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Department of Education

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Education Provision Consultation Document – October 2004

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 12 June 2003, 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 'Manor Farm' is in fact shown as being within the catchment areas of both Stornoway and Laxdale Primary Schools. This situation is inappropriate and unsustainable. 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 Authority to site temporary units at the school to accommodate the additional numbers. Some of the additionality is the result of placing requests.
- 2.4 While placing requests from rural areas are also received from time to time for Stornoway Primary other 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 In view of the factors detailed above the Authority 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. It is also a legal requirement that consultations on the proposal be undertaken.
- 2.7 The proposal as outlined in this document, if implemented, would result in the catchment areas for the two schools being defined as follows.

Laxdale Primary School:

Laxdale, Newvalley, Guershader, Newmarket and Marybank.

Stornoway Primary School:

Steinish, Stornoway, Cearns, Urquhart Gardens to Memorial Avenue.

CURRENT AND PROJECTED SCHOOL ROLLS

- 3.1 The projections of future rolls are, insofar as possible, based on current information. Where appropriate, estimated figures are inserted. At this stage, account can not 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 2003/04	29	35	30	43	33	28	40	238
Actual Roll 2004-05	28	28	35	36	43	36	26	232
Projected Roll 2005-06	28	28	28	35	36	43	36	234
Projected Roll 2006-07	30	28	28	28	35	36	43	228
Projected Roll 2007-08	30	30	28	28	28	35	36	215
Projected Roll 2008-09	30	30	30	28	28	28	35	209
Projected Roll 2009-10	30	30	30	30	28	28	28	204
Projected Roll 2010-11	30	30	30	30	30	28	28	206
Projected Roll 2011-12	30	30	30	30	30	30	28	208

Stornoway Primary	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	TOTAL
Actual Roll 2003/04	47	43	48	54	34	39	62	327
Actual Roll 2004-05	44	44	42	48	56	33	43	310
Projected Roll 2005-06	45	44	44	42	48	56	33	312
Projected Roll 2006-07	45	45	44	44	42	48	56	316
Projected Roll 2007-08	45	45	45	44	44	42	48	313
Projected Roll 2008-09	45	45	45	45	44	44	42	310
Projected Roll 2009-10	45	45	45	45	45	44	44	313
Projected Roll 2010-11	45	45	456	45	45	45	44	314
Projected Roll 2011-12	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	315

CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 The relevant School Boards are also being consulted and consultation with parents will take the form of **Public Meetings in Stornoway Primary School and Laxdale Primary School at 7.30pm on 27th October 2004**, 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, 8th November 2004**.

RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

- 5.1 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

- 6.1 It is proposed that, with effect from August 2005, 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.

[Appendix 1 – Map of boundary](#)

MML/DS
29 September 2004

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