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**Education Provision
Consultation Document – May 2009**

Review of Educational Provision

BAYBLE SCHOOL
Isle of Lewis

Roinn an Fhoghlaim

EDUCATION PROVISION: CONSULTATION DOCUMENT - MAY 2009**REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISION****BAYBLE SCHOOL****INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Comhairle aims to allocate resources in a way which will secure the best possible education for pupils in the Western Isles. Implicit in this key objective is the effective deployment of financial and other resources in order to secure continuous improvement in educational achievement and attainment, and provide better facilities in the most viable setting achievable.
- 1.2 The Comhairle conducted statutory consultation on proposed discontinuation of S1-2 provision in Bayble School in February 2008 and decided in March 2008 that S1-2 provision in the school would discontinue from June 2009. Implementation of that decision was deferred in June 2008 to allow the Comhairle to consider the implications for extending provision in 7 schools to S1-3 in the context of delivery of the S1-3 stage of Curriculum for Excellence. Following consideration of a report on these implications, the Comhairle agreed in September 2008 to the discontinuation of the secondary department of Bayble School from August 2011 or such time, whichever was the later, as the new Nicolson Institute was able to accommodate all secondary pupils from Lewis schools. The decision taken at that time in respect of all S1-2 secondary departments also included the proviso that, if at any time prior to implementation of the decision, the Director of Education considered that the number of placing requests by-passing S1-S2 education in any of the S1-2 departments was such as to render them unviable, a report would be brought to the Comhairle on statutory consultation with a view to making the date of closure of that S1-S2 unit earlier.
- 1.3 In the case of Bayble School, the sharp drop in pupil roll projected for S1 in August 2009, is considered to render this stage of education unviable. In consideration of that factor, the Comhairle concluded on 30 April 2009 to proceed to statutory consultation in respect of the possible discontinuation of the S1-S2 department of Bayble School with effect from August 2010, on the basis of transferring incoming S1 pupils to The Nicolson Institute with effect from August 2009, and allowing the current S1 pupils to complete the S1-S2 stage of their education in Bayble School, prior to transfer to S3 in The Nicolson Institute in August 2010.
- 1.4 Prior to the decision of 30 April 2009, informal meetings were held with the Parent Councils of the three Point Schools in March 2009 and with the parents of pupils in Primary 5-7 in April 2009. The consensus at the April 2009 meeting was to proceed to statutory consultation on discontinuation according to the timetable indicated in 1.3 above.

LEGAL ASPECTS

- 2.1 In terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended, the closure of schools is subject to a number of formal processes, including public consultation, and in the case of secondary departments a referral to Scottish ministers if schools are more than 10 miles from the receiving school.

PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The Comhairle decided in September 2008 to close the secondary department of Bayble School with effect from August 2011 or such time, whichever was the later, as the new Nicolson Institute was able to accommodate all secondary pupils from Lewis schools. The current proposal is for the closure of the secondary department in Bayble School to take effect from the earlier date of 1 July 2010. Consequently, with effect from 19 August 2010 the School would become Bayble Primary School. A final decision on the matter will be taken by the Comhairle at a meeting on 8 June 2009 following consultations with pupils currently in P5-7, parents of pupils and parents of pre-school children at the affected schools, the Teaching Staff Associations and the relevant Parent Councils. The consultation with parents will take place in the form of a public meeting in Bayble School on **26 May 2009 at 8.00 pm** at which the Comhairle's proposals will be explained in detail and to which all parents concerned will be invited. The Comhairle will also take into consideration any written representations on the proposals which may be submitted to the Chief Executive at Council Offices, Sandwick Road, Stornoway, **by 5.00pm on Monday, 1 June 2009**.
- 3.2 The Acting Director of Education's Report on the outcome of the consultation will be considered in the first instance by the Comhairle's Education and Children's Services Committee which will meet on 8 June 2009 at 12 noon and make a recommendation to the Comhairle at its meeting on 8 June 2009 at 7.30 pm.

CURRENT ROLL AND ROLLS PROJECTED TO 2011/12

- 4.1 The current and projected school rolls for Bayble School are:

Year	S1	S2	Total
2008/09	9	16	28
2009/10	5	9	15
2010/11	25	5	30
2011/12	19	25	44

- 4.2 The roll for 2008-09 was originally 10 but reduced in the course of the year. The projected rolls for 2010/11 and 2011/12 are based on the current rolls of Aird, Bayble and Knock, and do not take account of possible placing requests.

PLACING REQUESTS

- 5.1 For Bayble School the placing requests from 2005 to 2008 and the information currently available regarding placing requests for 2009 are shown below.

Year	To Nicolson Institute	From Nicolson Institute	Total Bayble S1 Roll
2009	10	0	5
2008	14	1	10
2007	13	0	16
2006	14	1	12
2005	13	0	11

- 5.2 As can be seen from the above table the percentage of pupils from the Point area electing to attend Bayble School for the S1-2 stage of their education has ranged from 33.3% to 53.5%, with the percentage in all years except 2007 being below 50%.

