

**FEASIBILITY STUDY INTO A GAELIC MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOL IN OBAN**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 In August 2016 the Education Service received a request for a consultation on the development of a stand-alone Gaelic Medium Education (GME) primary school in Argyll and Bute, with specific reference to Oban area. Having given due regard at the time to legislation and taking into consideration the existence of provision for GME in the Oban area, the Authority did not agree to the request for a consultation at that time.
- 1.2 Subsequent to this request not being granted, in January 2018 a Feasibility Study was commissioned by Comann nam Pàrant an Òbain, with funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Argyll and Bute Council. The brief of the study was to “consider the feasibility of a stand-alone GME primary school in Oban with additional community use space and potential income generation streams.”
- 1.3 The Feasibility Study has now been completed and presents an argument in favour of the idea of a stand-alone GME primary school.
- 1.4 Comann nam Pàrant an Òbain have requested in writing that the Authority now considers the findings of the feasibility study and undertakes a formal consultation of the proposal for a GME primary school in Oban.
- 1.5 The feasibility study requires to be considered by a wide range of senior officers, including:- 2 x Heads of Education; Head of Facility Services; Head of Improvement and HR; Head of Strategic Finance; Head of Economic Development; and Quality Improvement Manager Special Projects. This process is ongoing.
- 1.6 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:-
- Notes the request from Comann nam Pàrant an Òbain.
  - Agrees that officers continue their evaluation of the feasibility study and bring a further report to the Committee when this exercise has been concluded.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 In August 2016 the Education Service received a request for a consultation on the development of a stand-alone Gaelic Medium Education (GME) primary school in Argyll and Bute, with specific reference to Oban area. Having given due regard at the time to legislation and taking into consideration the existence of provision for GME in the Oban area, the Authority did not agree to the request for a consultation at that time.
- 2.2 Subsequent to this request not being granted, in January 2018 a Feasibility Study was commissioned by Comann nam Pàrant an Òbain, with funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Argyll and Bute Council. The brief of the study was to “consider the feasibility of a stand-alone GME primary school in Oban with additional community use space and potential income generation streams.”
- 2.3 The Feasibility Study has now been completed and presents an argument in favour of the idea of a stand-alone GME primary school.
- 2.4 Comann nam Pàrant an Òbain have requested in writing that the Authority now considers the findings of the feasibility study and undertakes a formal consultation of the proposal for a GME primary school in Oban.
- 2.5 The feasibility study requires to be considered by a wide range of senior officers, including:- 2 x Heads of Education; Head of Facility Services; Head of Improvement and HR; Head of Strategic Finance; Head of Economic Development; and Quality Improvement Manager Special Projects. This process is ongoing.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:-
- Notes the request from Comann nam Pàrant an Òbain.
  - Agrees that officers continue their evaluation of the feasibility study and bring a further report to the Committee when this exercise has been concluded.

**4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 Comann nam Pàrant an Òbain have written to the Chief Executive of Argyll and Bute Council and other members of Senior Management requesting that the Local Authority considers the findings of a Feasibility Study commissioned by them and published in May 2018, and begin a formal consultation process to establish a

GME primary school in Oban. At present, GME in the Oban and Lorn area is currently delivered via dedicated classes within Rockfield Primary School and Strath of Appin Primary School, both of which also have dedicated Gaelic early learning childcare (ELC).

- 4.2 The Feasibility Study, researched and written by Emma Grant (Community Development Consultant and Coach), presents an argument for the creation of a stand-alone GME primary school in Oban and Lorn area.
- 4.3 The author of the study collected and analysed both qualitative and quantitative data to present her findings. Documentation referred to include the national and local Gaelic Plans. Two rural stand-alone GME schools were visited in Highland Council. Interviews were conducted with key education personnel, key stakeholders approved by Comann nam Pàrant an Òbain, Oban and Lorn Councillors, Bòrd na Gàidhlig representatives, Scottish Government Officers and representatives of local Gaelic Language and cultural organisations. Two questionnaires were used, one for parents in the Oban and Lorn area currently accessing GME which generated 11 responses and one targeted at parents of children, available for anyone, which generated 118 responses.
- 4.4 A cross section of Senior Officers (as detailed at paragraph 1.5) are evaluating the content of the feasibility study from their respective professionalisms when this evaluation has been completed, a further report with recommendations on the request will be brought to the Committee for determination.

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Policy: None at this stage
- 5.2 Financial: None at this stage
- 5.3 Legal: All legal procedures would be in line with the *'Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education: Bòrd na Gàidhlig'* which relates to The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Schools (Consultation) Act 2010
- 5.4 HR: None at this stage
- 5.5 Equalities: None at this stage
- 5.6 Risk: None at this stage
- 5.7 Customer Service: None at this stage
- 5.8 Equality and Socio – Economic Impact: None at this stage

### **Executive Director of Customer Services**

18<sup>th</sup> July 2018

**Councillor Yvonne McNeilly**  
**Policy Lead for Education**

#### **For further information please contact:-**

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