



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

Department of Education

Sandwick Road, Stornoway. HS1 2BW
Rathad Shanndabhaig, Steornabhagh. HS1 2BW

Education Provision Consultation Document – February 2006

Proposal for the Review of the
Common Boundary of the Catchment Areas
for Stornoway and Laxdale Primary Schools
Isle of Lewis

Roinn an Fhoghlaim

PROPOSAL FOR THE REVIEW OF THE COMMON BOUNDARY OF THE CATCHMENT AREAS FOR STORNOWAY AND LAXDALE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Report by Director of Education

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 It is a legal requirement that all schools have a precisely defined catchment area and consequently that any parental aspiration to place a pupil outwith the catchment area for any particular school be the subject of a formal placing request.
- 1.2 The Comhairle, at its Meeting on 3 November 2005, authorised the Director of Education to proceed to undertake the necessary statutory consultations with parents of pupils concerned and the appropriate School Boards in terms of Section 22(A) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended, on a proposal to review and define the common catchment boundary line for Stornoway and Laxdale Primary Schools.

BACKGROUND

- 2.1 When the area formerly referred to as Manor Farm became the subject of major housing development, and consequent population growth, in recent decades the school catchment boundaries in the Urquhart Gardens/Cearns Area was never adequately defined. The whole of the former 'Manor Farm' area is in fact shown as being within the catchment areas of both Stornoway and Laxdale Primary Schools. This situation is considered to be inappropriate. However, while both schools operated below their maximum capacities the issue was not brought into such sharp focus.
- 2.2 Prior to extensive housing development, this area of farmland had divided Laxdale from the Manor Park area of Stornoway, and thus gave clear physical expression to the catchment boundaries for the two schools as they existed at that time.
- 2.3 Another factor which creates a need for the matter to be addressed is that this development, and continuing private and public sector housing growth in other parts of the Laxdale area, have resulted in a situation where Laxdale School tends to fill to capacity. The school was remodelled and refurbished in 1998 to provide for a working capacity of the order of 200 pupils. However, recent pressures have compelled the Comhairle to site temporary units at the school to accommodate the additional numbers.
- 2.4 With respect to Stornoway Primary factors such as out-migration from the town of Stornoway to the surrounding districts, along with falling rolls, have caused a substantial reduction in the number of pupil enrolments at this school by comparison with the peaking of its roll, in the 1970s and 80s, with well over 600 pupils.

- 2.5 The Government has recently stressed to all Local Authorities that they have a duty to respond to the changing landscape against which education must be provided. There are many examples of such changes but the pattern of demographic movement described above is a common one.
- 2.6 Statutory consultations on a proposal to review the catchment areas of Stornoway Primary and Laxdale Primary Schools were carried out in 2004. At the December 2004 series of meetings, it was agreed that the catchment areas of the two schools remain unchanged. Despite this the roll of Laxdale School has continued to grow with further major housing expansion still to take place. In light of this the Comhairle has therefore agreed to a re-examination of the matter.

NEW INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM HOUSING DEPARTMENT

- 3.1 **Newvalley (Marybank)** – 24 houses recently completed. Two further sites currently being investigated for a further 25 houses in this area.
- 3.2 **Blackwater (Bridge Cottages)** – 14 houses currently under construction and 36 more being considered on another two sites in the same area.
- 3.3 **Marybank (Dormitory Site)** – Outline planning permission for 80 new houses.
- 3.4 **Tong Road** – Survey currently underway to assess suitability for housing. Possibly up to 50 houses.
- 3.5 **Private Housing** – Numerous private houses under construction throughout the area. This is likely to add a further 20 units within the next 3 years.

CONCLUSION

- 4.1 In view of the factors detailed above the Comhairle is compelled to examine the situation with the intention of precisely defining the catchment boundary line as a primary consideration and also to redress the balance of rolls in these schools in the future. This is not an uncommon situation. Other areas face similar problems and, as stated above, the Government has stressed that all Local Authorities have a duty to respond to the changing landscape against which education must be provided.
- 4.2 It is therefore proposed that statutory consultations be held on a proposal to define the catchment areas for Laxdale Primary and Stornoway Primary Schools as follows.

Laxdale Primary School:

- Laxdale, Newvalley, Guershader, Newmarket and Marybank

Stornoway Primary School:

- Steinish, Stornoway, Cearns, Urquhart Gardens, Memorial Avenue and the Dormitory Site.

