Dunvegan Primary School.
- For the avoidance of doubt, it should be assumed that the related Pre-School provision is included within any reference below to a Primary School. In particular, any reference to Struan Primary School should be taken as a reference to both the primary and nursery classes.
- The proposed change, if approved, will take place immediately after the conclusion of the statutory process relating to school closures.

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Proposal Paper Published

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

Dunvegan Primary School, Dunvegan, Isle of Skye;
Carbost Primary School, Isle of Skye

and published on the Highland Council website:

www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

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

Area Care and Learning Office,
Camaghael Hostel
Fort William
PH33 7NE
Email: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, audio formats, or suitable language, please contact The Area Care and Learning Office, Camaghael Hostel, Fort William, PH33 7NE.

Email: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

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

- (i) Parents/carers of pupils attending Dunvegan Primary School; including parents/carers of pre-school pupils.
- (ii) Parents/carers of pupils attending Carbost Primary School; including parents/carers of pre-school pupils.
- (iii) The Parent Council of Dunvegan Primary School.
- (iv) The Parent Council of Carbost Primary School
- (v) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.
- (vi) Staff of Dunvegan Primary School.
- (vii) Staff of Carbost Primary School
- (viii) Struan Community Council
- (ix) Dunvegan Community Council
- (x) Trade Union representatives.

Advertisement in Local Media

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

Consultation Period

The consultation for this Proposal will run from 23 February 2023 and will end on 21 April 2023. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

Public Meeting

A public meeting will be held at 6.30pm on 20 March 2023 at Struan Primary School. Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council, will be chaired by a senior elected councillor, and will be addressed by officers of the Education Service.

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

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

Meetings with Pupils and Staff

School staff will arrange to discuss the proposal with pupils (who are considered to be of a suitable age and maturity) in the affected schools. Questions, responses and views will be taken down and the results published in the Consultation Report.

Responses to the Proposals

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

Area Care and Learning Office,
Camaghael Hostel
Fort William
PH33 7NE

Email: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

Or via an online form, to be found at:

<https://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

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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, 21 April 2023 at 5.00pm.

Involvement of Education Scotland

When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will be sent to Education Scotland by the Council. Education Scotland will also be sent, by 2 May 2023, a copy of any written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period. Education Scotland will also receive the summary note of the public meeting that will be held and so far as is practicable a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 23 May 2023. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may visit the affected schools and make such enquiries of people there as they consider appropriate.

Review of Consultation Exercise

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

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

At the present time the Council intends to publish its Report in October 2023, prior to submission to the Education Committee in November 2023. However, this timescale may change depending on the nature of issues raised during consultation, and the need to give full consideration to those issues. In the latter event, the Report may not be submitted until a later Committee meeting.

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

As the proposal involves the closure of a school, Highland Council would be required to notify Scottish Ministers of its decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Paper and Consultation Report. The Scottish Ministers would have an eight-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the

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proposal. Within the first three weeks of that eight-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person.

Note on Corrections

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

DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

Legislative Background

- 1.1 The proposal is advanced within the context of all applicable legislation. Amongst other duties, education authorities are required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (S.1 of the Education Act 1980); and to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education in schools that are managed by them (S.3 of The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000).
- 1.2 Struan Primary School is a rural school within the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (the school is classed as "very remote rural") and the Council has had regard to the provisions of that Act, in particular the special regard required for rural school closures. The Council has considered the school roll projections for Struan PS, taking into account the current pattern of enrolments, has given detailed consideration to the viable alternatives to closure (Sections 6-10 below); to the effect of closure on the community (Section 15 below) and to the impact of travel arrangements on children who are not yet of school age but who live in the Struan catchment (Section 13 below).

Reasons for the Proposal

- 2.1 This proposal is being advanced for the following reasons:
 - Struan PS has been mothballed since April 2022, after the school roll fell to two. There are currently no children within the catchment who are within the P1-7 age group, excepting a small number who attend other schools voluntarily, either on placing requests or to attend Gaelic Medium Education. (Struan Primary School has never offered GME).
 - Consequently, no children have attended the school since April 2022.
 - The Council has explored alternatives in arriving at this proposal, explained further below.
- 2.2 In November 2022 an informal discussion was held with Struan Community Council about the future of the school. The Parent Councils of Dunvegan Primary School and Carbost Primary School were also given advance notice of the proposal and invited to comment.
- 2.3 A note of the discussion with the Community Council can be found at **Appendix B**. The Community Council accept that the Highland Council should move forward to statutory consultation on closure.

Current Details – Struan Primary School

- 3.1 Struan Primary School is located in the middle of its catchment area between Meadle and Caroy. The main building dates from the 1890s but has had many alterations internally, over the years, and an extension opened in 1998, which provided modern, spacious accommodation. The school was well resourced

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and enjoyed the use of a spacious detached Demountable Unit and a modern Multi-use Games Pitch both of which are closely adjacent to the school.

When last in operation Struan was managed by a Head Teacher who oversaw both Struan and Carbost Primary Schools. Struan pupils travelled on a weekly basis to the larger Carbost Primary School for P.E, health and well-being, outdoor learning and weekly Assemblies. Both schools engage in a variety of other joint activities such as Ocean School, Christmas plays, performances, parties, visiting workshops and special events.

- 3.2 The school has been mothballed since April 2022 when the school roll fell to 2. Initially the pupils transferred to Carbost Primary School, but one is now at High School and the other has left the area. The only P1-7 pupils from within the catchment now attend Dunvegan Primary School.
- 3.3 There were no nursery children at Struan PS prior to mothballing, but the school did operate a nursery class when there were children to attend it. As mentioned above, this closure proposal encompasses both the primary school and nursery class stages.
- 3.4 The school has a registered permanent capacity of 50, based on the availability of two classrooms.
- 3.5 The Highland Council assesses all of its schools for Suitability and Condition, in line with the Scottish Government's School Estate Management guidelines. Schools are assessed on a scale with the ratings "A" (good) "B" (satisfactory), "C" (poor) and "D" (bad). Prior to mothballing, Struan Primary School was rated as "B" for the educational suitability of the building and "C" for building condition.
- 3.6. In the five sessions from 2017-18 to 2021-22, there were 4 placing requests to leave Struan PS, and 1 placing request to join.
- 3.7 No current HMle Report is available.
- 3.8 Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 the CO₂ equivalent emissions from the Struan Primary School building are estimated at just over 32 tonnes.

Current Details – Dunvegan Primary School

- 4.1 Dunvegan Primary School is located in the village of same name. It is classed as a "very remote" rural school. It provides education in both English (EM) and Gàidhlig(GM). Its English Medium catchment encompasses a wide area of Northwest Skye, and the Gàidhlig Medium catchment covers a still wider area, including the EM catchments of both Struan Primary and Edinbane Primary.
- 4.2 The school premises consist of:
 - the main building which is single storey and has a ramp at one main door, three classrooms, a gym, a resource room, girls' and boys' toilets, an office, a staffroom and staff toilets.

