

**REQUEST TO REZONE THE CATCHMENT AREA OF ST COLUMBA'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, OBAN**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 On 7<sup>th</sup> August 2018, St Columba's Primary Parent Council made a formal request to the Council to consider rezoning the current catchment area to that of the mainland catchment area for Oban High School. St Columba's Primary school is the only denominational school within 80 miles of Oban, and the catchment area currently covers Oban and Dunbeg.
- 1.2 The proposal to vary the catchment area of a school is a relevant proposal in terms of Schedule 1 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The amendments which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014 include a requirement for a report from Education Scotland in the case of every proposal requiring consultation. Guidance has been prepared by the Scottish Government to support implementation of these amendments.
- 1.3 In December 2018, Community Services Committee agreed to recommend to Council to:
- a) to discontinue the policy adopted on 11 September 2014 in relation to dealing with requests to alter the catchment area of a school;
  - b) to note that the relevant Area Committee would be given the opportunity to comment as part of a consultation exercise; and
  - c) to return to the previous process, similar to that for other proposals under the 2010 Act, whereby requests to alter the catchment area of a school are brought before the Community Services Committee for a decision to be made on whether that request is adopted as a 'relevant proposal' to be progressed to a public consultation under the 2010 Act.
- 1.4 It is recommended that Community Services Committee:
- a) Agrees that this is a relevant proposal and that Officers should now carry out a full consultation on the proposed change to the catchment area of St Columba's Primary school, as defined in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended;

- b) Notes that on completion of the consultation period a report will be presented to the committee detailing the results of the consultation for consideration and;
- c) Notes that the relevant Area Committee would be given the opportunity to comment as part of a consultation exercise.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

On 7<sup>th</sup> August 2018 St Columba's parent council made a formal request to the Council to consider rezone the current catchment area to include the catchment area for the following primary schools;

- **Achaleven,**
- **Barcaldine,**
- **Dalmally,**
- **Dunbeg,**
- **Easdale,**
- **Kilchrenan,**
- **Kilninver,**
- **Lochnell,**
- **Luing,**
- **Park,**
- **Rockfield,**
- **Strath of Appin,**
- **Taynuilt.**

This would make the catchment area for St Columba's Primary school the same as the mainland catchment area for Oban High School. St Columba's Primary school is the only denominational school within 80 miles of Oban, and the catchment area currently covers Oban and Dunbeg.

St. Columba's is a Roman Catholic Primary School situated in Oban. Together with Rockfield Primary, it forms part of the Oban Primary Campus. St Columba's Primary is one of 4 denominational schools in Argyll and Bute. St Joseph's Primary School is in Helensburgh and St Mun's Primary School is in Dunoon. The current school roll is 119 pupils. 6 pupils attend St Columba's Primary who live outwith the catchment area.

The council's policy on responding to rezone of catchment areas reflects the legislative process as laid out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that Community Services Committee;

- a) Agrees that this is a relevant proposal and that Officers should now carry out a full consultation on the proposed change to the catchment area of St Columba's Primary school, as defined in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended and;
- b) Notes that on completion of the consultation period a report will be presented to the committee detailing the results of the consultation for consideration and;
- c) Notes that the relevant Area Committee would be given the opportunity to comment as part of a consultation exercise.

### **4.0 DETAIL**

4.1 The proposal from St Columba's Primary School to rezone their catchment area to include the catchment area of the following primary schools;

- **Achaleven,**
- **Barcaldine,**
- **Dalmally,**
- **Dunbeg**
- **Easdale,**
- **Kilchrenan,**
- **Kilninver,**
- **Lochnell,**
- **Luing,**
- **Park,**
- **Rockfield,**
- **Strath of Appin,**
- **Taynuilt**

This would make the catchment area for St Columba's Primary school the same as the mainland catchment area for Oban High School. St Columba's Primary school is the only denominational school within 80 miles of Oban, and the catchment area currently covers Oban and Dunbeg.

This proposal qualifies as a permanent change to a school as defined in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

4.2 As detailed in the September 2014 Argyll and Bute Catchment area policy, the proposal to vary the catchment area of a school is a relevant proposal in terms of Schedule 1 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

Therefore, if the Council makes such a proposal it requires;

- to prepare an educational benefits statement which demonstrates the educational benefit for children from the area in question attending St Columba's Primary school. Care is required in framing this requirement to avoid reputational risk to any of the schools;
- to prepare and publish a proposal paper;
- to give notice of the proposal to the relevant consultees and invite representations;
- to hold and to give notice of a public meeting;
- to involve Education Scotland.

The consultation requires to be run over a period of not less than six weeks of school term time (i.e. the length of the consultation period cannot include holiday periods).

- 4.3 There are currently six pupils who currently attend St Columba's Primary School as a placing request. These pupils are currently not in receipt of school transport.
- 4.4 There are currently 577 pupils on the school roll of all the primaries in the proposed catchment area. This does not include pupils from Rockfield Primary Campus, who share the same catchment area as St Columba's Primary School.
- 4.5 It is not a requirement that all pupils who attend denominational schools must be of that particular religious persuasion. The law requires that every school under the management of the Education Authority must be open to pupils of all denominations.
- 4.6 In the case of Roman Catholic schools, where applications for places from those living within the catchment area exceed the number of places available, the Education Authority may give priority to those applicants whose children have siblings at the school and applicants who have a declared affinity with the religious belief of the school.
- 4.7 If Council were mindful to agree to the changes in to the boundary of St Columba's Primary school these changes could be made in time for the commencement of the 2019/2020 academic year.

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Policy – If this proposal is adopted it will result in a change to St Columba's Primary School catchment boundaries.
- 5.2 Financial – A change to a school catchment area may directly impact on the staffing, and school transport costs. It should be noted that there are also costs associated with carrying out consultation, as defined in the Act and associated guidance.
- 5.3 Legal – Any proposal requires to comply with the provisions of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

- 5.4 HR – a successful request could have implications on the head teacher’s salary as there is a relationship between salaries and roll size as determined by the job sizing process. An increase or decrease of school roll will also have a potential to increase or decrease teaching staff numbers.
- 5.5 Fairer – Scotland Duty: None
- 5.5.1 Equalities – protected characteristics – A socio-economic equalities impact assessment will be carried out as part of the consultation.
- 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – None
- 5.5.3 Islands – none
- 5.6. Risk – carrying out a public consultation can have an increased reputational risk to the Council especially if the proposal is divisive. Ensuring the proposal has the support of all parent councils mitigates against this risk.
- 5.7 Customer Service – a clear process, which follows the legislative guidelines will assist other parent councils to submit such requests.

**Douglas Hendry**  
**Executive Director of Customer Services**

**Louise Connor**  
**Head of Education: Learning & Teaching**

**Councillor Yvonne McNeilly**  
**Policy for Education and Lifelong Learning**

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Map of St Columba’s Primary catchment Area

Appendix 2 – Proposed rezoned catchment area

Appendix 3 – Proposal Paper