CAPACITY OF SCHOOLS AND CURRENT AND PROJECTED ROLLS

5.1

School	Roll at 01.09.06	Current Maximum Working Capacity
Stornoway Primary	312	460*
Laxdale Primary	247	250

(* While the roll of Stornoway Primary used to be much higher than this figure, certain factors have to be taken into account. For example it had some 'portakabin' accommodation which has been removed. Also some classrooms have been converted for use as pre-school accommodation).

- 5.2 The projections of future rolls are, insofar as possible, based on current information. Where appropriate, estimated figures are inserted. At this stage, account cannot be taken of inward and outward migration in relation to the catchment areas of each school

Laxdale	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	TOTAL
Actual Roll 2004-05	28	28	35	36	43	36	26	232
Actual Roll 2005-06	39	28	28	35	38	43	36	247
Projected Roll 2006-07	36	39	28	28	35	38	43	247
Projected Roll 2007-08	38	38	39	28	28	35	38	244
Projected Roll 2008-09	38	38	38	39	28	28	35	244
Projected Roll 2009-10	38	38	38	38	39	28	28	247
Projected Roll 2010-11	38	38	38	38	38	39	28	255
Projected Roll 2011-12	38	38	38	38	38	38	39	267

Stornoway Primary	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	TOTAL
Actual Roll 2004-05	44	44	42	48	56	33	43	310
Actual Roll 2005-06	36	45	44	46	50	57	34	312
Projected Roll 2006-07	39	36	45	44	46	50	57	317
Projected Roll 2007-08	39	39	36	45	44	46	50	299
Projected Roll 2008-09	39	39	39	36	45	44	46	288
Projected Roll 2009-10	39	39	39	39	36	45	44	281
Projected Roll 2010-11	39	39	39	39	39	36	45	276
Projected Roll 2011-12	39	39	39	39	39	39	36	270

TRAVEL

- 6.1 As the whole of the Urquhart Gardens/Cearns area is less than one mile from Stornoway Primary School, free school transport cannot be granted. However, it is appropriate, should this proposal be implemented, that a manned Children's Crossing be re-established on the Laxdale Road north of the Manor roundabout.

CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

- 7.1 This document outlines the background to the Council's proposals in detail and provides information on the proposed arrangements for the definition of the future catchment areas for both schools.
- 7.2 The relevant School Boards are also being consulted and consultation with parents will take the form of a **Public Meeting in Laxdale Primary School at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 28 February 2006**, at which the Council's proposals will be explained in detail, and to which parents concerned are invited. The Council will also take into consideration any written representations on the proposals, which may be submitted to the **Director of Corporate Services at the Council Offices, Stornoway, by 4.00pm on Monday, 13 March 2006**.

RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

- 8.1 In order to address the requirements for educational provision in a rational and fair way throughout the Western Isles the Comhairle has stated the following key policies:
- a) The Comhairle is committed to provide the highest quality of educational opportunity and experience for school pupils within available resources and will arrange education provision within agreed criteria.
 - b) In order to maintain an adequate level of provision it is necessary for the Comhairle to allocate its resources in a way which will secure the best possible education for pupils in the Western Isles. Implicit in this objective is the effective deployment of financial and other resources in order to provide better educational facilities. The Comhairle believes that it must continuously look at the provision of education in the Western Isles, to plan ahead and to determine the best way in which educational facilities of a higher standard can be made available for present and future generations.
 - c) When allocating school places in the Comhairle's primary and secondary schools, the following order of priority shall apply:
 - (a) pupils already attending the school;
 - (b) pupils within the school's catchment area;
 - (c) if the order of entry within the school's catchment area requires to be determined then the following order of priority will apply:
 - (i) those pupils with siblings already attending the school; and then
 - (ii) those pupils who would be best suited to attend a particular school having regard to transport considerations; and then
 - (iii) by order of date in which the parents' application for their child(ren)'s enrolment was received by the school;
 - (d) pupils who, in the judgment of the authority, have medical, special educational or other specific needs which can best be met at a particular school;
 - (e) pupils who are the subject of a placing request in the following order of priority:
 - (i) those pupils with siblings already attending the school; and then
 - (ii) those pupils for whom attendance at a particular school would be most suitable having regard to transport considerations¹; and then
 - (iii) by order of date in which the parents' placing request was received by the authority.

PROPOSAL

- 9.1 It is proposed that, with effect from August 2007, the boundary line which divides the catchment areas for Stornoway Primary School from that of Laxdale Primary School be confirmed as the HS1 postcode line, as drawn on the map which forms the appendix to the consultation document.

MML/DS
01 February 2006

¹ Parents are required to meet additional transport costs arising as a result of a placing request.