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- a demountable unit which has one classroom, a cloakroom, a resource room, a work room, toilets (staff & pupil), and Art cupboard & a large storage cupboard off the classroom.
 - a demountable unit which has two large rooms, one is the nursery and the other is a library.
 - the canteen where meals are cooked and served.
 - the playground which has tarmac immediately round the school leading into grassed areas.
- 4.3 The 2022-23 roll is 45 pupils within P1-7. There is a near-even split between pupils in English Medium education (23) and Gàidhlig Medium education (22). There are a further 15 children in the nursery class.
- 4.4 The school (excluding the nursery) has a registered capacity of 100. The 2022-23 roll of 45 therefore represents 45% use of capacity.
- 4.5 The Council publishes roll projections for each of its currently operational schools. The latest forecast for Dunvegan PS is contained within the document attached at **Appendix C**, whilst a copy of the Council's methodology for calculating the forecasts can be found at **Appendix Ci**.
- 4.6 It can be seen from Appendix C that the roll at Dunvegan Primary School is forecast to rise to 70 in session 2027/28 and to 98 in session 2035/36. The Council will carefully monitor the roll at Dunvegan PS with a view to managing the accommodation issue if and when capacity issues arise.
- 4.7 The present Dunvegan Primary School building is rated as "B" for educational suitability and "C" for Condition. A replacement building for the school has been nominated by the Highland Council for consideration by the Scottish Government for the third phase of their Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP).
- 4.8 In the 5 sessions from 2017-18 to 2021-22, there were 7 placing requests to leave Dunvegan Primary School, and 7 requests to join.
- 4.9 There is no current HMle Report for the school.
- 4.10 Annual CO₂e emissions from Dunvegan Primary School building from April 2021 to March 2022 were just over 24 tonnes. This figure would not be affected by the formal closure of Struan Primary School.

Current Details – Carbost Primary School

- 5.1 Carbost Primary School is also a "very remote" rural school. Its catchment serves the area of Carbost, Portnalong and nearby glens.
- 5.2 The school building was opened in 1988 and is surrounded by extensive wooded and grassy grounds, including a tarred Games Pitch area. Two main classrooms are included in the building, along with the normal educational requirements e.g., a well-equipped gym. A modern kitchen enables lunches to

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be provided every day. Nursery education is delivered in a modern and bright building, next to the school.

- 5.3 The 2022-23 roll is 22 pupils within P1-7. There are a further 2 children in the nursery class.
- 5.4 The school (excluding the nursery) has a registered capacity of 50. The 2022-23 roll of 22 therefore represents 44% use of capacity.
- 5.5 The Council publishes roll projections for each of its currently operational schools. The latest forecast for Carbst PS is contained within the document attached at **Appendix C**, whilst a copy of the Council's methodology for calculating the forecasts can be found at **Appendix Ci**.
- 5.6 It can be seen from Appendix C that the roll at Carbst Primary School is forecast to rise gently to 35 in session 2034/35.
- 5.7 The Carbst Primary School building is rated as "B" for educational suitability and "B" for Condition.
- 5.8 In the five school sessions from 2017-18 to 2021-22, there were 5 placing requests to leave Carbst Primary School, and none to join.
- 5.9 There is no current HMle Report for the school.
- 5.10 Annual CO₂e emissions from Carbst Primary School building from April 2020 to March 2021 were just under 17 tonnes. This figure would not be affected by the formal closure of Struan Primary School.

Examination of Alternatives

- 6.1 In bringing forward this proposal for closure, the Council must give due consideration of alternative courses of action that could be considered. The following reasonable alternatives to closure have been considered:
 - i. To continue with the current "mothballing" arrangement.
 - ii. To re-open Struan PS with its current catchment area.
 - iii. To re-open Struan PS with an expanded catchment area.
 - iv. To re-open Struan PS as a school offering Gaelic Medium Education.
- 6.2 As part of the consideration of alternatives, the Council has investigated the long-term roll projections – see Appendix C and Appendix Ci. The roll projections, prepared prior to the school being mothballed, predicted a fall to zero by 2025/26, but in practice this has happened more quickly. There are no planned housing developments in the area.
- 6.3 The detail of the Council's consideration of the reasonable alternatives is set out throughout this proposal paper and its appendices.

Option 1 – Continued Mothballing

- 7.1 Although it would be possible to continue with the current “mothballing” arrangement, Highland Council does not consider that would represent the best option for the taxpayer or the community. The very low number of children in the Struan PS catchment indicates strongly that the school is no longer viable. “Mothballing” would mean the continuation of the current lack of clarity regarding the future status of the school and would prevent the community from developing options for the future use of the accommodation. The Council would also be burdened with the costs of maintaining a “mothballed” building.
- 7.2 Scottish Government guidance relating to the mothballing of schools makes it clear that mothballing is a temporary measure and should not be used to undermine the requirements to undertake a statutory school closure consultation. The status of mothballed schools should be regularly reviewed. Having undertaken such a review, Highland Council does not see mothballing as a realistic alternative to closure, and informal engagement with the community supports this view.
- 7.3 Current school transport arrangements would not be affected by a continuation of mothballing.

Option 2 - Re-Opening of Struan Primary School with its Current Catchment Area

- 8.1 For the 2022-23 school session, there are no pupils of P1-7 age living within the catchment area of the school, excepting a small number who attend other schools voluntarily, either on placing requests or to attend Gaelic Medium Education. The issue of GME is considered at Option 4 below.
- 8.2 Taking all of the above into account, the Council’s review suggests there is no possibility of re-opening the school at the present time. Longer-term projections suggest there is no prospect of the roll recovering to a level that would justify re-opening the school.

Option 3 - Re-Opening of Struan Primary School with an Expanded Catchment Area

- 9.1 The Struan PS catchment is linked by road to three other primary school catchments. In one direction the Struan catchment extends very close to the catchment area of Carbost Primary School, a small rural school with a current roll of 22, located 10.9 miles from Struan Primary. The Struan catchment could not be extended towards Carbost without encompassing pupils who live much closer to Carbost than to Struan. It would not be reasonable to expect children from Carbost itself to travel 11 miles to Struan for their primary education, and therefore not reasonable to alter this catchment boundary in favour of Struan PS.

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- 9.2 To the northwest the next school to Struan is Dunvegan Primary, a small rural school with a current roll of 46, located 8.8 miles from Struan PS. The first community within the Dunvegan catchment is at Balmeanach. Whilst this community is marginally closer to Struan, transferring it to the Struan catchment would not materially affect the total roll at that school. At the time of writing there are no P1-7 pupils from Balmeanach.
- 9.3 Altering the catchment of Dunvegan PS in favour of Struan would of course require a statutory consultation in its own right. Taking all the circumstances into account, it would not be appropriate to alter this catchment boundary in favour of Struan Primary School.
- 9.4 In an easterly direction, Struan is linked to Portree Primary School over a narrow mountain road that travels 11 miles over uninhabited upland. The journey times is around 25 minutes one-way. There is no population on this route until Glengrasco, located approximately 8.4 miles (19 minutes) from Struan but only 2.3 miles (6 minutes) from Portree. It would not, therefore, be appropriate to alter this catchment boundary in favour of Struan PS.

