

Argyll and Bute Council Community Services - Education



Report on the outcome of the Consultation relating to the Re-alignment of Catchment Areas of Achahoish and Tarbert Primary Schools

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Argyll and Bute Council

Community Services: Education

This report has been prepared following Consultation on the proposal that the Council:

Re-align the catchment areas for Achahoish and Tarbert Primary Schools, taking effect from August 2016.

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- a) Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the Consultation period;
- b) Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meetings held on 1st and 8th December 2015; and
- c) Education Scotland's report on the proposal.

1. Introduction

This is a Consultation Report prepared in compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the above proposal.

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide a record of the total number of written responses made during the Statutory Consultation period;
- Provide a summary of the written responses;
- Provide a summary of oral representations made at the public meetings held on 1st and 8th December 2015;
- Provide a statement of the Council's response to those written and oral representations;
- Provide the full text of Education Scotland's Inspectorate report and a statement of the Council's response to this report;
- State how the Council reviewed the above proposal following the representations received during the Statutory Consultation period and the report from Education Scotland;
- Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Paper and state how the Council acted upon it; and
- State how the Council has complied with Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above proposals.

2 Background

- 2.1 In May 2014 Achahoish Primary School (PS) Parent Council made a formal request to the Council to consider rezoning their current catchment area. This request was supported by Tarbert Academy Primary School (PS) Parent Council.
- 2.2 The existing boundary between the current catchment areas of Achahoish PS and Tarbert Academy PS is shown in Appendix 4. The request by Achahoish PS Parent Council was for the catchment area to be increased. The preferred choice for boundary change is for Achahoish School to Tiretigan Farm, Kilberry, this is also shown in Appendix 4.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The decision by Council to close Kilberry Primary School in June 1979 resulted in the catchment area of Tarbert Academy PS being extended to incorporate the old catchment area of Kilberry PS. This has resulted in the pupils from the Kilberry area being expected to attend Tarbert Academy P S.
- 3.2 Achahoish Parent Council, supported by South Knapdale Community Council, feels that this decision was not correct and is now requesting that Achahoish PS catchment area be extended to include some of the old Kilberry PS catchment area.
- 3.3 From the new proposed boundary the distance to Achahoish PS is 9.6 miles. The distance to Tarbert Academy PS is 13.7 miles. All travel in this area is on a single track road with passing places.
- 3.4 The area proposed to be transferred contains 24 properties eligible for Council tax, seven of which are second homes, all seven receive second home Council tax reduction.
- 3.5 At present there are two children of primary school age living in the area, both of whom currently attend Achahoish PS. These two children are on a placing request. The family receive parental mileage to meet the present school bus arrangements. There is another family, whose children will start school in 2017, who have moved away temporarily. The family intend to return when they have built a house within the new proposed catchment area. This family have written a letter explaining their intention to return to the area and that the children attend Achahoish PS.
- 3.6 School transport is currently provided to five children between Achahoish School and Kilmaluag. This is an existing service bus route. Route Number 421 operated by West Coast Motors, between Kilmaluag, Lochgilphead and Ford. Leaving Kilmaluag 09.00 and arriving at Achahoish Primary School at 09.17. On Mondays and Wednesdays the bus carries on to Ford but on other days terminates at Lochgilphead. An earlier journey from Kilmaluag at 0752 travels to Lochgilphead Joint Campus for 08.44. Pupils from Achahoish

Primary School are picked up on their homeward journey at 15.35 by the bus which has left Lochgilphead at 1500. (Ford at 14.24 on Mondays and Wednesdays) arriving at Kilmaluaig at 15.47. Two children are then collected by parent transport travelling to Coulaghailtro.

- 3.7 The respective rolls of Achahoish PS and Tarbert Academy PS are given below. The table below shows the census figures for 2000, 2005, 2010 and roll as advised by Achahoish PS and Tarbert Academy PS week beginning 9th March 2015. Achahoish PS has a maximum capacity of 42 pupils and Tarbert Academy PS has a maximum capacity of 163 pupils.

