



Minute of Meeting held in
Lionel School on Friday 14
November 2013 at
7.30pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Catriona Stewart
Cllr Kenneth M Murray
Cllr John Mackay
Mr Peter Carpenter
Mr Donald Macleod
Mr Iain G Smith
Ms Lesley McDonald
seven parents and members of the
public

CATCHMENT AREA CONSULTATION MEETING - LIONEL

<p>Catriona Stewart</p>	<p>Good evening everybody and welcome to this meeting. My name is Catriona Stewart. I am Chair of Education and Children's Services and I will be chairing this evenings meeting. With me are Miss Lesley McDonald who is Head of Executive Office, Mr Peter Carpenter, Director of Education and Children's Services, Mr Donald Macleod who is the Community Learning Principal for this area, Mr Iain Smith is the Principal Officer who does all the technical data for the Education and Children's Services department. We have with us two other officers of the authority who are recording this evenings meeting. We have Evelyn Coul who will be wondering around with the mic later on for any questions you may wish to put and we have Martin Macleod at the back ensuring that the meeting is being recorded so that we have an accurate reflection of the meeting.</p> <p>The Meeting is to look at the catchment area for both schools in this area for Lionel School and Sgoil an Taobh Siar. As you can imagine there have been certain anomalies that have been thrown up a result of the review of the school estate which started in August 2007 and it is necessary to review the catchment areas to ensure that children and young people have access to the school closest to their home addresses so that is the purpose of this evening's meeting. I will pass over to Miss McDonald who talk about procedure and them I will ask Mr Carpenter to speak to the Report.</p>
<p>Lesley McDonald</p>	<p>Thank you Chair. The process to be followed is outlined in the consultation document which I hope you have all received. We are required to consult for a period of not less than 30 school days, in this case it will be 32 school days from Thursday 24 October until the final time for submissions of Wednesday 11 December. This note of meeting will be part of the package of documents which will go to both Education Scotland and to the Councillors who will ultimately make the decision in April of next year. What will also go to both Education Scotland and the Councillors is any written or email submission you make either by writing to the Chief Executive at the Comhairle or to the schools consultation email address outlined in the Report.</p>

	<p>I think Martin will be coming round with the mic tonight so if you want to identify yourselves....sorry Evelyn is coming round with the mic tonight, so if you want to identify yourselves it makes the note of the meeting that much more accurate.</p> <p>When Education Scotland prepare their report by early January (the 17th of January) what officers of the Comhairle will then do is take the proposal documents, this note of meeting, any representations that we have received and Education Scotland's report and use those to prepare what's called a consultation report which will take into account all of those representations and will respond to any themes that have come up in those representations. That report must be published at least 3 weeks before the meetings where it will be considered on 15 and 24 April. It's our practice to try to get these out about a month in advance and I'm happy to take any questions as to the process.</p>
Catriona Stewart	Thank you Ms McDonald. Mr Carpenter?
Peter Carpenter	<p>Thank you Chair. The consultation proposal is clear and I think you've received copies of it. It explains the proposed provision of catchment areas for the 2 schools. Now in appendix 1 of that document the boundary is indicated. Because it's quite a small scale map it's a little difficult to see. The text in section 8.1 clarifies how the proposed change would affect the different communities. In essence the proposal will move the village of north Galson into the Lionel catchment area.</p> <p>This consultation has come about because there are a small number of children, a small number of cases where the catchment area of the school result in people travelling to schools some distance from their home when there is actually a closer school available to them so we want to make sure that the proposed changes help those families but we also need to ensure that in making any changes to the boundaries to the 2 schools we don't want to adversely affect the arrangements for current students or future pupils of either school. So you have had the proposal document, we are keen to listen to your views and perhaps answer any questions that you may have. Thank you Chair.</p>
Catriona Stewart	Thank you Mr Carpenter, I'll now open up for any questions from the floor and as was said at the beginning please state your name so that we have it for the record before you speak.
Helen Mackenzie	<p>I just wanted to ask why you have drawn the line right through the middle of Galson because to me it doesn't make sense to divide a community which is quite distinct. Galson is quite distinct, there is more on one side of it than the other side of it, in half and if you think about the sort of social associations of the children in that area you would assume that they would, out of school, be friends together and playing together and you know to me it doesn't strike me as being a particularly natural boundary to draw. I think Kathleen's here from Galson and she may be able to talk about that but to me it seem a little bit arbitrary in terms of drawing a line through Galson and I wonder was that because historically, I think you were saying the children didn't go, but historically some of the children went north and some of the children went south to school? Where as I just.....for me it doesn't feel like a sensible thing to do, to divide Galson in half and I think that in terms of the sustainability of that community and talking to parents who live in other settlements in other places that if you were to divide that community in half and some of the children went, you know think about somewhere like Back for instance, some of the children going to one school and some of the children going to another school it doesn't really, to me, make natural sense as to how the children would be together so I think you should draw the line obviously at South Galson and bring the South Galson children up to Lionel as well.</p> <p>And the other point I wanted to make as well is about the sustainability of Lionel. We don't have anywhere to spread other than south in terms of keeping a sustainable number of pupils. I think within Barvas say in 10 years time, 15 years time, in Barvas and down the way to Shawbost there is a lot more, down to Carloway, Breasclate and so there is a lot more potential for some variations on boundaries there but if we start to shrink the boundary for Lionel up towards Dell</p>