Option 4 – Re-opening Struan PS as a School offering Gaelic Medium Education

- 10.1 As mentioned above, Struan Primary School has never offered GME. A very small number of children from the area currently attend Dunvegan PS in order to access GME. However, the number of children concerned does not meet the criteria of five that would generate a GMPE assessment under the terms of the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, and no such request has ever been received.
- 10.2 There is a well-known national shortage of Gaelic Medium teachers at the present time. A recent attempt by Highland to introduce GME at Applecross Primary in Wester Ross foundered due to a lack of applicants for the post, and in general Highland Council struggles to staff its already extensive provision of GME.
- 10.3 The Portree High School Associated School Group (ASG) is well-provisioned with GME at the present time. Six of the fourteen primary schools within the ASG already offer GME, as does Portree High School. In terms of expanding GME, Highland Council intends to prioritise schools where parents have actively requested a GMPE assessment.
- 10.4 The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education is clear that all Local Authorities, irrespective of whether GME is available, must promote GME appropriately. Within the local geographical context of Struan Primary, there would be consideration of existing GME provision as there is reasonable travelling distance to Dunvegan in the case of a GMPE request.
- 10.4 Lack of pupil numbers would however be the most significant barrier to re-opening Struan Primary as a school offering GME.

Educational Benefits

- 11.1 Highland Council is of the view that the school environment should be of a quality that sustains and improves education provision, pupil performance and outcomes for the young people of Highland. Some of the activities listed in the paragraphs below have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the educational benefits of the closure are considered in the longer term.
- 11.2 Highland Council has adopted the following indicators in reviewing its' school estate:
- Pupils should be educated in facilities which are rated at least category B for each of Condition and Suitability.
 - Pupils should be members of an age-appropriate peer group.
 - Pupils should have the opportunity to engage in the widest possible range of activities beyond the core curriculum, including music, sports, drama and art.
 - Pupils with Additional Support Needs should be educated in the most appropriate local setting.
 - Pupils should not ordinarily be required to travel for longer than 30 minutes from the nearest classified road pick-up point to school (primary) although it is recognised that this may not always be possible in a rural council area such as Highland.
 - School facilities should be of a size appropriate to the delineated area that they serve, paying due regard to demographic trends.
 - School delineated areas should reflect geography, travel routes and population distribution.
 - Safe school transport should be provided and safe traffic management in and around school sites should be implemented.
 - Teachers should be members of a professional learning community comprising at least 3 members located in the same facility.
 - The implications of school location to local communities should be considered.
 - Schools, wherever possible, should be located where there is a recognised village or other built-up community.
- 11.3 As mentioned above, evidence gathered by Highland Council to date suggests that there is no realistic prospect of a viable roll at Struan PS. Currently there are no pupils in the P1-7 age group within the Struan catchment, excepting the small number who attend other schools voluntarily. Any individual pupils who might be in the area would suffer educational detriment from attending a school by themselves or perhaps with one other pupil.
- 11.4 Currently, Dunvegan Primary School and Carbost Primary School are managed by a single Head Teacher as part of a "cluster" arrangement. There is thus a commonality of approach to learning and teaching within the two schools.
- 11.5 Children at both Dunvegan PS and Carbost PS regularly work in co-operative learning groups of various sizes. The very small roll of a re-opened Struan PS would mean that the groups would not only be limited in size but also static, since there would be no possibility of changing the membership of learning

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groups. A very small roll would also limit the variety of skills that pupils could bring to the groups, and there would be a smaller range of work to use in terms of sharing standards.

- 11.6 A larger school roll makes it easier for the school to attract visiting speakers, tutors and other external partners to work with the children. In many cases external partners look for a certain threshold in the number of children they will be working with.
- 11.7 Working with others across a wide range of settings is one of the core elements of the school curriculum. This includes planning and carrying out projects in small groups, sharing tasks and responsibilities, and being ready and willing to learn from and with others. Working with others also plays a part in the development of leadership skills, which become increasingly important to pupils as they move through their school years and beyond school education into adulthood.
- 11.8 The existence of pre-school classes at Dunvegan PS and Carbost PS enables a strong transition process for children moving into P1.
- 11.9 The language programmes at Dunvegan PS and Carbost PS aims to develop listening, talking, reading and writing skills. Listening is developed by games, stories, radio & television programmes, music, and use of ICT. The school aims to develop fluency and clarity of expression and to extend vocabulary. Talking is developed by role playing, mime, reporting, interviewing etc. They are also used for the teaching of French and Gaelic, which are introduced to pupils as part of the 1+2 language initiative. Once again, the emphasis is on oral work and role play. In all cases, working with others plays an important role.
- 11.10 As part of the Developing Scotland's Young Workforce the aim is to develop increased awareness of the world of work, social skills and employability skills, including team working, leadership and working with others. Such knowledge and understanding and skills acquisition would very much benefit from discussions and dialogue with peers of the same age/stage.
- 11.11 It is self-evident that an overall school roll in single figures restricts opportunities for team sports and other active recreational activities. It further applies to the health and wellbeing element of the curriculum which involves discussion between pupils about health lifestyle choices. Whilst these problems can be overcome by taking the pupils to participate in activities in neighbouring schools, that in itself involves time out of school in travelling.
- 11.12 As with sports, the larger rolls at Dunvegan and Carbost provides a greater likelihood of pupils benefitting from a wider range of group musical and artistic opportunities, events that are more difficult to deliver with restricted numbers.
- 11.13 The level to which pupils are able to become skilled in social interaction will depend to an extent on the opportunities afforded to them. The forging of close friendships and the development of self-esteem is enhanced by each

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pupil being enabled to be part of an age-appropriate peer group of a sufficient size to allow a range of interactions and relationships to form and reform.

- 11.14 In summary, there are positive educational benefits to be derived from the closure of Struan Primary School, due to the significantly increased opportunities that can be provided at Dunvegan and Carbost. Collaborative working within the classroom, language learning, and artistic and sports activities, and socialisation, can all benefit from the greater numbers that are available. Conversely, the roll of a re-opened Struan Primary School would be insufficient to keep the school viable.

Re-allocation of Struan PS Catchment

12.1 A map of the current Struan, Dunvegan and Carbost catchments is Appendix D.

12.2 In the event that Struan Primary School closes, there are 3 options for re-allocating school catchment:

- i. Transfer the catchment wholly to that of Dunvegan Primary School
- ii. Transfer the catchment wholly to that of Carbost Primary School
- iii. Split the current catchment between the two schools. One option would be to draw the Carbost /Dunvegan School Catchment boundary along the same line as the boundary between Minginish and Dunvegan Community Councils

12.3 Option iii above has the disadvantage that very few houses are included in the area between the current and proposed Carbost school catchment boundaries.

12.4 For Gaelic Medium purposes, the Struan PS catchment is included with the Gaelic Medium catchment of Dunvegan Primary School. There would be merit in aligning the GM and EM catchments.

12.5 Taking the above into account, Highland Council proposes that the Struan PS catchment should be transferred entirely to that of Dunvegan Primary School, upon the closure of Struan. The Council would however welcome views on this aspect of the proposal.

12.6 A map of the proposed merged catchment is at **Appendix E**.

Effect of Differing Transport Arrangements

13.1 Currently, there are no P1-7 pupils within the Struan PS catchment except a small number who attended other schools prior to mothballing. Therefore, no differing transport arrangement would need to be applied in the event Struan PS is closed.

