



REVIEW OF CATCHMENT AREAS: DALIBURGH AND IOCHDAR SCHOOLS

Report by Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to inform the Comhairle of a request received to review and rezone the catchment boundary for two schools in South Uist and to seek approval to commence the first informal stage of statutory consultation in relation to the request.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Following the closure of Stoneybridge School in 2011, the full catchment of that school, namely the townships of Stoneybridge, North Stoneybridge and Ormiclete, were subsumed in the catchment for Iochdar School.
- 2.2 A number of parents resident within the current Iochdar School catchment, predominantly resident within the old Stoneybridge catchment, have chosen to make placing requests to Daliburgh School. Stated reasons have included proximity to Daliburgh School compared to Iochdar and links to childcare and after-school provision at Cothrom.
- 2.3 As per Comhairle policy, children resident out-with the school catchment that are subject to a placing request for another school are not entitled to school transport and parents are responsible for making their own alternative transport provision.
- 2.4 Following a meeting of Daliburgh Parent Council, the Comhairle received a formal letter from that body requesting a review be undertaken to rezone the catchment of Daliburgh School to include Snishival and all townships south of that point.
- 2.5 School catchment boundary rezoning is subject to the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as defined in schedule 1 para. 4 (a) of the Act. If approved, the consultation on this matter must be conducted in accordance with the stipulations of the Act; the first stage of which is to seek committee approval to commence consultation at the informal stage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle consider the request from Daliburgh Parent Council regarding a rezoning of the catchment of the school and agree to the commencement of the informal stage of the statutory consultation process.**

Contact Officer: Donald Macleod, Chief Officer Tel: 211596

Appendix: None

Background Papers: [School \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010 – Statutory Guidance](#)

IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	There are no direct financial implications at this stage related to the approval of the recommendation but it should be recognised that significant officer time will be required to undertake the statutory consultation and this incurs an indirect cost to the service. Should the full consultation process conclude in favour of the proposals, there will be a financial implication to the Comhairle in terms of provision of transport and this will be detailed fully in a future Report, if the matter proceeds.
Legal	The rezoning of a school catchment area is a recognised action within the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (Sch 1 para. 4 (a)). As such, the consultation must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Act. The consultation must also consider other statutory obligations upon the Education Authority, such as those defined in the: Education (Scotland) Act 1980; Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000; Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Acts 2004 & 2009; Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006; and the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	The recommendation does not impact on any currently identified strategic risks. If approved, future stages of the consultation will consider other risk implications.
Equalities	An equality impact assessment is not required at this stage because the report is only seeking to commence informal consultation currently. This is a requirement of the next stage of consultation.
Corporate Strategy	Support Children, Families and Young People: - Ensure schools and lifelong learning are at the heart of our communities, with particular emphasis on Gàidhlig, digital skills and new technologies. Support Caring and Resilient Communities and Quality of Life: - Nurture the safety and resilience of our communities.
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	Consultation on this matter is defined in the 2010 Act, as detailed above.

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 During the consultation on the closure of Stoneybridge School, conducted in 2010, it was identified that the catchment of the school, comprising of the three middle district townships of Stoneybridge, North Stoneybridge and Ormiclete, be merged into the catchment of lochdar School in full, with effect from August 2011.
- 5.2 Following the Comhairle vote to proceed with the closure of Stoneybridge School in 2010, the school closed in June 2011 and the catchment area for lochdar School was subsequently extended to incorporate the three townships, moving the catchment boundary effectively to the junction of the Ormiclete road and the A865 where the Cothrom premises is situated.
- 5.3 In recent years, several parents resident in the middle district part of the catchment for lochdar School have made placing requests for their children to attend Daliburgh School. As such, they do not have entitlement to access home-to-school transport.