	<p>basically then I think that puts a lot of pressure on us in Lionel to have lots of babies to keep the school numbers up and you know I'm past it now so it won't be me but I think there is something about, you know there is a need to have a primary and a junior secondary school in Ness as long as there are people living in Ness and I think we need to bear that in mind in terms of maintaining sustainability of the school as well so that's my view on it and that's the point I wanted to raise.</p>
Catriona Stewart	<p>Well thank you for your views but we also responding to parents who have a contrary view so that is one of the reasons why we have come out to consult because clearly we were made aware that people were unhappy with decisions that had been made some time ago before certain new schools had been built so....I'll hand over to Mr Carpenter.</p>
Helen Mackenzie	<p>All right, I thought it was because we were doing a review of the schools that this came up not because of complaints. Apologies.</p>
Peter Carpenter	<p>I'll just add a little bit if I could to what Cllr Stewart has said. You'll be aware that there are other consultations on school boundaries in other parts of the authority and generally the trigger for that has been individual cases of families who, as I described before, are living close to a school but actually are not in the catchment area for that school and that was the case in this particular context as well. There was an individual family I understand that were in this predicament. This is part of the process so we'll certainly look at the different views of communities about what's best but my understanding is that North Galson is actually an addition to the Lionel catchment at present. You know, it is increasing Lionel's catchment area at the moment but perhaps not as much as you wanted it to?</p>
Helen Mackenzie	<p>Well I think really it was to have a debate about the catchment area rather than to challenge any position, that was why I was raising the point really. And there are families of children in North Galson who have been coming here who presumably made placing requests and presumably even if you draw a boundary at a certain point a family could always make a placing request and that could be considered by you so that if you decided to draw the boundary that the family that had raised to concern just now weren't in the catchment area that they wanted to be they could till presumably make the placing request and you could consider that so, just because a boundary is drawn, it doesn't close the shutters for particular choice for particular reasons. It was more about just having the debate about the boundary in the middle of Galson that I was really interested in and obviously we want the school to be sustainable. Perhaps Kathleen wants to come in on that?</p>
Catriona Stewart	<p>So we could move the boundary up to Dell. So we could move the boundary up to Dell.</p>
Helen Mackenzie	<p>Well theoretically, yes. But obviously as Chair of Lionel Parent Council I'm not going to</p>
Catriona Stewart	<p>No, but if you are going to debate about where the boundary could be, you know.</p>
Helen Mackenzie	<p>It's more about splitting Galson in half that I think is an interesting proposition and where you draw the boundary obviously will be for the Council at the end of the day to decide. I mean we would obviously in terms of the school and the fact that we've got children from Galson coming to the school suggest to you that you stop it at South Galson but you know there is a thing about splitting the community in half that you might want to reflect on as well.</p>
Kathleen Thomson	<p>My name is Kathleen Thomson and I will be a parent, well I am a parent of a child going to the school in the future. I would like to make it clear that historically Galson School was shut and the nearest school to Galson School was Airidhantuim and then after that was shut most of the children went to Sgoil an Taobh Siar school. That left quite a gap for, naturally I think most of the children would have gone to Lionel School if it wasn't for the fact that they went Airidhantuim thereafter because it was the closest primary school to them at that time. Now we find ourselves in the situation at the moment where the closest</p>