13.2 The travel time between Struan PS and Dunvegan PS is approximately 14 minutes (source: Google Maps) whilst the travel time from Struan PS to Carbost PS is approximately 18 minutes. Both figures are well within the normal range for the Highland Council area.

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- 13.3 The closure of the school would not at present result in any additional CO₂e emissions arising from transport. Any that arise in the future would be negligible, and would in any case be set against the annual emissions of over 32 tonnes that could be expected from the Struan Primary School building itself were it operational.

Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements

- 14.1 As the school is already “mothballed” there will be no impact on school management arrangements at Dunvegan PS or Carbost PS from a formal closure of Struan Primary School.
- 14.2 A continuation of the current mothballing arrangement will have no effect on current staffing arrangements.

Effect on the Local Community

- 15.1 Unlike many communities, Struan does not have a village hall or community centre. The school building therefore represents an important public space, and the only practical location for community meetings.
- 15.2 Since the school was mothballed in April, the Struan Community Council have been active users of the building, and took over the management of the school building in January 2023, with an interim lease setting out the detailed arrangements. The community are interested in securing the future of the building in a way that will benefit local people.
- 15.3 Subject to the Council not having any operational need for the building, Highland Council would be keen to work with the local community over the future use of the building and site. Any such proposal would however have to be progressed within the terms of the Council’s current asset management arrangements.

Financial Consequences

- 16.1 The Table at **Appendix F** sets out the Highland Council’s assessment of the Financial Implications of the proposed merger. As the school is currently mothballed, the savings identified are already being made and no additional saving would arise to the Council from closure.
- 16.2 The table does not include property costs that would arise if Struan PS were to become operational once more. At the present time this figure can only be a very rough estimate.

Equalities Impact Assessment

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

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

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

Rural Impact Assessment

- 18.1 Struan PS, Carbost PS and Dunvegan PS are classed by the Scottish Government as “very remote rural schools”. Although the proposal involves a formal closure of service, the service itself has not operated since April 2022. In practical terms the proposal will not change the current position.
- 18.2 The relocation of service (which in practical terms has already taken place) involves moving local school provision from Struan to Dunvegan, a distance of 8.8 miles.
- 18.3 As set out in Section 11 above, the Highland Council believes that the proposal offers educational benefits.
- 18.4 The maximum additional travel time for school pupils from the Struan PS site to Dunvegan is 14 minutes (source: Google Maps). As school transport is provided by the Council, the proposal would not be expected to have any impact on accessibility to education or on fuel poverty.

Mitigation of Adverse Effects

- 19.1 As there are currently no pupils within the Struan PS catchment who were already attending other schools on either placing requests or to attend GME, no adverse effects arise.

Recommendation

- 20.1 Taking the above into account Highland Council recommends that Struan Primary School, currently “mothballed,” is closed and the catchment area re-assigned to that of Dunvegan Primary School.
- 20.2 This proposal paper is issued in terms of the authority’s procedures to meet the relevant statutory requirements. Following the consultation period, a report

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and submissions received will be presented to the Education Committee of the Highland Council.

END OF PROPOSAL PAPER

Struan Community Council

Chairperson	Secretary/Treasurer	Vice-Chairperson
Mr I Beaton	Mr A Morrison	Mr D Beaton
Gesto Farm	3 Coillore	1 Coillore
Struan	Struan	Struan
Isle of Skye	Isle of Skye	Isle of Skye
01470 572217	01470 572357	01470 572250

Minutes of the meeting of Struan Community Council held on Friday 4th November 2022

Present: Mr I Beaton, Mr D Beaton, Mr A Lockhart, Mr G MacKinnon, Mr D J Morrison, Mr A Morrison, Mrs S Illingworth, Mr G Semler, Mr M N Beaton, Mr D Millar (Highland Councillor), Ms M MacDonald (Area Education Manager) & Mr I Jackson (Highland Council Education Office) by Teams

1. Welcome

Mr I Beaton opened & welcomed all to the meeting

2. Apologies

Mr K Davies

3. Minutes of last Meeting

Minutes of the meeting from Wednesday 21st September 2022 were put forward to the meeting for approval, adoption was proposed by Mr A Lockhart and seconded by Mr D J Morrison

4. Matters Arising

a) Notice Board

Mr G MacKinnon confirmed an application has been submitted to the Trust for funding new Notice Board.

b) Broadband

Mr A Morrison advised that an e-mail had been received from Keith Nicolson, Kate Forbes MSP's case worker, we had asked if they could ask the R100 Digital Scotland Division to advise why the Struan Exchange cannot be up graded when so many & further spread communities on either side, Carbost, Dunvegan & Glendale have the service in place, is it the demographic of the population that is having our community passed over. In the response received Mr Nicolson did not have the question answered & simply responded to advise that they have been looking at local projects, such as the Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm proposal, as they are aware through other community benefit schemes broadband can sometimes be offered as part of the scheme, going on to say, if you have not done so already, we would certainly encourage the Community Council to enquire with Muirhall regarding their community benefit scheme and what consideration can be given to linking with Struan.

It was agreed that appears they are simply passing the buck and not interested in assisting us, will respond and press further for an answer to original question. **Action: Mr A Morrison**

c) Play Park

Mr G MacKinnon advised that from his discussions with HAGS that the Astra Turf option would be best, however, Hags have advised that although they will come and install the Astro Turf, they will not undertake the preparatory work, therefore, Mr MacKinnon to obtain quotes for this to allow the project to progress. The path to the entrance to the Play Park was also further discussed, agreed that a formal path be constructed from the road round to the back entrance, various forms of path discussed, chips, tarmac, slabs, Mr G MacKinnon & Mr D J Morrison will take on and obtain quotes for consideration.

Action: Mr G MacKinnon & Mr D J Morrison

d) Village Improvements

Mr A Morrison advised all matters ongoing

Action: Mr A Morrison

5. Struan School

Ms M MacDonald (Area Education Manager) in person & Mr I Jackson (Education Officer) by Teams, attended the meeting to provide the Community Council with an up-date on the position with the school along with their proposal for moving forward. Mr Jackson advised that the mothballing of a School requires to be reviewed regularly, at each point of review they can either continue to mothball or they can move to commence the process to close the school, due to several factors they are minded to move towards closure of the school. At this point Mr Jackson asked for the views of the Community Council, all believed taking all factors into consideration they had no objection to the process of closure commencing.

Mr Jackson then went on to explain the process involved and the likely timeframe, the process cannot commence until has been put before a full Council meeting, the next one being due in March 2023, as the process likely to take a year after full consultation and final ratification by the Scottish Ministers, the earliest closure likely conclusion would be Spring 2024, Ms MacDonald left Mr I Beaton a timetable of the process for information. Ms MacDonald went on to advise the position with the building upon closure, initially would be offered in house to any Department within Highland Council for their use, if no takers, the next option is a Community Asset Transfer, if this not taken up then would go for sale on the open market. Ms MacDonald also advised that until such time as the school has been formally closed the Education Dept would continue to be responsible for the building and maintenance.