Primary School	2000	2005	2010	2015 (March)	2015 (Oct)	2015/16 Anticipated
Achahoish	30	13	15	10	10	9
Tarbert	135	100	120	81	87	87

- 3.8 Achahoish PS has two placing requests travelling in to the school and no children travelling out of the school. These two children live in the new proposed catchment area for Achahoish PS. Tarbert Academy PS has two placing requests travelling in to the school and six children travelling out of the school.
- 3.9 The Single Outcome Agreement seeks to reverse population decline and is supported in this by the Local Development Plan, which identifies and promotes housing development sites. The following evidences future development potential in the area as indicated by allocations for housing in the Adopted Local Development Plan 2015 and planning permissions in the locality of Achahoish. The new Local Development Plan identifies three areas for housing development. One area allocated for ten houses, including 25% affordable (H3004) and two further areas totalling 2.16ha allocated for medium density housing (PDA12/53 and PDA12/55 starting at 17 houses per ha.) There is also possibility of windfall development out with the allocations and potential development areas but in accord with the settlement strategy. The applications that were approved for housing in the Achahoish catchment in the 3 years up to 01/04/2014 will lapse after 3 years from decision date unless development has commenced.
- 3.10 Achahoish is not included as a priority in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan. No housing pressures or requirements have been identified.

4 The Consultation Process

- 4.1 On 25 June 2015, Argyll and Bute Council considered the Proposal Paper and agreed that a Consultation with all stakeholders be undertaken on the proposal within this document. The proposal document made clear the Consultation would run from 4th November 2015 until 18th December 2015.

4.2 The proposal on which the Consultation took place on was the re-alignment of the catchment areas for Achahoish and Tarbert Primary Schools, taking effect from August 2016.

4.3 The requirements for consulting on a relevant proposal relating to schools are set out in the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 and the amendments in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

- The Council posted the proposal document on its website and lodged copies in the schools concerned, in Council offices and in all libraries in Mid Argyll. In addition the Council placed an advert in local newspapers. The Council held public meetings on 1 and 8 December 2015 at Achahoish Primary School and Tarbert Academy respectively.
- Two public meetings were held to discuss the proposal as follows: 1st December 2015 Achahoish Primary School, and 8th December 2015 Tarbert Academy Primary School.
- The Consultation ended on 18th December 2015.
- Education Scotland's involvement consisted of: the proposal document being sent to them, attendance at the meeting in Tarbert Academy Primary School on 8th December and visiting the two primary schools and meeting with a sample of children and community members. They also received a copy of all written representations; a note of the public meetings and meetings with staff and children. They then prepared a report on the educational aspects of this proposal. This is attached as Appendix 3.

4.4 The following schools are affected by the proposal:

- Tarbert Academy Primary School, and
- Achahoish Primary School

4.5 In accordance with statutory requirements, the following persons were consulted:

- The Parent Councils of the two affected schools;
- The parents/carers of the pupils and children who may attend the two schools;
- Parents/carers of children expected to the two school within two years of the date of publication of this proposal document;
- The teaching and ancillary staff of the two schools;
- All Trades Unions;
- Community Councils in areas affected;
- Relevant users of the two schools;
- Elected Members of Argyll and Bute Council;
- The Constituency MSP and List MSPs covering the Constituencies;

- The Constituency MP;
- Argyll and Bute Community Planners;
- Argyll and Bute Youth Council;
- Police Scotland;
- Area Commander Fire Service;
- Chief Executive of the NHS;
- Argyll and Bute Head of Roads;
- Education Scotland, and
- The Care Inspectorate.

4.6 During the Consultation representations were sought from interested parties, either oral or in written form or by e mail.

4.7 This Consultation Report is the Council's response to the issues raised during the Consultation period on the Proposal Paper.

4.8 This Consultation Report will be published on Tuesday 15th March 2016 before a final decision is taken at a meeting of Argyll and Bute Council on 21st April 2016

5 The Public Meetings

5.1 A public meeting was held in Achahoish Primary School on 1st December 2015. Five members of the public attended. A full note of the meeting is attached as Appendix 1 which details the questions and issues raised at the meeting.

5.2 A public meeting was held in Tarbert Academy on 8th December 2015. Seven members of the public attended. A full note of the meeting is attached as Appendix 2 which details the questions and issues raised at the meeting.

5.3 The attendees at the meetings all supported the proposal. There was discussion regarding the financial implications for the Council.

6 Responses to the Consultation Exercise

6.1 The Council received 31 responses during the Consultation period and 30 were in agreement with the proposal, and one was blank.

6.2 The written and oral responses focussed mainly on:

- The common sense of the proposal;
- The strong educational benefits of the proposal, and
- The cost implications stated within the paper and the need for the Council to consider an option where parental mileage is paid giving a cost effective option.

