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Review of Education Provision
at
DALIBURGH SCHOOL (S1-2)
Isle of South Uist

CONSULTATION REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2010

Roinn an Fhoghlaim is Seirbheisean Chloinne

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Review of Education Provision
CONSULTATION REPORT FOR DALIBURGH SCHOOL (S1-2)
Isle of South Uist

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Review of Education Provision at Daliburgh School, Isle of South Uist Consultation Report

Report by Director of Education and Children's Services

CONSIDER THE PROPOSAL THAT :

- **The S1/S2 education provision at Daliburgh School be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011.**
- **That the pupils of S1/2 at Daliburgh School continue their education at Sgoil Lionacleit, from 18 August 2011.**

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Comhairle, at its Meeting on 18 February 2010, 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 regarding the proposed closure of Daliburgh School (S1-2) as required by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 1.2 This decision relates to the implementation of the Strategy for the Future Provision of Education in the Western Isles. The Comhairle is required to provide its statutory services as effectively and efficiently as possible. It is therefore necessary to be strategic in the delivery of education to ensure Best Value. School rolls in the Authority as a whole have been falling year on year for the last thirty years and this, based on population projections, is a continuing trend. This trend has resulted in there being more buildings in the school estate than are considered necessary for the delivery of high quality education.
- 1.3 In order to ensure appropriate investment in education at a time of financial challenges it is necessary that the Comhairle make the most efficient use of its finances and resources. The current level of over-capacity in schools combined with the high maintenance costs and poor condition of many of the school buildings throughout the Western Isles is a significant drain on resources and presents a major obstacle to investment in education and school buildings.
- 1.4 Daliburgh School is designated as a very remote rural school. In terms of Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010, the Comhairle has given special regard to -
 - any viable alternative to the closure proposal,
 - 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 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 CONSULTATION PROCESS

2.1 The current requirements for consulting on proposed school closures are set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

- A proposal document was issued as a result of a decision approved by 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 13 May 2010 and the consultation ran thereafter for a period of 34 school days until 30 June 2010.
- A public meeting was held on Monday, 21 June 2010.
- Pupils and staff were also consulted separately.
- HMle involvement included being sent a copy of the proposal document, their attendance at the public meeting and their visiting the affected schools and meeting with parents, pupils and staff. They also received a copy of all written representations. They 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 legislation, was undertaken in relation to the proposal for the School. There were no discriminatory or detrimental consequences identified in relation 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 meeting at Daliburgh School on 21 June 2010.
 - Meetings with staff at both Daliburgh School and Sgoil Lionacleit were held separately.
 - Meetings with pupils at both Daliburgh School and Sgoil Lionacleit were held separately.

OMISSIONS AND INACCURACIES

4.1 Within the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 there is guidance on how errors or omissions should be addressed. In paragraph 10.1 of the Proposal Document, Daliburgh School was described as an accessible rural school when in fact it is a very remote rural school. An advertisement to that effect was placed in local newspapers. Attention was drawn to the error at the Public Meeting and the correct definition was given. This error was not deemed to be material and therefore no further action was taken in relation to this matter.

REPRESENTATIONS

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

Representations from:	Number
• Individual written representation	1
• Parent Council	1
• Staff Professional Associations	2
• Bòrd na Gàidhlig	1
• NHS Western Isles	1
• Fire Service	1
Total:	7

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 to the Report to Comhairle Members.

6.2 The responses to the issues raised are detailed below.

STAFFING
<p>ISSUE: Parents were looking for assurance that there would be sufficient staffing at Sgoil Lionacleit and that the building could accommodate the pupils from Daliburgh School?</p> <p>RESPONSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sgoil Lionacleit is fully staffed and has the capacity to accommodate the pupils from Daliburgh School. • As a result of parental placing requests applications, all pupils have successfully transferred from Daliburgh S1-2 to Sgoil Lionacleit from August 2010

PRIMARY SCHOOL
<p>ISSUE: Parents were concerned that the Primary School at Daliburgh would close.</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daliburgh Primary School is not part of the School Estate Review consultation. However, the Comhairle has taken a decision to build a new primary school on the site of the current school.

TRANSPORT
<p>ISSUE: Concern was expressed by the community about the condition of the roads in Uist. Clarification was sought about when they would be upgraded.</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a Roads Authority the Comhairle places a great importance on its roads infrastructure and tries to maintain them all to a safe standard. Regular inspections of the network are carried out by engineers. • The Kildonnán section of approximately 1k of the spinal route south is currently the subject of an ERDF application and a start on site is anticipated late in 2011.