Mr A Morrison went on to advise the up-to-date position with use of the School by the Community, at present can be used by way of contacting Mr Morrison, as he will act as a Keyholder as agreed with Mr F MacDonald Highland Council Property & Facilities, in addition, Mr MacDonald will proceed to draft a Lease Document to allow the Community Council to have control over the building in the interim period, this will allow access to and use of the Keder House by the Community, it is hoped that a Lease will be in place by end of the year or early 2023. Furthermore, the Demountable Unit is to be demolished, the Contract has been agreed, the Unit has been cleared out and only outstanding item is an Asbestos Report to be undertaken, then will be demolished. Mr Morrison advised would keep all up dated on progress.

Action: Mr A Morrison

6. Glen Ullinish II

Mr A Morrison advise that subsequent to the last meeting's short discussion on Declaration of Interests, he had sent a copy of Highland Council Code of Conduct for Community Councils to all members requesting they review with the intention anyone with an interest in the Muirhall

Development or for that matter any other Wind Farm Development either on going or proposed would be given the opportunity to declare their interest, Mr A Lockhart, Mr I Beaton & Mr D J Morrison all declared they had an interest in the Muirhall Development. Furthermore, no member has any interest in any other Wind Farm Development either ongoing or proposed.

In relation to the significant Community concerns with possible pollution/disruption to Public & Private Water supplies due to Turbines on the DWPA, Mr Morrison wrote Mr P MacIntyre at Scottish Water in Portree, Mr MacIntyre responded advising "as far as I am aware the Scottish Water catchment team are preparing to ask the planning authorities to stop the 6 turbines going within the catchment area" further going on to say "I have been keeping tabs on this and raising concerns to the Scottish Water sustainable land management people" concluding that he will continue to liaise with Scottish Water Sustainable Land Management people, so as they can hopefully provide reassurance that Scottish Water are doing what is needed to protect the catchment area.

There followed a discussion on the Community Benefit, various aspects discussed, in particular the level of funding being provided for the Community Benefit Fund, felt by all that although the figure proposed by Muirhall purported as being market leading at £7,000 per KW at present, it is still perceived as low in comparison to the return Muirhall will gain from the Development, Mr D Millar advised that he would be bringing this up when Councillors meet with Muirhall and he feels a significantly higher fund should be provided by Muirhall. In addition, was agreed to write Ian Blackford MP for his advice as Scottish Ministers are the land owners of much of the ground upon which the Development is to be sited to see if he can put any pressure on in respect of an increase in the Community Benefit.

Mr I Beaton and Mr A Morrison on behalf of the Community Council are to attend a meeting with Muirhall on Tuesday 8/11, along with representatives from the Development Group and Trust, there will also be representation from neighbouring Community Groups, the purpose of the meeting is for Muirhall to update on present position and provide details of their vision of the Community Benefit Fund, Mr A Morrison advised there is a meeting of the 3 local Groups on Monday 07/11 in preparation for the Muirhall meeting, All agreed that we should be insisting Struan have a separate standalone Community Benefit to others to ensure a guaranteed income year on year and to assist with levelling up, continue to press Muirhall to provide a date for a Public Meeting in Struan with Struan residents, question who should actually be classed as near neighbours and press for an increase in the per KW sum payable. **Action: A Morrison**

7. Other Wind Farm Developments

Mr A Morrison advised in respect of existing and new Wind Farm Developments within the vicinity of the Community:

Vattenfall

An initial e-mail received from Simon Lejeune and subsequently Mr Morrison had a telephone conversation with him in respect of their future plans for the existing Development, Mr Lejeune advised that their intention is to re-power and extend the site, they will be replacing the existing turbines with a larger version, due to this the spacing between each will require to be extended, they hope to have plans in place early 2023 and will arrange Public Event in Struan.

Balmeanach

In respect of the upcoming Development to be undertaken by Wind2, Mr Morrison sent an e-mail to Mr Fraser MacKenzie to se

e if they were intending holding any events in Struan & advising that we do have access to the school and is suitable for anything they may wish to undertake, also, asking about a Public Meeting in the future. Subsequently, response received from Ms Hannah Brown, Project Manager to advise they would be willing to hold an event in Struan, they are awaiting receipt of the formal boards they would use and these likely to be hand late November, can then arrange event in Struan thereafter. Although, an e-mail received from Fiona Scott of SLR Consulting this week advising of in person Consultations in Dunvegan & Edinbane on 22nd & 23Rd November, Mr Morrison will contact them for advices on when they wish to undertake one in Struan **Action: Mr A Morrison**

8. Community Action Plan

Mr A Morrison advised he had contacted three firms, Star Development Group, PAS & Nick Wright Planning to see if they would be willing to provide a Proposal & Costing for undertaking the work in relation to producing a Community Action Plan. Mr Morrison spoke at length with Lesley Campbell at Star, after going over what we were looking for, Lesley has provided a Proposal for a Community Action Plan for Struan outlining what they would propose to undertake along with a costing that has been circulated to all Community Council members. Mr Morrison also advised that he has arranged a call with PAS this coming Wednesday to discuss what is required and ask that they provide a costed Proposal, in addition, advised that he has had an e-mail exchange with Nick Wright, although Mr Wright would be delighted to get involved and provide a Proposal, unfortunately he has several Projects ongoing and committed to that will keep him tied up into the middle of next year, therefore, unable at present to get involved. Mr Morrison further advised that he would now send on the Star Proposal to the members of the joint CC, Trust & Development Group in preparation for the meeting this coming Monday and will outline details of the other options at the meeting.

9. Cemeteries

Mr I Beaton advised that the application to the Trust has been successful for re-fencing the new Cemetery, will now contact Ian Leach to have the works undertaken, Mr Beaton further advised that he has submitted a further application to the Trust in respect of the replacement of the front wall at the new Cemetery. Mr D J Morrison advised in process of obtaining estimates for finishing off the perimeter of the Cemetery Car Park, hopes to have in early course, also, cannot locate the "No Overnight Parking" sign but will obtain a costing for a replacement. **Action: D J Morrison**

10. Act of Remembrance

As all are aware this year's Community Act of Remembrance will take place on Saturday 12th November with a start time of 10:45am, Mr A Morrison advised he has the 2 Wreaths, will have copies of the Order of Service printed, Mr A Lockhart confirmed Rev James Beaton will officiate, also that Mrs J Beaton with assistance from Mrs K Lockhart will lay the Community Wreath, Mr Morrison confirmed that Alasdair Tindall will lay the Wreath on behalf of the Young People of the Community. Mr M N Beaton will read the Roll of Honour and confirmed that Peter Morrison will be in attendance to play the Pipes. In addition, as the school is now available it was agreed to provide Tea, Coffee & Biscuits after the conclusion Of events at the War Memorial for all. Mr Beaton further advised that the name of Kenneth Lockhart who died during the Boer Warr was not on the War Memorial and feels he should be named, all were in agreement, Mr Beaton agreed to contact John Hearch to see the best way to undertake the addition.