7 Education Authority response to written and oral representations

- 7.1 Concern: what could be the impact on the local community of Achahoish
Response: This will help strengthen links between the naturally neighbouring communities of Kilberry and Achahoish. This proposal may encourage young families in to the area, there will be little or no affect to Tarbert Academy or Tarbert community. It will strengthen the school because there is a greater chance of increasing the school role.
- 7.2 Concern: How could the financial implication affect the outcome of the proposal?
Response: It was acknowledged that the figure mentioned in the proposal document was a concern and in the present economic climate. Attendees highlighted another option that could be more acceptable financially, is if a parent may be willing to drive pupils to and from the bus collection point at the end of the original boundary line.
Councillor D Philand felt the above suggestion should be included in the proposal even although it is understood that it depends on good will of a parent. This option should be brought to the attention of the Council as something that had been discussed and considered.
- 7.3 Concern : To ensure financial best value -what process would be followed in order to get a suitable driver if required?
Response – sent by e mail – the usual Argyll and Bute recruitment process would be followed, advertising locally and on the website.
- 7.4 Concern: Again with regard to financial implications- Could the boundary change be granted conditionally? *Clarified by e mail "if the cost of transport was a barrier to the Council agreeing to rezoning, could the rezoning be agreed to on the condition that parent transport would be required to transport children who live between the existing boundary and the new?"*
Response by e mail - Parental transport is an option, however there are occasions when parents, for different reasons, are unable to undertake this task. This type of transport arrangement cannot be provided by anyone other than a parent/carer meaning the Council would be obliged to provide one of the more expensive transport options as outlined in the paper.
- 7.5 Concern: Parent present at meeting has young children and although already in catchment area for primary if this proposal is accepted – what will be the position for children attending Tarbert Academy post primary?
Response: This proposal will have no effect on the catchment areas for secondary education.
- 7.6 Concern: Local employers should have been directly consulted.
Response: Noted for consideration in the future and thanks to local employers for responding through local networks.

8. Education Scotland Report

8.1 In accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the amendments contained in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal.

8.2 Education Scotland visited:

- Tarbert Academy Primary School, and
- Achahoish Primary School

To speak with pupils, parents/cares and staff. Education Scotland attended the public meeting in Tarbert Academy on the 8th December 2015. Education Scotland had the opportunity to review in detail the Proposal Paper, the written responses and a summary of the oral responses.

8.3 The Education Scotland report is produced in full (Appendix 3).

8.4 The report broadly supports the proposal and is summarised below:

- Argyll and Bute Council has set out an appropriate rationale for its proposal;
- The Achahoish School curriculum directly relates to the rural context of where the children live;
- Children would reduce their transit time resulting in increased opportunities to learn;
- The Council had ensured school communities were well informed;
- Tarbert Academy Primary School Community was in favour of the proposal believing there would be no direct effect on the Tarbert Community;
- The South Knapdale Community Council, local community and local employers strongly support the proposal;
- The proposal will have no impact on Tarbert Academy Primary School, and
- Argyll and Bute Council should give consideration to paying parental mileage as a more cost effective option for transport arrangements.

8.5 Argyll and Bute Council's Response to Education Scotland's Report

The Council welcomes the report from Education Scotland and accepts its findings.

In response to the findings contained within the Education Scotland report, Argyll and Bute Response is as follows:

8.5.1 Financial implications of Proposal

- Purchase a vehicle and employ a driver and escort. This will cost approximately £15k per annum, providing a driver and escort can be employed from the Coulaghaltro area. The cost will rise to £22,500 if the driver and escort are resident in either Tarbert or Lochgilphead,

or,

- Extend the local bus service to Tiretigan. Due to timetabling constraints this extension would only be possible in the morning. The afternoon run would require to be undertaken by Council mini bus from Lochgilphead. The cost for this extension would be £23,000.
- Parental/guardian transport may be an option if a parent/ guardian is available and willing to drive.

Cost indication for a pupil travelling **7.5 miles** to school or bus pick up point: £2280 per annum,

Cost break down: four journeys daily, 190 days annually at 40p per mile.

Cost indication for a pupil travelling **3 miles** to school or bus picks up point: £912 per annum,

Cost break down: four journeys daily, 190 days annually at 40p per mile.