	<p>school to us is Lionel School which would be a natural progression for us to put the child there or even as far up as Tigh an Bhar which is where the old school was originally would be a sensible boundary and its only a sensible boundary. I would only ask for the Council to make a sensible decision based on the distance involved. We really have very little to do with communities up the West Side. We as, I'm talking about myself in particular and our family, our support network is within the Ness community. You're talking about communities here as well and you have to be mindful of that when you are making that decision. And the other thing is transportation. There is a bus at the moment coming down from, well set up specially to take the children from Galson to Sgoil an Taobh Siar and at the moment the children who go to Lionel School go on a public service so I don't think you would have any problems because there is bus service there anyway rather than, it would be even more of a saving perhaps if you wanted to reflect on that. I don't think I've got anything else to add.</p>
Catriona Stewart	<p>Thank you. I seem to recall that historically when the decision was made by parents a number of years ago to build a new school for the West Side area that the catchment area for that school would include those children that had gone to Airidhantuin. I think that's my understanding so we are responding to parents who have come and said to us that actually we would prefer you to look at the boundaries again so that's the purpose of this exercise here tonight.</p> <p>Are there any further questions?</p>
Cllr John Mackay	<p>All the secondary pupils in Galson who come down, the bus comes from Ballantrushal right to here. These children from Galson they come into Lionel School and as Helen and Kathleen said I think it makes sense to keep the village of Galson under the one area. If that was my village split in half in my young days I wouldn't have been at all pleased. If half of my friends were coming to this school and half of them taken away to another school I definitely wouldn't.....You said that they would be sent to the nearest school. Is that the policy?</p>
Peter Carpenter	<p>Wherever possible that's the aim of the boundary that it would be drawn to facilitate that.</p>
Cllr John Mackay	<p>Okay so how....Where does Tigh na Bhar stand in relation to distance from Lionel and Sgoil an Taobh Siar? Have you measured what the distance is?</p>
Catriona Stewart	<p>We'll see if Mr Smith has. That is the site of the old school at Galson. 7.4 thank you Mr Murray. Does that help? 7.4. from Tigh na Bhar?</p>
Mr Smith	<p>Its about 9.</p>
Catriona Stewart	<p>About 9.</p>
Cllr John Mackay	<p>So do you know how far it is to Lionel? So if it is the policy that children go to the nearest school. And another thing, it doesn't cost the Council to send the pupils, the bus is coming here anyway. I know there is a bus coming to take children to Barvas but there is a bus coming and going back from the school here every day and I don't see where the extra cost is coming from.</p>
Peter Carpenter	<p>Can I say a few words? This isn't about cost. The boundary isn't driven by any driver about costs. So it's not about costs. The line of the boundary was drawn because of the investigation as to where the children are currently attending school and the one case where I mentioned of the anomaly where a child was attending school outwith the catchment area so there is no intention to split a community and if that's the strong view of the community then clearly we would need to look at that. The intent is to cause minimum disruption to children's current education provision and where it does cause potentially a child being moved into an out of catchment situation then the authority would support that family to ensure the continuity of education was maintained for the child. So we are not wanting to move children from a school where they have their friends established and current arrangements are working well for that family. So we</p>