OPTIONS

- 6.1 The projected roll for S1 for 2009-10, and therefore for S2 for 2010-11 is five pupils. In terms of projections for 2010-11, early indications from informal feedback from parents of pupils currently in Primary 6 are that 17 pupils may opt to remain in Bayble. However, the actual number electing to remain in Bayble may be lower, and the historical perspective would give a valid basis for making such an assumption.
- 6.2 The options that have been considered in the context of the current proposal are:
- the continuation of the status quo in accordance with the Comhairle decision of September 2008, or
 - transferring the incoming S1 to The Nicolson Institute from August 2009, with the current S2 remaining to complete the S1-2 stage of their education in Bayble School.
- 6.3 Another option examined since the January 2008 consultation process that led to the decision to discontinue S1-2 provision in Bayble was the possibility of extending S1-2 provision in all schools to S1-3. The Comhairle commissioned an external report into the viability of that option. That report concluded that there would be potentially significant additional costs in staffing and in accommodation. In addition to the financial implications the biggest difficulty related to the curricular options open to pupils in the schools concerned, as they would have significantly less choice than they would have experienced in the Nicolson Institute, and that there would be the consequent effect of significantly reducing curricular choice in the Nicolson Institute. This would then impact adversely by reducing the choice available in S4-6, for all pupils, both those attending the S1-6 schools from S1-6 and those transferring at S4. The Comhairle considered this option but concluded not to proceed with it.

THE BALANCE OF EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGE

- 7.1 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 places considerable duties on Education Authorities. In particular, it is the duty of the authority 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. In the context of planning for full implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, which is at the heart of current developments to fulfil the requirements of the Act, schools are expected to ensure that all pupils become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.
- 7.2 The current consultation has been triggered by concern over the educational issues attendant on small pupil cohorts in terms of ensuring that the potential of pupils is fully developed. While there could possibly be a larger cohort in S1 in 2010, the immediate concerns relate to the five pupils who will transfer from Primary 7 in Bayble School to S1 in Bayble School in August 2009, having been together as a group for a large part of their primary education. It is noted that 10 other incoming S1 pupils in the Point area have expressed the intention of transferring to The Nicolson Institute.
- 7.3 The remaining five pupils will not be able to benefit from the enriched experience that integrating in a larger context and meeting with pupils from different feeder primary schools can bring, in terms of intellectual challenge and social interaction. It brings into question the capacity of the educational experience available to them to provide both challenge and enjoyment, which are key principles of curriculum design. These statements are in no sense a criticism of the delivery of education in the secondary department of Bayble School, but rather reflect the considerable task facing teaching staff in providing the usual high quality of learning experiences to such a small cohort.

- 7.4 Pupils would continue in this small group for most of their education for two years, with the possible exception of music and PE, where they could be taught as a single group along with S2 pupils in 2009-10 and S1 pupils in 2010-11. Thereafter the pupils would transfer at the beginning of S3 to the Nicolson Institute. This transition to a large school in S3 could be difficult for them after operating as a very small group for such an extended period of time.
- 7.5 The quality indicators in the HMle guide for self-evaluation in schools, How Good is Our School? include the following themes under the heading *Teaching for effective learning*:
- The learning climate and teaching approaches
 - Teacher-pupil interaction including learners' engagement
- 7.6 Where a class size is small, the opportunities to work with a variety of other young people, that is a key aspect of a stimulating learning environment, are restricted. The best teaching approaches involve paired work and group work, with rotation in the membership of groups and pairs. Varying membership is not possible with small class sizes. In a larger class group it is easier for teachers to provide co-operative learning experiences in groups and pairs that meet the varying needs of learners, and that are at an appropriate pace for individuals. Research shows that students working together engage more deeply with their learning and understand more fully the concepts and materials with which they are grappling. Not only is there improvement in achievement, but those learning by co-operative means also are likely to be more creative, to show improved self-esteem and to evidence greater psychological well-being. Co-operative learning, which is a key element of the methodology promoted to deliver Curriculum for Excellence is considered to work best in class groups which are not below 20 pupils. Class sizes below this figure potentially make it more problematic for teachers to provide a stimulating learning environment, with good group dynamics and well-paced teaching and learning approaches.
- 7.7 In addition to this co-operative working, learners are also expected to learn to work independently. Independent learning may also be compromised where the teaching group is small, as teaching staff will have to exercise great care not to give too much attention to pupils and to allow them to develop the necessary independence.
- 7.8 In terms of out of class activities, which contribute to the personal and social development of pupils, the opportunities for social interaction are very limited when year groups are small.

PUPIL COSTS

- 8.1 The annual budgeted school running cost per pupil is obtained by dividing the total budgeted school running cost by the school roll. The total cost comprises of the following.
- Staff (teaching and non teaching)
 - Premises (e.g. lighting, heating, maintenance, cleaning etc)
 - Supplies (including books, materials and educational equipment)
 - School transport
 - Catering
 - Other School Costs (e.g. Parent Councils, Administration, Examination costs where applicable etc).