It should be noted

1. If a parent/guardian is not available one of the alternative options would require to be implemented.
2. This option offered by transport at present may not always be available.

The above would impact on the schools transport budget and would require to be considered during the annual transport planning process.

9. Implementation Arrangements.

- 9.1 Until August 2022, siblings of children who live in the proposed rezoned catchment area and attend Tarbert Academy Primary School will have the option of attending Tarbert Academy Primary School without the need for a placing request.
- 9.2 The proposal will not affect the existing arrangements for pupils going to secondary school.

10. Alleged Omissions or Inaccuracies

- 10.1 Section (10) (3) of the 2010 Act also places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission within the Proposal Paper which has either been identified by the Council or raised by consultees. This section of the 2010 Act also requires the Council to provide a statement on

the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, or, if no action was taken, to state that fact and why.

- 10.2 In the course of the Consultation exercise there were no areas identified by respondents as being inaccurate or omitted from the Proposal Paper during the Consultation period.

11. Compliance with Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 states

After the Education Authority has received Education Scotland's report, the Authority is to review the relevant proposal having regard (in particular) to:

- (i) written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the Consultation period,*
- (ii) oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting,*
- (iii) Education Scotland's report.*

- 11.1 Following receipt of 31 written responses and consideration of oral representations made at public meetings held during the Consultation period, officers reviewed the proposals.
- 11.2 The feedback from the Consultation was considered by several officers. This ensured that the Council met the requirements of section 9(1), 12 and 13(3) (b) of the 2010 Act.
- 11.3 Having reviewed and considered feedback from all responses to the Consultation, it is considered that the proposal is appropriate for the pupils within the extended catchment area of Achahoish Primary Schools and the pupils at Tarbert Academy Primary.

12 LEGAL ISSUES

- 12.1 The Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 throughout this statutory Consultation.
- 12.2 The Council is mindful of its duties in respect of equality and the Equality Impact Assessment did not identify that any parent, child or young person would be treated less favourably as a result of this proposal.
- 12.3 Under the terms of the Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2010, it is a legal requirement that the Council should not reach any formal decision without:
- having reviewed the relevant proposal having regard, in particular, to:
 - a) relevant written representations received from any person during the Consultation period;
 - b) oral representation made to it by any person at the public meetings held on 1st and 8th December 2015;
 - c) the Education Scotland report ;

- preparing a Consultation Report; and
- waiting until a period of three weeks starting on the day on which this Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed form has expired.

12.4 As it is the intention that this Consultation Report should be published, both electronically and in written form, if required, on 15th March 2016 until 21st April 2016, this exceeds the statutory requirement to publish this report more than three weeks before consideration of the proposal by Argyll and Bute Council.

13. Employee Implications

Staffing arrangements will continue to be consistent with the Argyll and Bute Council Staffing Standards and other local arrangements.

14. Environmental Issues

Due to the very small number of children affected by this proposal it is unlikely that there will be any environmental impact.

15. Conclusion

15.1 The Council now has to consider two options, namely

- a) Adopt the proposal; or
- b) Withdraw the proposal.

15.2 In withdrawing the proposal, the Council would have regard to the support from parents/carers, staff, communities and local employers in supporting the realignment of the catchment areas of Achahoish and Tarbert Academy Primary Schools. Education Scotland has identified that the proposal would lead to clear education benefits for children. This includes providing learning in context in line with the principles of Curriculum for Excellence.

15.3 The following key issues have been highlighted during the Consultation period are as follows

- The Council's proposal has been generally supported by parents/carers, staff and the communities.
- There were no responses that did not support the proposal.
- The report from Education Scotland acknowledges that the proposal would lead to clear educational benefits to the children of Achahoish Primary School.

16. Recommendations

16.1 On the basis of the feedback received and taking account of the educational benefits of the proposal, it is recommended that the Council:

- Realign the catchment areas for Achahoish and Tarbert Primary Schools.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director, Community Services

Statutory Consultation Public Meeting

Proposal to re-align catchment area

1st December 2015

Achahoish Primary School

Present: Kathryn Wilkie (Chair), Douglas Philand (A & B Council), Alan Stewart (Chair, Achahoish Parent council), Mary Semple (Secretary, Achahoish, Parent Council), Natalie MacEacheran (parent) Delores Firth, (Teacher, Achahoish School), Neil McKnight (Head Teacher, Tarbert Academy), Anne McArthur (Minutes).