DETAIL

- 6.1 Daliburgh Parent Council has written to the Comhairle formally requesting the initiation of a consultation on a rezoning of catchments for Daliburgh and lochdar schools. Their request references incorporation of an area of the middle district of South Uist into the Daliburgh catchment, thus removing it from lochdar School catchment. Their request follows meetings held by the Parent Council to consider representations from parents living in the in the southern part of the lochdar catchment that have chosen to make a placing request for their children to attend Daliburgh School.
- 6.2 Daliburgh Parent Council is seeking to extend their current catchment to include the township of Snishival, incorporating all other areas south of this point. This proposal encompasses the whole of the original Stoneybridge School catchment and extends beyond that to include Peninerine and Snishival that were historically always in lochdar School catchment. The primary reason for their request is to allow out-of-catchment children in this area to be recognised as being in catchment and, therefore, eligible for school transport to and from Daliburgh.
- 6.3 There are currently six children enrolled in Daliburgh School that reside within the catchment of lochdar school. They are from Stoneybridge, Ormiclete and Snishival. There are also children resident within this area that attend lochdar School and the proposed consultation will need to consider the impact on them in terms of their continuing eligibility to attend that school. Should the process conclude in favour of the rezoning of the two schools, this will represent a permanent change that will affect all future enrolments.
- 6.4 The current catchment areas of the two schools are provided below with affected communities highlighted.

lochdar School:

Ardchuig, Ardivachair, Ardmhor, Ardnamonie, Balgarva, Bualadubh, Carnan, Graigstrome, Creagorry, Drimsdale, East & West Gernish, Griminish, Grimsay Island, Grogarry, Hacklete, Holmar, Howbeg, Howmore, lochdar, Kilaulay, Kilerivagh, Liniclate, Linique, Lochcarnan, Lochskipport, Noss, Peninerine, Petersport, Rhughashinish, Sandwick, Snishival, Stillgarry, Torlum, Uskevagh, Ormiclete, Stoneybridge, North Stoneybridge.

Daliburgh School:

Airidhmuillinn, Askernish, North and South Boisdale, Bornish, Daliburgh, East & West Kilbride, Eriskay, Frobost, Garryhallie, Garrynamonie, North & South Glendale, Kildonan, Kilpheder, Lochboisdale, North & South Locheynort, Ludag, Milton, Mingarry, Pollochar, Smerclate, Strome, Trossaraidh,

- 6.5 Representations have been made through the lochdar School Parent Council expressing concern at the proposal in terms of reducing the area of their catchment, with a potential consequence that removing five townships could further threaten a school with a roll that has been declining over recent years.
- 6.6 If the recommendation of the Report is approved, the Comhairle must conduct the consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as the action of rezoning school catchments is a recognised activity within the Act. This will require compliance with a set of processes and timelines that include informal and formal consultation stages, future reports to committee, public meetings and referral to Education Scotland.
- 6.7 A broad outline of the statutory consultation process is set out below.

Activity	Timescale
Authorisation to commence informal consultation stage from the relevant Council committee(s).	April 2024
Informal Consultation Stage	
Planning for delivery of informal consultation stage	Approx 2-3 weeks
Design and issue online survey	
Conduct informal consultations with HTs, local elected members, parents and community stakeholders.	3 weeks
Hold informal drop-in session(s) in the area where proposals and maps can be viewed.	3 weeks
Create Proposal Report that includes Equality Impact Assessment	
Conduct consultation using the Proposal Report.	30 term-time days
Notify Education Scotland	
Report to relevant Council committee (s) to include Proposal Report and consultation findings. Seek approval to commence to Statutory formal consultation stage.	June 2024
Statutory Formal Stage	
Planning for delivery of formal consultation stage	Approx 3-4 weeks.
Enact statutory consultation period to include online survey, pupil questionnaires, public meetings and engagement with Education Scotland.	Minimum six weeks and to include 30 term-time days.
Report to relevant Council committee (s) to share formal consultation findings and seek a final decision on the proposals.	November 2024 or February 2025
Enact the decision from the following August school entry point.	August 2025

- 6.8 Based on the statutory requirements of the consultation, should the proposals be agreed, it is likely that it would take until the committee series in either November 2024 or February 2025 for the process to be finalised for subsequent implementation in August 2025.

CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The initial rezoning proposal made by Daliburgh School Parent Council represents a significant change in the catchment for the South Uist schools and would currently affect a small number of children. It is recommended that consideration is given to approving commencement of the informal stage of the consultation process to permit the gathering of views across the stakeholders of both schools to allow for the Comhairle to make an informed future decision about the statutory formal consultation stage.