- 8.2 The latest available figures for Bayble School secondary pupil costs are for 2007/08, and are shown in the following table along with the relevant comparators.

Detail	Amount
Scottish Average	£4,675
Western Isles Secondary School Average	£7,295
The Nicolson Institute	£5,165
Average for designated comparator Authorities	£5,500
Bayble Secondary School	£13,041

THE NEW POINT SCHOOL

- 9.1 In addition to the educational reasons for moving to an earlier discontinuation, there are practical reasons relating to the building project which require to be considered. The location which had the unanimous agreement of the Parent Councils in Point as the site for the new school is the present Bayble Primary Department site. The current draft timetable for the building of the new school anticipates a start to the building programme in 2011, for completion in 2012. This programme was devised in the context of the date for discontinuation of S1-2 agreed by the Comhairle in September 2008. However, the actual timing of construction will not be finalised until a preferred bidder has been selected and has had input to the agreement of a Construction Programme.
- 9.2 The freedom to manage the construction programme within the 2010-2012 two year period and a greater proportion of new-build are seen as major attractions for the construction sector. An earlier discontinuation of S1/S2 would increase the likelihood of the Contractor choosing to schedule the works earlier within the above two year period and could allow an earlier start to building the new school. There would be a much more self-contained site for the operation of the primary department if the existing primary accommodation were to be demolished and the primary department were to transfer to the existing S1/S2 building. This would allow the construction site to be sealed off while construction goes ahead and would thus be a more attractive option for the contractors to carry out their work.
- 9.3 With an earlier discontinuation of S1/S2 provision as proposed in the current consultation there is the possibility of construction starting as soon as August 2010. If, however, S1/2 were to continue in Bayble until the completion of The Nicolson Institute (currently programmed for summer 2012) accommodation for both primary and secondary pupils would have to be provided in the existing two-storey building and/or demountable units, following demolition of the current primary accommodation. There would undoubtedly be financial and programming implications arising from this.

DISTANCE TO THE RECEIVING SCHOOL

- 10.1 In the case of Bayble School the distance to the designated receiving school, The Nicolson Institute, is 7 miles. Consequently, in relation to paragraph 2.1 of this Report, a final decision on the proposals rests with the Comhairle. Pupils from the furthest parts of Point would be required to travel up to 11 miles as indeed they require to do so for S3-6 secondary education. It is estimated that the maximum travelling time for pupils would be 30 minutes each way.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF DEPLOYMENT

- 11.1 The conditions and provisions applicable to non-promoted resident and itinerant staff affected by closure of S1-2 provision are covered by a Local Negotiating Committee for Teaching staff agreement of June 2008. This agreement covers individual consultation, re-deployment to another school/schools, continuing professional development opportunities to prepare for transfer, and possible options for early severance. The situation in respect of promoted staff has been discussed at LNCT and is scheduled to be the subject of a report to LNCT in June 2009.

Professional development

- 11.2 In the year prior to discontinuation, staff will have significantly reduced class-contact, and it is recommended that the non-contact time available will be allocated to CPD related to a potential move to an S1-6 school, and in particular to the courses and assessment arrangements for SQA certification. This can be done through familiarisation with documentation, accessing online sites related to their subject area, and by arranging opportunities for work-shadowing, team-teaching, and attendance at department meetings of the relevant S1-6 school. The priorities in these should be agreed at annual individual Professional Review and Development meetings and arrangements made through the relevant Headteachers.
- 11.3 During this development phase for Curriculum for Excellence, staff will also be engaging with all necessary aspects of preparation for implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.
- 11.4 During this intervening year, if a vacancy were to occur in an S1-2 school or in The Nicolson Institute, teachers will have the opportunity to consider a move to cover part of that vacancy, for example to cover the 0.3 FTE of a probationer timetable.

CONSIDERATION OF OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS

- 12.1 It is always the case that, in situations of this nature, other relevant factors should be considered. In formulating the proposals the authority has taken into account factors such as community use of the school, rural sustainability and other factors which might be unique to the local situation. Such factors are particularly relevant if whole school closure is proposed, and were considered in the 2008 consultation. They are being considered again in the present consultation, which is for an earlier discontinuation of a stage of education for the reasons given in this report. The facility will remain as an operational school but serving primary and pre-school education purposes only. The premises would remain available for community use, although with potentially fewer rooms available than at present until the new school is ready for use. It is considered that the number of rooms available will be more than sufficient to meet the needs of the current level of use of the school. It is also noted that there are other very good facilities in the Point area, such as the Aird Community Centre and Ionad Stoodie that can be used by the community.

CURRENT PROPOSALS

- 13.1 Arising from the factors detailed in Sections 4, 7 and 9 of this report the current proposal would change the basic provision to that of primary and pre-school provision at an earlier stage than the date agreed by the Comhairle in September 2008. The proposal is underpinned by educational consideration for the incoming secondary cohorts in 2009, 2010 and 2011, and by the possibility of an earlier start to the building programme for the new Point School.