HMIe 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 proposed closure of Daliburgh School (S1-2) and the transfer of pupils to Sgoil Lionacleit . This report is attached as Appendix D.

7.2 The Report also identifies issues for consideration by the Comhairle as follows.

HMIe REPORT	
ISSUE:	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar should continue to work with parents to allay concerns on conditions of travel and safeguarding issues.
RESPONSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All bus contractors meet rigorous contractual obligations. All bus drivers have appropriate SCRO checks and the service is delivered to a high standard. Drivers and the public have, where appropriate, made referrals in terms of any nuisance behaviour on buses or child protection concerns. All of these are robustly investigated and dealt with. • The integrated and dedicated transport provision does not have supervisory staff on the buses. Dedicated transport for children with additional support needs, whether taxi or buses, may have auxiliary support provided dependent on assessed needs. Where concerns have been raised regarding passenger behaviour, buses have been fitted with CCTV cameras. • It is observed that on some routes, the adult presence on the bus has a positive effect on pupil behaviour and may reduce bullying or other nuisance behaviour. This makes travel for young people safer.
ISSUE:	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar should continue to assess the likely impact of the proposed travelling arrangements on the environment and on the young people affected by them.
RESPONSE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daliburgh School pupils would use the existing transport structure to access education at Sgoil Lionacleit, with the provision of an additional midi coach. Consequently, the discontinuation of S1/S2 provision at Daliburgh School would produce a minimal negative environmental impact. Within the overall School Estate Review, the Comhairle is confident that there is a significant reduction in its carbon footprint, due to reduced and more efficient energy use. • The distances that pupils have to travel to and from school are clearly important in any assessment of appropriate transport provision. In addition, distances of themselves have to be set in the context of road conditions, and the time that such travelling takes. • The Comhairle will look at solutions which would reduce travelling time for pupils from the furthest away areas, by using minibuses and/or taxis to take pupils to identified pick-up points, so that travel to and from school would be as direct as possible. • To utilise after-school clubs, pupils are issued with passes which can be used on regular scheduled transport at designated pick-up points. • Numbers on buses are subject to regulation and the transport manager ensures that overloads are dealt with by the provision of extra capacity through additional transport. • Numbers of pupils on buses do not exceed the stated capacity. • All bus contractors meet rigorous contractual obligations. All bus drivers have appropriate SCRO checks and the service is delivered to a high standard. Drivers and the public have, where appropriate, made referrals in terms of any nuisance behaviour on buses or child protection concerns. All of these have been robustly investigated and dealt with. • Although the school day would be extended, pupils who currently travel, say that travel time allows for opportunities to socialise.

ISSUE: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar should take full account of the composite response submitted by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

RESPONSE:

- Bòrd na Gàidhlig commented on areas where the Education and Children's Services Department should do further work to promote Gàidhlig and, in particular, the uptake of Gaelic Medium Education.
- As a result, the Education and Children's Services Department has re-focused its bid proposal for Gaelic Specific Grant to work with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and partners to increase the primary enrolment numbers and maximise opportunities for Gaelic Medium Education.
- Gaelic Medium Education is provided in History, Geography, Modern Studies and Home Economics at Sgoil Lionacleit. Gaelic Medium pupils are timetabled together for parts of the week and, where appropriate, pupils will be instructed through the medium of Gaelic.
- The Comhairle in recent years has seen a steady growth in its enrolment in Gaelic Medium Education. The Education and Children's Services Department's revised Gaelic Plan will set a target of at least 50% of P1 enrolments in Gaelic Medium Education over the next 3 years. This is considered realistic on the basis that many parents whose children are enrolled in Croileagan do not enrol their children in Gaelic Medium Education where their local school only provides education through the medium of English.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION WITH PUPILS

- 8.1 Dependent on the size of the school, consultation with pupils was carried out on the basis of a representative focus group and a cross section of stages or whole school. In each school the children and young people were asked to work in groups to identify:
- Benefits in bringing the schools together
 - Issues of concern
 - Areas they felt they might need help with
- 8.2 In this consultation it was the unanimous view of all pupils that they wanted to retain their own school.