Copies of the Consultation Proposal Document, Map of boundaries old and new, Response Form and Meeting Agenda were made available/ distributed.

Kathryn Wilkie opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the consultation meeting at Achahoish School to discuss the on-going process following the proposal to re-align the catchment areas for Achahoish and Tarbert Primary Schools, a similar meeting has been arranged in Tarbert Academy on the 8th December. Within the consultation time scale pupils and staff at both schools will get an opportunity to voice their opinion. At the end of the consultation period K Wilkie will provide Education Scotland with a summary of feedback from both meetings, including representations given at meeting and any other recommendations through the website, e mail or mail.

It was noted at the meeting that the on-line version of the response form is not working.

The process so far was explained and the consultation paper was discussed.

The feeling by everyone was very positive and Mr McKnight from Tarbert Academy said that Tarbert Academy would fully support the proposal and was happy to give any help and backing required.

Under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the consultation period started on Wednesday 4th November 2015 with notices being distributed to all on list of consultees many by email on the 3rd November, the 6 weeks consultation period will end on Friday 18th December 2015. All representations should be returned before this date to Argyll House. At the end of the consultation period K Wilkie will provide Education Scotland with a summary of feedback from both meetings, including representations and any other relevant documentation.

Education Scotland will in turn report to the council with an explanation of the proposal and details of any in-accuracies they might want to point out.

The meeting was then opened up for questions and comments.

Observation from member of public: This will help strengthen Achahoish School, the community will pull together to help the local school. Moving of boundary will increase the draw of people in the community who will support the school, there will be massive Educational Benefits for the pupils and the school.

Q. When is a final decision likely to be made

A. The first appropriate meeting of the council around Easter.

Q. What will happen when pupils move to Secondary School

A. The original boundary will remain as before with pupils going on to Tarbert Academy from Kilberry, this has already happened with pupils who were attending Achahoish as a placing request.

Q. What impact will this have on the Local Community?

A. This will help strengthen links along the road rather than divide the community as is the case now, also might encourage young families in to the area, there will be little or no affect to Tarbert Academy or Tarbert community. It will strengthen the school because there is a greater chance of increasing the school role.

Neil McKnight reiterated Tarbert Academy fully support this opinion.

Q. How will the financial implication affect the outcome of the proposal?

A. This was discussed at length and everyone accepts that the figure mentioned in the proposal document was a concern and in the present economic climate likely to be the one reason the council might not agree to the proposal going ahead. The figure quoted is for the council requiring to either alter the local bus service, or acquire a vehicle, with driver costs, for the school. Attendees highlighted another option that could be more acceptable financially, is if a parent or member of the community may be willing to drive pupils to and from the bus collection point at the end of the original boundary line. It was accepted that this could not be assumed to be possible but is a bonafide option. It was felt by the attendees that there would always be someone in the area who would be happy to take on this responsibility.

Observation: Councillor Philand felt the above suggestion should be included in the proposal even although it is understood that it depends on good will of a parent or a local person doing the driving, this option would be more cost effective and worth being brought to the attention of the council as something that had been discussed and considered.

Q. How would the council advertise for a driver, to make sure it is someone local got the job, making sure costs were kept to a minimum?

Answer – sent by e mail – the usual process would be followed, advertising locally and on the Argyll and Bute website.

Observation: Following on from the discussion about the bus cost the comment was made that the time spent on the bus by younger children would be much reduced

Q. How likely is this to go through?

Answer sent by e mail - The decision will be made by the elected members therefor I cannot comment on the likelihood either way. Councillor Philand supports the rezoning and will be in full knowledge of transport costs. He has agreed to progress the issue around transport costs and the third option of parental/ community involvement.

Q. Could it be granted conditionally?

Further discussion to clarify this question happened by e mail. Detail below.

From questioner *"if the cost of transport was a barrier to the Council agreeing to rezoning, could the rezoning be agreed to on the condition that parent transport would be required to transport children who live between the existing boundary and the new?"*

Answer by e mail - Parental transport is an option, however there are occasions when parents, for different reasons, are unable to undertake this task. This type of transport arrangement cannot be provided by anyone other than a parent/ carer meaning the council would be obliged to provide one of the more expensive transport options as outlined in the paper.