11. Planning

Consultation Request Notification received in relation to the Skye Reinforcement Project, response required by 18th November 2022

12. Correspondence

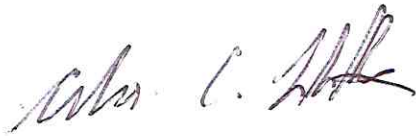
None

13. AOCB

None

Date of Next Meeting 9th January 2023@ 7.00pm at Struan School

The meeting closed at 9.15pm



D.G. Beaton

09/01/2023

5139120	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37
S 1	108	94	98	101	86	107	104	96	92	97	101	101	103	105	106	108
S 2	86	110	96	100	103	87	108	105	97	93	98	102	102	104	106	108
S 3	84	88	112	98	102	104	89	110	107	98	94	99	103	103	105	107
S 4	83	86	90	114	100	103	106	90	111	108	100	96	100	104	104	106
S 5	74	72	74	78	97	85	88	90	77	94	92	85	81	85	88	88
S 6	63	57	55	57	60	74	65	67	68	59	72	70	64	62	65	67
Total Roll	498	507	525	548	548	560	560	558	552	549	557	553	553	563	574	584
Total Capacity	951	951	951	951	951	951	951	951	951	951	951	951	951	951	951	951
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-453	-444	-426	-403	-403	-391	-391	-393	-399	-402	-394	-398	-398	-388	-377	-367
(Tot Roll/Tot Cap)%	52%	53%	55%	58%	58%	59%	59%	59%	58%	58%	59%	58%	58%	59%	60%	61%

School Roll Forecast

Portree High School

Broadford Primary

5127823	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37
P 1	11	9	10	10	11	11	11	12	12	12	12	13	13	13	13	13
P 2	11	12	9	11	11	11	11	12	12	12	12	13	13	13	13	13
P 3	6	12	13	10	11	11	11	12	12	12	12	13	13	13	13	13
P 4	12	7	13	13	11	12	11	12	12	12	12	13	13	13	13	13
P 5	13	13	8	13	14	11	12	12	12	12	12	13	13	13	13	13
P 6	17	14	14	8	14	14	11	12	12	12	12	13	13	13	13	13
P 7	19	18	15	14	9	14	15	11	12	12	12	13	13	13	13	13
Total Roll	89	85	82	79	81	84	82	83	84	84	84	91	91	91	91	91
Total Capacity	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-36	-40	-43	-46	-44	-41	-43	-42	-41	-41	-41	-34	-34	-34	-34	-34
(Tot Roll/Tot Cap)%	71%	68%	66%	63%	65%	67%	66%	66%	67%	67%	67%	73%	73%	73%	73%	73%

School Roll Forecast
 Portree High School
 Bun-Sgoil Ghaidhlig Phort Rìgh

1004557	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37
P 1	29	18	19	21	20	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	24	25	25	25
P 2	27	30	19	19	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	24	25	25	25
P 3	24	28	30	19	20	22	22	22	23	23	24	24	24	25	25	25
P 4	21	25	28	31	20	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	24	25	25	25
P 5	16	22	25	29	31	21	21	23	23	23	24	24	24	25	25	25
P 6	25	17	22	26	29	32	21	22	24	23	24	24	24	25	25	25
P 7	19	26	17	23	26	30	32	22	22	24	24	24	24	25	25	25
Total Roll	161	166	160	168	167	168	162	155	161	162	168	168	168	175	175	175
Total Capacity	188	188	188	188	188	188	188	188	188	188	188	188	188	188	188	188
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-27	-22	-28	-20	-21	-20	-26	-33	-27	-26	-20	-20	-20	-13	-13	-13
(Tot Roll/Tot Cap)%	86%	88%	85%	89%	89%	89%	86%	82%	86%	86%	89%	89%	89%	93%	93%	93%

School Roll Forecast

Portree High School

Bun-Sgoil Shlèite

5126525	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37
P 1	13	8	14	13	14	14	14	15	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18
P 2	10	14	9	16	13	14	14	15	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18
P 3	10	11	15	11	16	14	14	15	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18
P 4	6	11	12	16	11	17	14	15	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18
P 5	10	7	12	13	17	12	17	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18
P 6	12	11	8	13	14	17	12	17	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18
P 7	13	13	12	9	14	14	17	12	18	15	16	16	17	17	18	18
Total Roll	74	75	82	91	99	102	102	103	108	105	112	112	119	119	126	126
Total Capacity	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-26	-25	-18	-9	-1	2	2	3	8	5	12	12	19	19	26	26
(Tot Roll/Tot Cap)%	74%	75%	82%	91%	99%	102%	102%	103%	108%	105%	112%	112%	119%	119%	126%	126%

School Roll Forecast
 Portree High School
 Carbost Primary

5126126	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37
P 1	0	4	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
P 2	4	0	4	2	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
P 3	6	4	0	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
P 4	0	6	4	0	5	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
P 5	5	0	6	4	1	5	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
P 6	4	5	0	6	5	1	5	2	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
P 7	8	4	5	0	7	5	1	5	2	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
Total Roll	27	23	21	19	27	23	24	27	26	28	28	28	28	35	35	35
Total Capacity	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-23	-27	-29	-31	-23	-27	-26	-23	-24	-22	-22	-22	-22	-15	-15	-15
(Tot Roll/Tot Cap)%	54%	46%	42%	38%	54%	46%	48%	54%	52%	56%	56%	56%	56%	70%	70%	70%

School Roll Forecast
 Portree High School
 Dunvegan Primary

5127920	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37
P 1	4	9	10	8	10	10	11	11	11	12	12	12	13	13	14	14
P 2	5	4	10	10	8	10	11	11	11	12	12	12	13	13	14	14
P 3	9	5	5	10	11	9	11	11	11	12	12	12	13	13	14	14
P 4	6	9	6	5	10	11	9	11	11	12	12	12	13	13	14	14
P 5	9	6	10	6	6	11	11	9	11	12	12	12	13	13	14	14
P 6	6	9	7	10	7	6	11	12	10	12	12	12	13	13	14	14
P 7	4	6	10	7	11	7	6	12	12	10	12	12	13	13	14	14
Total Roll	43	48	58	56	63	64	70	77	77	82	84	84	91	91	98	98
Total Capacity	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-57	-52	-42	-44	-37	-36	-30	-23	-23	-18	-16	-16	-9	-9	-2	-2
(Tot Roll/Tot Cap)%	43%	48%	58%	56%	63%	64%	70%	77%	77%	82%	84%	84%	91%	91%	98%	98%

School Roll Forecast

Portree High School

Kilmuir Primary

5126827	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37
P 1	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
P 2	6	1	2	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
P 3	2	6	1	2	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
P 4	3	2	6	1	2	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
P 5	2	3	2	6	1	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
P 6	4	2	3	2	6	1	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
P 7	5	4	2	3	2	6	1	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	4
Total Roll	23	20	18	19	20	21	20	22	22	22	21	21	21	21	28	28
Total Capacity	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-51	-54	-56	-55	-54	-53	-54	-52	-52	-52	-53	-53	-53	-53	-46	-46
(Tot Roll/Tot Cap)%	31%	27%	24%	26%	27%	28%	27%	30%	30%	30%	28%	28%	28%	28%	38%	38%

