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Review of Education Provision

**Proposal to Revise the
Catchment Boundary for
Leverhulme Memorial School and
Sir E Scott School
Isle of Harris**

**CONSULTATION REPORT
FEBRUARY 2014**

Roinn an Fhoghlaim is Seirbheisean Chloinne

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**CONSULTATION REPORT:
CATCHMENT BOUNDARY FOR LEVERHULME MEMORIAL SCHOOL AND
SIR E SCOTT SCHOOL, ISLE OF HARRIS**

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Review of Education Provision

CATCHMENT BOUNDARY FOR LEVERHULME MEMORIAL SCHOOL AND SIR E SCOTT SCHOOL, ISLE OF HARRIS

Consultation Report

Report by Director of Education and Children's Services

PROPOSAL:

It is proposed that the catchment areas for Leverhulme Memorial School and Sir E Scott School be defined as indicated in the ordnance survey map which forms Appendix 1 to the Proposal Document with effect from August 2014.

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Comhairle, at its Meeting on 12 September 2013, authorised the Director of Education and Children's Services to proceed to undertake the necessary statutory consultation with parents, staff, pupils and other interested parties affected by the proposal that the catchment areas for Leverhulme Memorial School and Sir E Scott School be defined as indicated in the ordnance survey maps which forms Appendix 1 to the Proposal Document with effect from August 2014 as required by the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.
- 1.2 While there is no legal requirement for a school to have a defined catchment area, local authorities use the definition as an administrative tool so that children living within a catchment area are normally provided with a place at the school serving that area.
- 1.3 Subsequent to the School Estate Review, resulting in the closure of 8 primary schools it was considered appropriate to review school catchment areas to ensure that children and young people have access to the school closest to their home address. Currently a number of anomalies exist whereby children and young people's catchment areas result in them travelling to schools a significant distance from their home when there is a closer school available. In these circumstances, in order for parents to enrol their children in the school closest to their home, they have to submit a placing request and thereby incur additional transport costs.
- 1.4 This document relates to a proposal that the catchment areas for Leverhulme Memorial School and Sir E Scott School be defined as indicated in the ordnance survey map which forms Appendix 1 to the Proposal Document with effect from August 2014.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 2.1 The current requirements for consulting are set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
 - A proposal document was issued as a result of a decision of the Comhairle as detailed in Appendix A. A copy of this document was issued free of charge to the consultees as listed in the Proposal Document and was also published on the Comhairle website.
 - An advert was placed in local newspapers on 24 October 2013 and the consultation ran thereafter for a period of 32 school days until 11 December 2013.
 - Public meetings were held on 20 November 2013.
 - Pupils and staff were also consulted separately.

- Education Scotland involvement included being sent a copy of the proposal document, their visiting the affected schools and meeting with parents, pupils and staff. They also received a copy of all written representations. Education Scotland then prepared a report on the educational aspects of the proposal (Appendix D).
- This Consultation Report is the Comhairle’s response to issues raised during the consultation period including a response to identified inaccuracies in the consultation information.
- This Consultation Report will be published at least three weeks before a final decision is taken by the Comhairle on the proposal.

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

- 2.2 An Initial Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment (Appendix C), in line with statutory requirements, was undertaken in relation to the proposal for the school. There were no discriminatory or detrimental consequences identified to the proposal being implemented. Therefore, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

CONSULTATION MEETINGS

- 3.1 Consultations meetings were held as follows:
- Public meetings at Sir E Scott School and Leverhulme Memorial School, both on 20 November 2013
 - Meetings with staff at Sir E Scott School and Leverhulme Memorial School.

OMISSIONS AND INACCURACIES

- 4.1 Section 8.1 of the Proposal Document contained inaccuracies in the spelling of the following villages: Maaruig and Seilebost. The village of Lickisto was inadvertently omitted from the catchment area list.

REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 The written representations received during the consultation period are detailed below.