Observation: Parent present at meeting has three young children and although already in catchment area for primary she hopes to send her three to Tarbert Academy Secondary School.

Q. Are there any children in the extended area who would come to Achahoish School if Boundary moved?

A. At present two children live in the proposed extended area who attend Achahoish Primary by placing request. There is a family with two under school age children proposing to come and live in the extended area. This family e mailed their intention prior to the consultation period. It was noted that when the proposal was initially requested four years ago, there were another two families living in the area who have since moved away. Families come and go regularly.

The general consensus of the meeting was that the proposal made sense and other than the added cost no one could see why it should not be passed.

K Wilkie thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

K Wilkie was thanked for all the work she has done to this point on pulling proposal together.

Statutory Consultation Public Meeting at Tarbert Academy

Proposal to Re-align Catchment Area for Achahoish and Tarbert Primary Schools

8th December 2015

Present: Kathryn Wilkie (Chair), Douglas Philand (A & B Council), Alan Stewart (Chair, Achahoish Parent Council), Mary Semple (Secretary, Achahoish, Parent Council), Jacqueline Gallagher (Education Scotland), Katherine Weir (Achahoish School), Mary Watson (Dunmore), Derek Watson (Dunmore), Anna Dawton (Tarbert Academy Parent Council), Neil McKnight (Head Teacher, Tarbert Academy), Louise Paterson (Depute Head Teacher Primary Tarbert Academy), Louise Bates (Minutes).

Copies of the Consultation Proposal Document, Map of boundaries old and new, Response Form and Meeting Agenda were referred to /distributed.

Kathryn Wilkie opened the meeting, introduced the panel and welcomed everyone to the consultation meeting at Tarbert Academy School to discuss the on-going process following the proposal to re-align the catchment areas for Achahoish and Tarbert Primary Schools, a similar meeting had taken place in Achahoish Primary School on the 1st December. Within the consultation time-scale, pupils and staff at both schools will have an opportunity to voice their opinion. At the end of the consultation period Kathryn Wilkie will provide Education Scotland with a summary of feedback from both meetings, including representations given at meetings and any other recommendations through the website, email or mail.

It was noted at both of the meetings that the on-line version of the response form was available to be printed off then sent as an attachment or printed out and posted. Kathryn Wilkie referred to the copies of the Response Form to complete and submit by post if more convenient.

The process so far was explained and discussed, and the paper as laid out was gone through.

Under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the consultation period started on Wednesday 4th November 2015 with notices being distributed to all on list of consultees many by email on the 3rd November, the 6 weeks consultation period will end on Friday 18th December 2015. All representations should be returned before this date to Argyll House.

At the end of the consultation period Kathryn Wilkie will provide Education Scotland with a summary of feedback from both meetings, including representations and any other relevant documentation.

Education Scotland will in turn prepare a report including their consideration on the following – this report will affect the final proposal document.

Kathryn Wilkie stated that there is knowledge of a new family building a house in the proposed boundary rezoning area who will be affected by this proposal positively if it goes through. She stated both Achahoish Parent Council and Community hope the proposed boundary changes will strengthen the community.

Neil McKnight said that the feeling by everyone was very positive and that Tarbert

Academy would fully support the proposal. He offered to give any help and backing required, as it made a lot of sense and would increase access to any afterschool activities.

Alan Stewart added that it was true to say that Achahoish Parent Council fully support the proposal.

Q. The Chair of Tarbert Academy Parent Council supports the two communities involved. She requested clarification of any placement requests and whether they go through standard procedure and would there be any barrier to a placing request?

A. Kathryn Wilkie stated that families are responsible for transporting their children to requested schools.

Neil McKnight referred to clarification of point 2.2 in the Consultation Paper that any brothers and or sisters attending Tarbert Academy PS, whose home is in the area proposed to be rezoned to Achahoish PS would have the option of attending Tarbert Academy PS without the need for a placing request. This option will remain in place until August 2022. Neil confirmed that this will allow children to grow through the system. Kathryn Wilkie confirmed there is adequate space in the classrooms for additional pupils.

Q. The option of option of parents being paid 40p per mile to be included in the paper was asked to be considered.

A. Kathryn Wilkie replied that when appropriate, parents could provide the transport and be paid 40 p per mile, this is the system in place for some families across the authority including Achahoish. However it was noted that the driver has to be a parent or carer and on occasions a parent may not be available.