	looked at where people are now we looked at the anomaly and drew the line on the basis of that. Clearly when you draw catchment areas you'd want to look at distances and travel but you also have to look at where people are and try to make the minimal impact on those families and that's how it was drawn for this particular process.
Donnie Macleod Chair of Community Council (no mic used)	Can I ask if <i>inaudible</i> .. catchment area... <i>inaudible</i>how many children would go to Barvas school and how many would go to Lionel School? from that are .. <i>inaudible</i> ..
Mr Smith	At the moment there's 4 children in Galson, 2 children in South Galson go to Sgoil an Taobh Siar, 2 come north one from South Galson and one from North Galson they come Lionel. That's from the figure that we have. 2 going both ways.
Kathleen Matheson	I have a child attending this school on a placement request. We stay in Borve. When she comes to First Year do I have to send her to the Nicolson as the boundary is in, well?
Peter Carpenter	You have an option. You could send your child to the Nicolson or you could send your child to S1 in Lionel.
Kathleen Mackenzie	Right, and would it not make more sense to send her to Lionel seeing as it is a nearer school for all those pupils that, say from as it is just now, pupils from currently in Borve attending secondary school from next August they would be going straight over to the Nicolson wouldn't they?
Catriona Stewart	You mean children from the Borve area who are attending Sgoil an Taobh Siar?
Kathleen Mackenzie	No they are attending the secondary education here at the moment.
Donnie Macleod	Donnie Macleod again. When...
Kathleen Mackenzie	Excuse me
Donnie Macleod	It's just to try and enlighten what you said.
Kathleen Mackenzie	Okay.
Donald Macleod	If the boundary changes, the line changes does that mean that the children that currently come from Borve to Lionel Secondary would then have to go instead of coming here would they then have to go to the Nicolson? i.e. from the West Side School.
Peter Carpenter	Sorry I didn't quite get your question but I understand now what you mean. No and that is what I was trying to say at the beginning that where a current placement is established where families and relationships are settled in the school then parents have the choice. You can choose that but we wouldn't in any way require a child to attend a different school. That's not the purpose of this consultation or the boundary change.
Helen Mackenzie	Does this consultation affect any catchment area for the secondary, for Lionel Secondary? Does Lionel Secondary have a catchment area?
Donald Macleod	The catchment area should be the same as the primary.
Helen Mackenzie	So it does affect. So the catchment area for the primary is going to affect the..... So you're going to have to make a placing request if you were outside....
Donald Macleod	It should actually add to the.....It should increase it.
Helen Mackenzie	Yes but if you lived in Ballantrushal for instance and you wanted your child to

	come to Lionel S1/S2 would you then have to make a placing request?
Donald Macleod	Yes.
Helen Mackenzie	So the primary boundary does affect the secondary boundary whereas in the past it would have been when the juniors.....you always had to make a placing request.
Donnie Macleod	This change will not hurt anybody because we are moving the boundary to include North Galson and Lionel's catchment so the pupils in North Galson will actually have a choice because they can come to Lionel or they can go to the Nicolson as well so.....
Helen Mackenzie	So when Airidhantuim was opened then the Airiandhtuim parents made a placing request if they wanted their children to go to Lionel Secondary. No? It was all automatic that they came to Lionel, was it? So this does affect the catchment area for the secondary school.
Catriona Stewart	Thank you very much everybody. If there are no further questions? The Comhairle will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland Report, written representations it has received and oral representations made to the Comhairle by any person at the public meeting. A consultation report will be produced. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Comhairle web site and from the Comhairle buildings as well as the affected schools free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the authority's response made to the Education Scotland report as well as any other written or oral representations it has received together with a copy of the Education Scotland report and any other relevant information including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how it complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the Education Scotland report and representations both written and oral that it received. The consultation report will be published at least three weeks prior to the Comhairle making a decision. This consultation report together with any other relevant documentation will be considered by the Education and Children's Services Committee on 15 April 2014 which will make a recommendation which will then be subject to the approval of the Comhairle on 24 April 2014 and can I say that the consultation period will close on 11 December 2013 and you should write into the Chief Executive at the Comhairle buildings on Sandwick Road or else email to schoolsconsultation@cne-siar.gov.uk and I assure you that address is in the proposal document if I've got it wrong and may I thank you for your attendance this evening and for the contributions you've made. Thank you very much everyone.