Summary of Consultation with Daliburgh School (S1-2) Pupils

Benefits:

- Better facilities at Sgoil Lionacleit eg football pitch, social areas
- New teachers
- Learning new things
- Opportunity to make new friends

Issues of Concern

- Finding their way around
- Meeting new people, new teachers and making friends
- Travel eg the longer journey, getting up early, missing the bus
- Homework
- Larger classes

What pupils will miss from Daliburgh School

- Friends and teachers
- The familiarity of the school eg knowing everyone
- TV in the Common Room
- Having 3 separate breaks
- Short journey to school

RESPONSE:

These issues were discussed with the pupils and where possible answers were provided.

Areas where we might help

- Providing a map of the school
- Buddy groups
- Induction week/days

RESPONSE:

A successful transition has taken place.

Summary of Consultation with Sgoil Lionacleit Pupils as the receiving School

Benefits

- Better facilities at Sgoil Lionacleit
- Better suited to secondary pupils
- Better educational choices
- A smoother transition to S3
- Wider social circle – a bigger school – meeting new people

Issues of Concern

- The Community aspect of the school
- The familiarity of the school
- The leaving dance
- Smaller classes – more attention
- Being close to home
- Short journey to school
- Finding their way around
- Meeting new people and new teachers
- Finding constructive things to do at break time
- Forgetting things
- Not liking teachers
- The longer journey

RESPONSE:

These issues were discussed with the pupils and where possible answers provided.

Areas where we might help

- Run icebreakers
- Make an effort to supply teachers with information pertaining to new pupils
- Put on activities
- Explain layout of school. A map at the front door to show them where to go
- Other people being nice and friendly
- Make sure they are “fully briefed”
- Have workshops to help them meet new people
- More induction days
- Give them clear directions where their classes are

RESPONSE:

A successful transition has taken place.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION WITH STAFF

- 9.1 All teaching and non-teaching staff were invited to attend consultations regarding the Comhairle's proposals. The staff made the following observations which they wished to be recorded.

- Some members of staff expressed the view that almost all parents had accepted, albeit reluctantly, that the S1/2 provision at Daliburgh would cease in August 2011.
- Small pupil cohort in Daliburgh creates difficulties in relation to group activities.
- Smaller setting enables some children to develop greater confidence.
- Social interaction for pupils problematic due to small number.
- Concern expressed over condition of road from Daliburgh to Lionacleit. Lack of development of spinal route.
- At present, upper Primary staff and pupils benefit from support given by the Secondary Science specialist. They would appreciate this support continuing.

Sgoil Lionacleit Staff

- Travel – it was noted that pupils from Eriskay and Daliburgh catchment area currently travel to Sgoil Lionacleit. Any additional pupils from Daliburgh School would also use the existing transport structure, though it may be necessary to enhance the existing transport provision.
- There would be very little effect on the local community in terms of community use of the school since Daliburgh School would stay open as a Primary School.
- Ancillary support would in general stay as it is since the primary school would remain open. Current teaching staff is an Acting Headteacher and 2-5 FTE itinerant staff. Some of the itinerant staff are already timetabled in Sgoil Lionacleit and would be given revised timetables. Any staff transfers would be conducted under existing Comhairle terms and conditions.
- Concern over perception of staff at Daliburgh School if they felt that Sgoil Lionacleit teachers were happy enough to see pupils from Daliburgh Secondary coming to Sgoil Lionacleit thus ensuring closure of Daliburgh Secondary.
- Teachers thought that educationally it was better for them to have pupils from S1 through to examination level rather than pupils coming at S3.
- An acknowledgment that Daliburgh Secondary (& Paible) have always prepared pupils well for their move to Sgoil Lionacleit at S3. However, also a realisation that the numbers at all the schools have fallen quite considerably in the last few years.
- An awareness that many of the current S1 at Daliburgh had requested transfer to S2 at Sgoil Lionacleit. Currently, 9/11 had asked to transfer, though it was thought that all in fact were coming. If this were to be the case, there would be no pupils in Daliburgh Secondary in the coming session.
- It was noted that in the last academic session it had been cheaper to educate a child at Daliburgh Secondary than at Sgoil Lionacleit (£9,922 – Daliburgh/£10,337 – Sgoil Lionacleit). However, Daliburgh costs would rise significantly if the pupil roll went down.
- No objections whatsoever to Daliburgh pupils coming to Sgoil Lionacleit.

CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Throughout this consultation the Comhairle has given special regard to the provision for rural schools within Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010,
- 10.2 In recognition of the impact of school closures on local communities, the Comhairle undertook, in addition to statutory consultation, community conversations in order to share with stakeholders the challenges for education together with its aspirations for a review of educational provision designed to provide 'Quality Education in Quality Buildings'.
- 10.3 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.

- 10.4 The Standards in Schools (Scotland) 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”. (Para 2.1)
- 10.5 HMle visited Daliburgh School (S1-2) to speak to parents, pupils and staff. They attended the public meeting on 21 June 2010 and had the opportunity to review in detail the proposal document and all written responses.
- 10.6 In summary, the HMle Report recognises the merits of the closure proposal.
“The proposal to discontinue secondary education at Daliburgh School and transfer young people to Sgoil Lionacleit with effect from August 2011, offers clear educational benefits to young people directly affected by the proposal. These benefits relate to the social and personal development of the children and to improved access to curricular opportunities. The proposal makes the delivery of subjects through the medium of Gaelic more viable for young people of Daliburgh School and Sgoil Lionacleit. It is not likely that the proposal will adversely affect the quality of education for children in Sgoil Lionacleit. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has appropriate plans in place for supporting young people as they prepare for the proposed move. Increasingly, Sgoil Lionacleit is being selected by parents and children in preference to Daliburgh School for secondary education. The proposal has the support of most parents and other members of the local community.”
- 10.7 The HMle report provides evidence that the proposal to amalgamate Daliburgh School (S1-2) with Sgoil Lionacleit will produce:
Educational benefits:
- Can deliver Curriculum for Excellence effectively
 - Will assure more effective use of resources – financial, staffing and estate
 - Will ensure that pupils are educated in buildings fit for the 21st Century
- 10.8 In its submission in response to the consultations, Bòrd na Gàidhlig commented on areas where the Education and Children’s Services Department should do further work to promote Gàidhlig and, in particular, the uptake of Gaelic Medium Education. However, the Bòrd welcomed Comhairle nan Eilean Siar’s aspiration that GME should be available in all primary schools in the Western Isles through the implementation of the Schools Estate Strategy. In particular, Bòrd na Gàidhlig would not oppose the discontinuation of the S1-2 provision at Daliburgh School.
- 10.9 The Director of Education and Children’s Services, on reviewing all of the submissions, the HMle report, Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s response and the Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix C) recommends that the best and most sustainable educational provision for the current catchment area of Daliburgh School (S1/2) would be provided at Sgoil Lionacleit and that the education provision should be discontinued at Daliburgh Primary School from 30 June 2011.
- 10.10 The Director of Education and Children’s Services recommends that a transfer of pupils from Daliburgh School (S1-2) to Sgoil Lionacleit will have educational benefits and that the learning opportunities and experience for pupils will be significantly widened. There will be:
- increased opportunities for pupils, both curricular and extra-curricular activities;
 - greater flexibility in grouping children for learning and teaching;
 - greater flexibility in the deployment of staff to meet learning needs;
 - a larger staff will offer a wider range of expertise resulting in increased opportunities for sharing effective practice, more collegiate support and a wider range of learning and teaching approaches;
 - more management support to promote school improvement.
- 10.11 Pupils and parents of Daliburgh School (S1-2) would have access to a modern educational establishment, which is fully equipped and designed to meet the needs of pupils and fully deliver a Curriculum for Excellence. There is an opportunity for the pupils, staff and parents of both schools to benefit from working together to ensure that the very best quality of learning and teaching is available to all pupils, irrespective of their needs or abilities.
- 10.12 The proposal will result in pupils at Daliburgh School (S1-2) attending a building that is modern and better designed for the delivery of a 21st Century curriculum.

- 10.13 The closure of Daliburgh School (S1-2) will both improve efficiency of the school estate and enable investment in education and provide a better educational experience for pupils.
- 10.14 Should the proposal be approved the Director of Education and Children’s Services will work with parents and staff in Daliburgh and Sgoil Lionacleit s to develop a transition plan that will ensure an effective transition for pupils and staff to Sgoil Lionacleit .

RECOMMENDATION

- 11.1 It is recommended that:
- a) the S1/S2 education provision at Daliburgh School be discontinued with effect from 30 June 2011; and
 - b) the pupils of S1/2 at Daliburgh School continue their education at Sgoil Lionacleit, from 18 August 2011.