Statement - Douglas Philand said he would raise this transport point if this could be included in the Consultation paper. However he wondered if the council be always be obliged to make this mileage payment considering the current financial situation.

Statement – The chair of the Achahoish Parent Council stated that the parents are pleased that Douglas Philand will raise the transport point with the council but is concerned other people in the council might argue against this point.

Kathryn Wilkie closed the meeting and thanked everyone who attended and that if they have any further questions they wanted to ask, she would be happy to respond through the e mail address on the consultation document.

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Argyll and Bute Council to realign the catchment areas for Achahoish Primary School and Tarbert Academy Primary School.

1. Introduction

This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments contained in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Argyll and Bute Council's proposal to realign the catchment areas for Achahoish Primary School and Tarbert Academy Primary School. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include a copy of this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all legislative obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.1 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools, any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.2 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 8 December 2015 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and

- visits to the sites of Achahoish Primary School and Tarbert Academy Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 Argyll and Bute Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

2.2 The consultation ran from 4 November 2015 until 18 December 2015. The council posted the proposal document on its website and lodged copies in the schools concerned, in council offices and in all libraries in Mid Argyll. In addition the council placed an advert in local newspapers. The council held public meetings on 1 and 8 December 2015 at Achahoish Primary School and Tarbert Academy respectively. The council received 31 responses during the consultation period and almost all were in agreement with the proposal. The council also held meetings for staff and children at both the schools concerned.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 Argyll and Bute Council has set out an appropriate rationale for its proposal to realign the catchment areas for Achahoish Primary School and Tarbert Academy Primary School, to be implemented from August 2016. Within the current catchment arrangements, a proportion of children who live closer to Achahoish Primary School are zoned for Tarbert Academy Primary School. This results in parents submitting placing requests for their child to attend the school nearer their home. Some children who live in the proposed catchment area attend Achahoish Primary School on placing requests. The current roll in Achahoish Primary School is ten pupils. Parents who live in the proposed rezoned catchment area and who enrol children from January 2016 will have the choice of sending their child to Achahoish Primary School or Tarbert Academy Primary School. Until August 2022, siblings of children who live in the proposed rezoned catchment area and attend Tarbert Academy Primary School will have the option of attending Tarbert Academy Primary School without the need for a placing request. The proposal will not affect the existing arrangements for pupils going to secondary school.

3.2 Achahoish Primary School was built in November 2005 and is located within the Knapdale National Scenic Area at the lochside. The school curriculum relates directly to the rural context of where the children live, reflecting their immediate outdoor environment in settings such as the beach classroom.

3.3 From the proposed catchment boundary the distance to Achahoish Primary School is 9.6 miles. The distance to Tarbert Academy Primary School is 13.7 miles. All travel in this area is on a single track road with passing places, which greatly lengthens travel times. Children are therefore in transit for a significant part of their school day. Shortening travel times would enable children to arrive at school less tired and more ready to learn. It would also increase access to after school learning opportunities.

3.4 Members of the Achahoish Primary School community, including children who spoke to HM Inspectors were very positive about the proposal and felt that the council had ensured that they were well-informed. They had reached a view that the proposal would benefit the school community by strengthening links between children and families from naturally neighbouring communities in an isolated rural area. Staff stated that the boundary change would strengthen the diversity and vibrancy of the school community. Children were enthusiastic about having more friends. The parental view was that the larger catchment area would shorten journeys to and from school and lead to more children on the roll. Children who live in Kilberry and are in the proposed catchment area would be able to attend the same primary school as those in the neighbouring community.

3.5 Members of the Tarbert Academy Primary School community who spoke to HM Inspectors were in favour of the proposal. Due to the distance between schools, and the very small number of children involved in this proposal, they believed there will be no direct effect on the Tarbert Community.