School Roll Forecast

Portree High School

Portree Primary

5128722	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37
P 1	17	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	24	24	25	25	25	25
P 2	17	18	20	19	21	21	22	23	23	24	24	24	25	25	25	25
P 3	26	18	18	20	20	22	22	23	23	24	24	24	25	25	25	25
P 4	16	27	18	19	21	21	22	23	23	24	24	24	25	25	25	25
P 5	29	17	27	19	19	22	21	23	23	24	24	24	25	25	25	25
P 6	18	30	17	28	19	20	22	22	23	24	24	24	25	25	25	25
P 7	17	19	30	18	28	20	21	23	23	24	24	24	25	25	25	25
Total Roll	140	148	149	143	149	147	152	160	161	168	168	168	175	175	175	175
Total Capacity	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-81	-73	-72	-78	-72	-74	-69	-61	-60	-53	-53	-53	-46	-46	-46	-46
(Tot Roll/Tot Cap)%	63%	67%	67%	65%	67%	67%	69%	72%	73%	76%	76%	76%	79%	79%	79%	79%

School Roll Forecast
 Portree High School
 Staffin Primary

5128323	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37
P 1	3	3	4	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6
P 2	7	3	3	4	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6
P 3	7	7	3	4	5	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6
P 4	5	7	7	4	4	5	6	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6
P 5	7	5	7	8	4	4	5	6	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6
P 6	6	7	5	8	8	4	4	5	6	5	5	5	6	6	6	6
P 7	3	6	7	6	8	8	4	4	5	6	5	5	6	6	6	6
Total Roll	38	38	36	40	40	37	34	35	36	36	35	35	42	42	42	42
Total Capacity	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Tot Roll - Tot Cap	-12	-12	-14	-10	-10	-13	-16	-15	-14	-14	-15	-15	-8	-8	-8	-8
(Tot Roll/Tot Cap)%	76%	76%	72%	80%	80%	74%	68%	70%	72%	72%	70%	70%	84%	84%	84%	84%

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This background paper describes the high level approach taken in preparing school roll forecasts for primary and secondary schools in Highland. It describes the basic methodology used and changes introduced to the processes to improve transparency and ease of use of the forecasts.
- 1.2 The existing school roll forecasting methodology has been iteratively developed over several decades with improvements and adjustments to account for circumstances in Highland. Given the school capacity pressures experienced in recent years, Highland Council's Development and Infrastructure - Information and Research department, together with Care and Learning, took the opportunity to look afresh at the forecasting process. This research has informed the 2017/18 School Roll Forecasts and the preparation of the draft Developer Contributions Supplementary guidance (consultation 2018).
- 1.3 It has been recognised that there is a need for a simplified approach to determining the effect of residential development on the school estate. In preparing the forecasts, a key consideration was the usability of these forecasts to easily identify all anticipated residential developments which feed into the forecasts and undertake development scenario modelling. This information is critical for effective planning of the school estate and assessing Local Development Plan site allocations as well as individual development proposals.
- 1.4 An integrated primary and secondary school Excel spreadsheet based approach has been developed to give confidence in school roll forecasting. A baseline forecast is updated and published annually, which also acts as a template that can now be used for modelling future school rolls based on testing various potential development and school estate management scenarios.

2 Input Datasets and Factors

- 2.1 A key factor in school roll forecasting is a detailed and accurate assessment of the likely residential build-out timescales for new developments. The annual Housing Land Audit (HLA) provides this base information. Since 2016, the HLA has been prepared in parallel with the creation of the annual School Roll Forecasts. In addition to programmed build out rates for Local Development Plan site allocations, allowance for smaller scale 'windfall' development sites is also applied to the forecasts. This windfall rate is based on the prevailing average for the primary school catchment in the previous two years. The build out and delivery of multiple residential developments, which often take place within a similar timeframe, contribute to cumulative pressures on the school estate.

- 2.2 The ratio of additional pupils expected to derive from newly constructed housing (the Pupil Product Ratio or PPR) is the major influence on increasing school rolls. The rates used in Highland are 0.3 primary pupils and 0.13 secondary per new home. These figures are comparable with those used across many Scottish Local Authorities and have been found to be accurate and reliable as recently assessed and reported in the School Pupil Product Ratio Review, prepared by The Highland Council - Information and Research, September 2017.
- 2.3 Forecasts are informed by an annual school pupil census, combined with information on current school capacities to provide the baseline and start point for forecasting and roll pressure analysis. These are provided by Care and Learning and are updated regularly to comply with the latest legislation and regulatory requirements.
- 2.4 Pre-school year group values are populated using GP registration figures supplied by the NHS, to identify children which are not yet of school age. These will be included in the calculation of future P1 intakes for Primary Schools.
- 2.5 A significant exercise was undertaken in 2017 to increase the accuracy of pupil flow modelling. We analyse the current flow of pupils attending schools outwith their catchment area school to determine future roll adjustments from Placing Request applications, as well as calculate intake numbers for Gaelic and Denominational schools.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 Once the input datasets have been refreshed with the latest values, the spreadsheet can be used to forecast school rolls for the next 15 years. As a baseline, each projection sheet shows the number of pupils in each year group for the current school year.
- 3.2 For every additional year to be forecast, the number of pupils expected in each year group will be updated to take account of the influences from the various input datasets, including additional pupils from new housing development completions.
- 3.3 Using the residential development information, estimated build out rates are aggregated by primary catchment and an updated windfall contribution is added to give a year by year additional housing count for each. These values are combined with the Pupil Product Ratios to predict the number of additional pupils expected per school for each year forecast.