Representations from:	Number
• Parents	2
• Parent Council	1
• West Harris Trust	1
TOTAL:	4

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS AND COMHAIRLE RESPONSES

- 6.1 This section details the relevant points raised at public meetings and in the written submissions. A full transcript of the public meeting is included as Appendix B. A copy of all written representations will be published as part of the Report to Comhairle Members.
- 6.2 The responses to the issues raised are detailed below.

EAST COAST BOUNDARY
<p>ISSUE: Manish and Geocrab are part of the Leverhulme School Catchment area, historically, parents from these villages have always placed their children in Sir E Scott Primary School as it was the closest school.</p>
<p>RESPONSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the Proposal Document only specified the change of boundary on the west site of Harris, the purpose of the proposal document was to address anomalies arising out of the school estate review. • The consultation process provides an appropriate forum to consider all issues raised to ensure that students and parents have access to the school nearest to them.

- On the basis of representation received from parents and students regarding school catchment areas the Director of Education and Children's Services would be sympathetic to recommending the inclusion of the villages of Manish and Geocrab within the Sir E Scott School catchment area. He will recommend to the Comhairle that the boundary on the east side of the island be subject to further consultation.

EXTENSION OF THE PROPOSED LEVERHULME MEMORIAL SCHOOL BOUNDARY

- ISSUE:** Concern was expressed that the proposed Leverhulme School boundary on the west side may be extended to include Luskentyre in order to ensure viability of Leverhulme Memorial School
- RESPONSE:**
- There was no representation from Leverhulme parents for the extension of the school boundary beyond that proposed within the Proposal Document
 - There was concern expressed by the Leverhulme parents that if Gaelic and English medium education were not available in the school this could threaten the viability of the school in the future. However, the Comhairle is committed to ensuring the provision of education in Gaelic and English in the foreseeable future.

PARENTAL CHOICE OF SCHOOL

- ISSUE:** Whether parents of children within the villages of Seilebost and Luskentyre should be given a choice of placement between Leverhulme Memorial School and Sir E Scott School with free transport provided.
- RESPONSE:**
- All Comhairle schools have defined boundaries and on this basis transport is contracted consistent with the Comhairle's Home to School Transport Policy.
 - The current consultation process is being undertaken to ensure that boundaries reflect, as far as possible, parents' wishes in addition to ensuring, where possible, children have the shortest and safest route to school.
 - Parents wishing to place their children in schools outwith their catchment area are required to make a placing request and to meet the associated travel costs. However, the current Home to School Travel Policy does offer subsidised transport where there is a contracted vehicle on the route and may be available in some circumstances.

PUPIL CAPACITY AT SIR E SCOTT SCHOOL

- ISSUE:** Concern was expressed that with the growing demand for placements at Sir E Scott School placing requests from outwith the area may result in pupils from Harris not being able to enrol in Sir E Scott Primary School
- RESPONSE:**
- The Comhairle is confident that there is sufficient capacity in Sir E Scott School for current and future demand based on current demographic information.
 - The Comhairle is committed in ensuring that all children in its rural areas have access to their local catchment school.

PHYSICAL CONDITION OF LEVERHULME MEMORIAL SCHOOL

- ISSUE:** The School Estate review guaranteed that children would transfer to a school that was designated as a Condition Category B or above.
- RESPONSE:**
- Leverhulme Memorial School is categorised as Condition C and the Schools Capital Plan priorities will undertake work to raise the condition to a Category B standard.

- A sum of £1.8m has been set aside for capital investment for receiving schools in addition to the core Capital Plan priorities.
- In addition, further capital grant money has been approved in terms of IT (£1.3M) and Gaelic Capital Fund (£500k).

EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMI) REPORT

- 7.1 In line with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was provided by HM Inspectorate on the educational aspects of the proposal to revise the catchment boundary for Leverhulme Memorial School and Sir E Scott School. This report is attached as Appendix D. The Report also identifies issues for consideration by the Comhairle as follows.

EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMI) REPORT
<p>ISSUE: The road condition, distance and inclusion of Geocrab and Manish within the Leverhulme Memorial Catchment</p> <p>RESPONSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents, through historical practice, had assumed that children in the villages of Manish and Geocrab were already in the school catchment area of Sir E Scott and were able to access free school transport on shorter route to Sir E Scott. • The current proposal will recommend that Manish and Geocrab are included within the Sir E Scott Catchment and that pupils from these villages will continue to attend Sir E School and access school transport as detailed in the Home to School Transport policy. • This will be considered as a matter of a separate consultation. Given the particular circumstances, authority is sought not to charge for home to school transport to Sir E Scott School during this exercise.
<p>ISSUE: Sir E Scott School capacity with 89% occupancy may be close to its limit.</p> <p>RESPONSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing requests to Sir E Scott have been largely been linked to the secondary department and put no pressure on the primary department. • The Comhairle is confident that there is sufficient capacity in Sir E Scott School for current and future demand based on current demographic information. • The Comhairle is committed in ensuring that all children in its rural areas have access to their local catchment school.
<p>ISSUE: Category Condition C of Leverhulme Memorial School.</p> <p>RESPONSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverhulme Memorial School is categorised as Condition C and the Schools Capital Plan priorities will undertake work to raise the condition to a Category B standard. • A sum of £1.8m has been set aside for capital investment for receiving schools in addition to the core Capital Plan priorities. • In addition, further capital grant money has been approved in terms of IT (£1.3M) and Gaelic Capital Fund (£500k).

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION WITH PUPILS

- 8.1 Interviews were held with pupils attending Leverhulme Memorial School on 19 November 2013 and Sir E Scott School on 20 November 2013.
- 8.2 The children made the following comments in relation to the proposal to revise the catchment boundary for Leverhulme Memorial School and Sir E Scott School.

Leverhulme Memorial School

- The children like being in Leverhulme School.
- They particularly noted that they like being in a small school where they know everyone, there is room to play, the work is not too hard, teachers are nice and there are different places to do your work.
- The pupils were aware of what the consultation was about as the HMI had been in the school that morning asking about the same issues.
- Pupils felt that everyone in Harris should have a choice about which schools they attend. They wondered where the boundary was on the east coast of Harris. They did not see it as an issue having friends in different parts of Harris as they could see them on the weekend. They did not see any issues in where the boundary was proposed but would prefer if pupils were able to go where they wished.

Sir E Scott School

- Pupils felt that the change of boundary would improve the allocation of pupils between schools and possibly cost less.
- They expressed concern that pupils historically attending Sir E Scott from Geocrab and Mainish should be able to continue to attend Sir E Scott School and not be included in the Leverhulme Memorial School catchment.

8.3 These issues were discussed with the pupils and, where possible, age-appropriate answers provided.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION WITH STAFF

9.1 Teaching and non-teaching staff were invited to attend consultations regarding the Comhairle's proposals. The interviews were held in Leverhulme Memorial School on 19 November 2013 and Sir E Scott School on 20 November 2013. Staff were asked for their views and they made the following comments.

Leverhulme Memorial School

- The costs of buses for families who make placing requests could be prohibitive.
- In some areas of the islands, alternative schools to the catchment school could be closer and therefore not so costly to access on buses. Can allowance be made for the more remote areas of the islands e.g. Harris which now has only 2 schools covering the entire island?
- Letters about the costs for school transport only went out in Sept 2012 to those who were affected last session. This information needs to be more accessible to parents in general.
- It was felt that some parents are not aware of the costs for transport.
- If buses are doing designated school runs and they are passing the homes of children who wish to cross their catchment area boundary, could these buses not be accessed for free by these children as there is no additional cost to the Comhairle for this.
- The east coast boundary needs to be added to the map.
- There is a spelling error in the document. Marvig (is in Lewis) should instead read Maruig?
- The spelling of Sheilbost should be changed to Seilebost - the village spelling?
- Liceasto needs to be added to the list of villages and assigned to the SES catchment area.
- Geocrab and Manish should be assigned to SES as it is a far easier journey for children.
- 7.7. It is not clear whether after this session, pupils who are currently in a school that is not their new catchment school, will continue to receive free transport to school.
- Families with children from zero to three, who are not yet involved in the education system, were not given the consultation document.
- The notice of the meetings has not been on the Gaelic radio, as mentioned in the document.
- There are no notices posted in public areas. This would have been helpful.
- It was suggested that former schools or road ends i.e. Seilebost and Manish could be used as the boundary of the catchments. A line could be drawn from Seilebost to Manish on the map.
- It was suggested that there could be a "no man's land" or neutral zone in between the two catchment areas. This would be where parents could choose, without any need to pay transport costs, to send their children to either school.