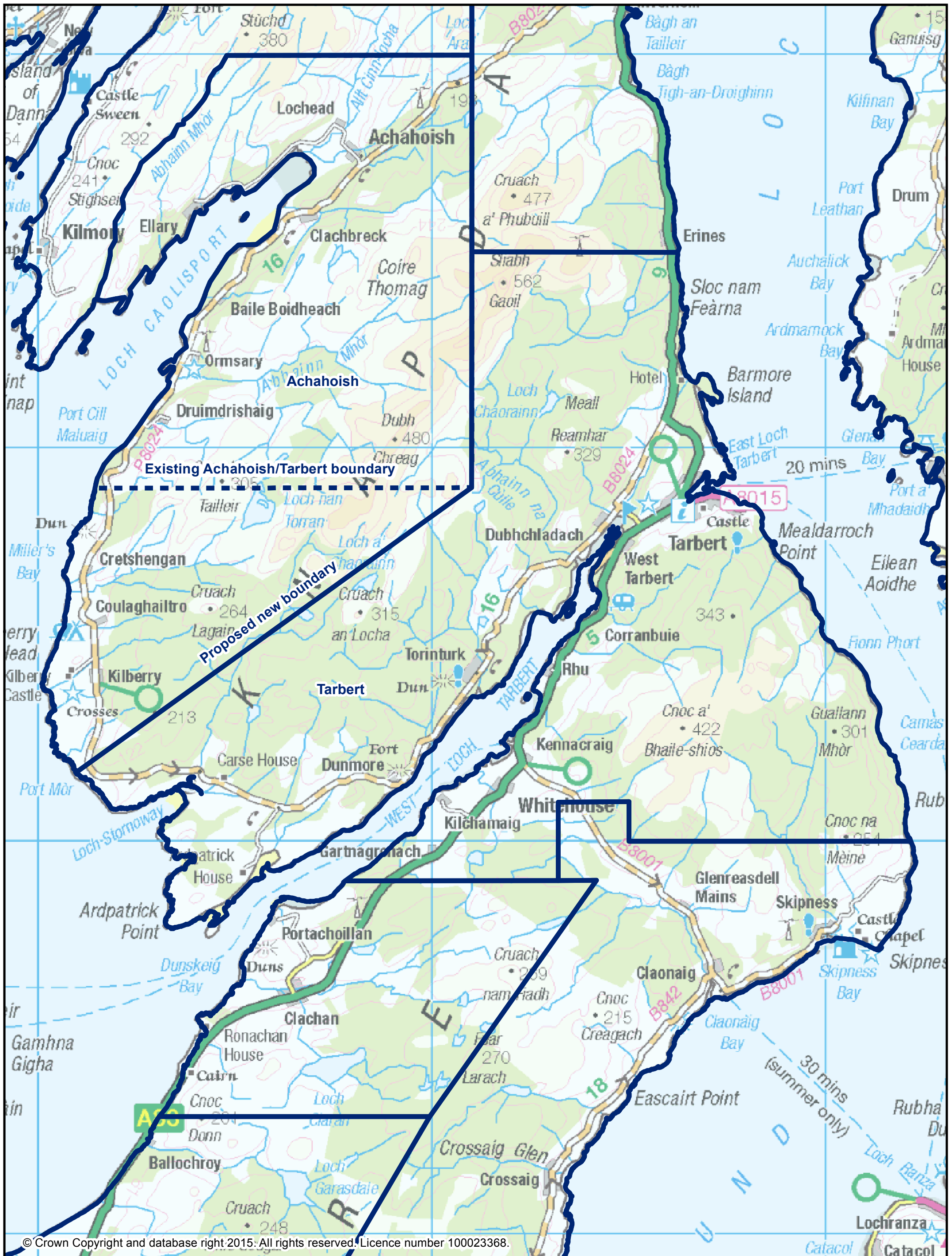
3.6 The South Knapdale Community Council, members of the local community and local employers who responded in writing, strongly support the proposal which they believe encourages and supports settlement and retention of young families in a fragile rural community.

3.7 Currently parents/carers drive children to the existing catchment boundary where the children then board a bus. However the proposal will have significant financial implications, involving either the extension of the current bus route, or the purchase of a minibus and employment of a driver. Parents and the local community have proposed that parental mileage be paid as an alternative. Argyll and Bute Council currently pay parental mileage payments to some families, including families in Achahoish. This would be a cost effective option and Argyll and Bute Council should give this proposition due consideration.

4. Summary

Argyll and Bute Council's proposal has potential educational benefits for existing children and those who may attend Achahoish Primary School in the future. It will ensure that children have opportunities to benefit from learning in their local environment. The decrease in travel time to and from school will support children's concentration and readiness to learn. The proposal will have no impact on children who attend Tarbert Academy Primary School.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
January 2016**



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Argyll and Bute - Proposed modification to Achahoish/Tarbert Primary School catchment boundaries

March 2015