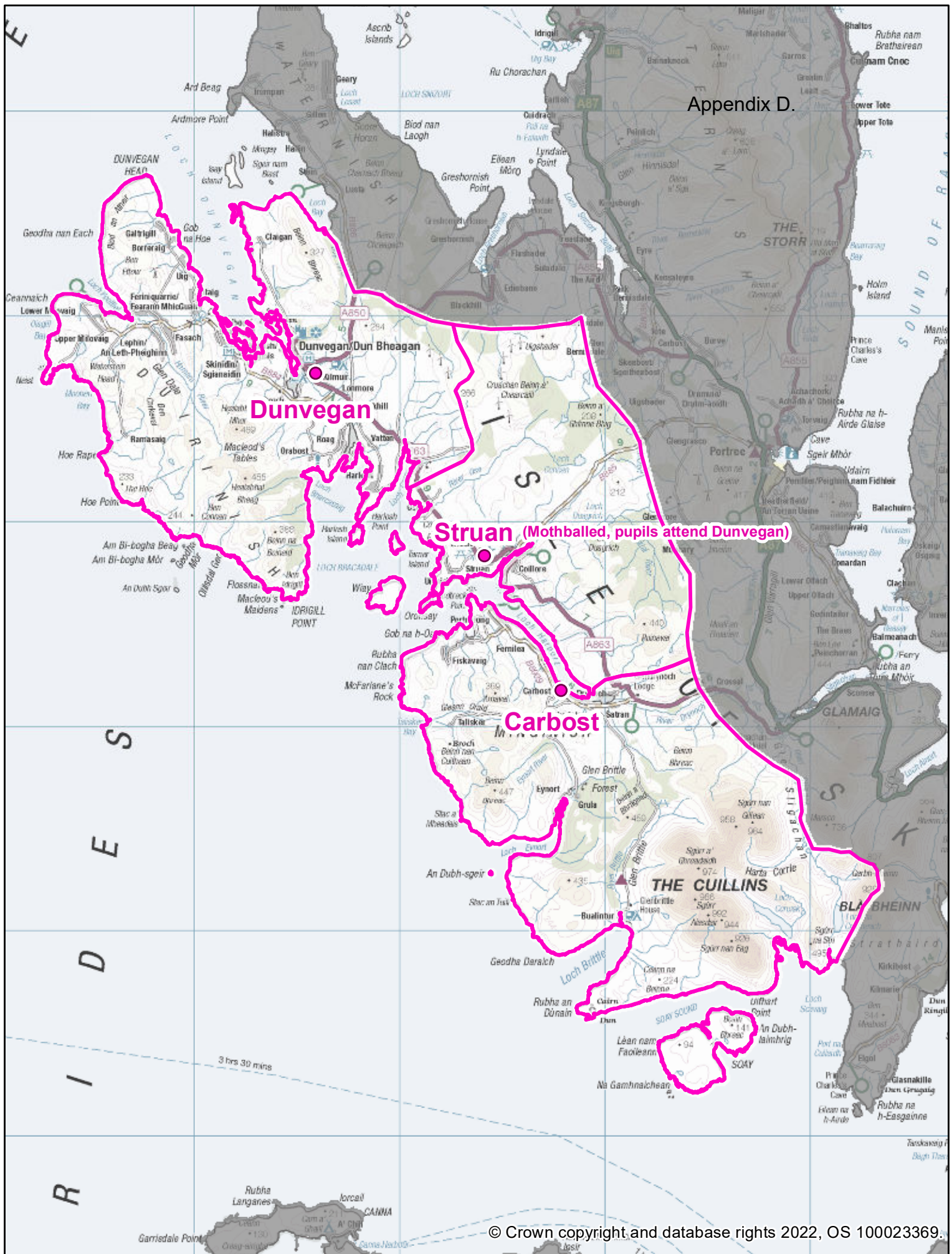
- 3.4 These anticipated new housing yields are combined with expected Placing Request numbers and are used to adjust the pupil numbers moving through the education system. Primary School P1 rolls are based on the Pre-school figures collected from the NHS and Secondary School S1 rolls use the product of last years Primary P7 pupils. All other Primary and Secondary year groups are based on the number of pupils expected to progress through from the previous school year. Adjusted year group figures for each projected year are displayed alongside baseline roll figures.
- 3.5 Total school rolls forecasted are reported against school capacities to highlight current and future school's capacity constraints or where schools have excess capacity.

4 Outputs

- 4.1 Forecasts are aggregated into a single summary sheet for each Associated School Group (ASG) and published annually via the Highland Council's Website. From 2018, we will also be publishing mid-year update sheets to reflect any significant changes to the school estate.
- 4.2 The published School Roll Forecast is used internally as a baseline to enable effective management of the school estate and forms an essential part of the Council's evidence base for informing planning decision making.

END

The Highland Council - Information and Research
Development and Infrastructure
September 2017



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Existing Carbost, Dunvegan and Struan Primary School Catchments

Ref: gis2659
 Date: 07 Dec 2023

N
 1:230,000



Appendix F.

Financial Template

Table 1	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Row 1	Current revenue costs for school proposed for closure			
		Costs for full financial year (projected annual costs)	Additional financial impact on receiving school Dunvegan Primary School	Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)
Row 2	Name of School			
	Struan Primary School			
Row 3	School costs			
Row 4	Employee costs - note 2			
Row 5	teaching staff	101,218	-	101,218
Row 6	support staff	9,784	-	9,784
Row 7	teaching staff training (CPD etc)	253	3	250
Row 8	support staff training	-	-	-
Row 9	Supply costs - note 2	2,428	-	2,428
Row 10				
Row 11	Building costs:			
Row 12	property insurance	246	-	246
Row 13	non domestic rates	-	-	-
Row 14	water & sewerage charges	349	-	349
Row 15	energy costs	14,184	-	14,184
Row 16	cleaning (contract or inhouse)	5,092	-	5,092
Row 17	building repair & maintenance	151	5	146
Row 18	grounds maintenance	-	-	-
Row 19	facilities management costs - note 6	1,924	-	1,924
Row 20	revenue costs arising from capital	-	-	-
Row 21	other	-	-	-
Row 22				
Row 23	School operational costs:			
Row 24	learning materials	1,163	55	1,108
Row 25	catering (contract or inhouse)	6,926	945	5,981
Row 26	SQA costs	-	-	-
Row 27	other school operational costs (e.g. licences)	-	-	-
Row 28				
Row 29	Transport costs: note 3			
Row 30	home to school	4,560	-	4,560
Row 31	other pupil transport costs	-	-	-
Row 32	staff travel	191	-	191
Row 33	SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL	148,469	1,008	147,461
Row 34				
Row 35	Income:			
Row 36	Sale of meals	-	-	-
Row 37	Lets	-	-	-
Row 38	External care provider	-	-	-
Row 39	Other	-	-	-
Row 40	SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL	-	-	-
Row 41				
Row 42	TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL	148,469	1,008	147,461
Row 43				
Row 44	UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR	148,469	1,008	147,461

Table 2	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7
Capital costs		School proposed for closure	Receiving school
Capital Life Cycle cost - note 7			
Third party contributions to capital costs			

Table 3	Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal
property insurance	246
non domestic rates	-
water & sewerage charges	100
energy costs	10,703
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	-
security costs	-
building repair & maintenance	-
grounds maintenance	-
facilities management costs	-
other	-
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL	11,049

Table 4	Non-recurring revenue costs
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	

Table 5	Impact on GAE - note 5
GAE IMPACT	-2242

Notes

1. The total costs incurred for teaching staff (row 5) and support staff (row 6) are required to be included. Column 2 should include the current costs for a full financial year for the school proposed for closure, and column 3 should include the *additional* cost to the receiving school as a result of staff transferring.

For teaching staff, this should include regular teachers, itinerant teachers, learning support teaching staff and special education (ASN) staff.

Itinerant teaching staff includes central support services such as English as additional language support, hearing, visually impaired services, educational psychology services.

For support staff, this should include classroom assistants, administration staff and janitorial staff.

For all staff the costs entered should include salary, NI and pension costs.

If the school proposed for closure has less than 3 staff members, then the cumulative staff costs only should be given in row 5 (for both teaching and support staff), so as to avoid possible disclosure of individual salaries.

Training costs should be identified separately in rows 7 and 8.

2. Supply costs to cover teaching and support staff. This may be held in a central budget, be devolved or shared across the budgets.

3. 'Home to school' pupil transport costs should include those school transport costs incurred in accordance with Council policy. 'Other pupil transport costs' will cover costs incurred for the transport of pupils for activities such as swimming etc

4. Row 30 of column 3 should include the additional transport costs related to the increased home to school transport arrangements that are put in place in accordance with Council policy. This figure is therefore likely to be considerably higher than current costs.

5. This table is to capture the impact on the revenue support grant as a result of changes to GAE. Impact on GAE should consider the issues covered in the GAE section of the guidance document that accompany this template.

6. Facilities management costs will include costs related to caretaking, janitorial and security.

7. The capital costs for the receiving school should be taken across the life cycle of the school in line with the life expectancy of that school. The capital costs for the school proposed for closure should be taken across the same life cycle period.