Sir E Scott School

- Staff were generally in favour of the proposal although they expressed a wish that Manish and Geocrab should be included in the catchment of Sir E Scott School.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- 10.1 There are no financial consequences associated with the proposal.

CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The consultation process was robust and provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to identify key issues of concern. These issues have been fully considered and the Comhairle's response detailed in sections 6, 7, 8 and 9 above.
- 11.2 The Standards in Scotland's etc Act 2000 requires local authorities "to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential". (Section 2(i))
- 11.3 Education Scotland HMI officers visited Leverhulme Memorial School and Sir E Scott School to speak to parents, pupils and staff. They also had the opportunity to review in detail the proposal document and all written responses.
- 11.4 In summary, the Education Scotland (HMI) Report recognises that children in both schools were aware of the proposals with pupils, parents and staff all requesting that Geocrab and Manish be included within the Sir E Scott School catchment area. They noted that both Headteachers and staff interviewed supported the proposal to review the catchment area with staff generally not having strong views about the proposals as the changes affected very low numbers of children. Concern was expressed about the occupancy in Sir E Scott School. However, there is no suggestion that the school will not be able to accommodate all pupils from the proposed catchment areas. The Comhairle, as indicated by Education Scotland, has reassured parents in Leverhulme Memorial School that the proposed changes will not mean the closure of their school and have shared with the Headteacher and parents information in relation to investment and work plan as part of the Capital Investment Programme. Education Scotland recognise that the proposal is of overall educational benefit and that both schools are able to provide a similar range of activities, including Gaelic Medium Education.
- 11.5 The Director of Education and Children's Services, on reviewing all of the submissions, the Education Scotland report and the Equality Impact Assessment recommends that the best and most sustainable educational provision is for the catchment areas for Leverhulme Memorial School and Sir E Scott School to be defined as indicated in the ordnance survey maps which forms Appendix 1 to the Proposal Document with effect from August 2014 with an adjustment that includes the villages of Liceastol, Manish and Geocrab within the Sir E Scott catchment area. This adjustment will require a further consultation as it did not form part of the original consultation.

RECOMMENDATION

- 12.1 It is recommended that the catchment areas for Leverhulme Memorial School and Sir E Scott School be defined as indicated in the ordnance survey map which forms Appendix 1 to the Proposal Document with effect from August 2014. This would entail moving the previous catchment boundary from the Northton village road end on the A859 to just before the village of Seilebost on the A859 which would effectively move the villages of Scarista, Borve and Horgabost into the Leverburgh School catchment area. Following the outcome of the consultation, authority is sought to consult on the proposal to include the villages of Lickisto, Manish and Geocrab in the Sir E Scott catchment area and not to charge for school transport from these villages to Sir E Scott School pending the outcome of the consultation.

RECOMMENDED CATCHMENT AREA

Leverhulme Memorial	Sir E Scott		
Ardvey	Aline	Geocrab	Meavaig North
Borrisdale	Amhuinnsuidhe	Govig	Meavaig South
Borsam	Ardhasaig	Grosebay	Plockropool
Borve	Ardvey Stockinish	Horsaclete	Rhenigidale
Finsbay	Ardvourlie	Hushinish	Scadabay
Flodabay	Bedersaig	Isle of Scalpay	Scaladale
Horgabost	Bowglas	Kendibig	Seilebost
Leverburgh	Bunavoneadar	Kyles Scalpay	Stockinish
Lingerbay	Carrageich	Leacklee	Tarbert
Northton	Cliasmol	Lickisto	Urgha
Quidinish	Cluer	Luskentyre	
Rodel	Collam	Maaruig	
Scarista	Diracleit	Manish	
Strond	Drinishader		