

Rezoning Request by Achahoish Parent Council

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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.

The 2010 Act has recently been amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The amendments which came into force on 1st 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 the amendments. In September 2014 Argyll and Bute Council Community Services Committee:

- a) Noted the amendments to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the revised timeline and process for the public consultation.
 - b) Approved the process by which future requests to alter the catchment area of a school be considered.
 - c) Agreed that any proposal received from a Parent Council being taken forward to a public consultation would require to have the support all parent councils affected by the proposal.
 - d) Agreed that subsequent requests for altering the catchment area of a school following either a decision to refuse a request to do so or a decision following the publication of the consultation report not to proceed with such an alteration will only be considered if there has been a material change of circumstances from those originally considered.
- 1.1. In May 2014 Achahoish Primary School Parent Council made a formal request to the council to consider rezoning their current catchment area.
 - 1.2. Rezoning requests received since 2010 have not been considered due to the advice from the Scottish Government that the legislation was not fit for purpose and subsequently the report of the Commission for Rural Education which recommended amendments to the legislation.
 - 1.3. The Council administration has made it clear that they have no plans to review the school estate at this time and the recommendations in the report prepared by the Commission for Rural Education are being considered by the Scottish

Government and COSLA, joint commissioners of the report. However, none of the 38 recommendations in the report would prevent us from reviewing school catchment areas at this time

- 1.4. Three requests relating to rezoning of catchment areas have now been received by the Executive Director of Community Services, these being:
- Strone Primary School – Sandbank Primary School
 - Achahoish Primary School – Tarbert Academy (Primary Dept.)
 - North Bute Primary School – Rothesay Joint Campus (Primary Dept.)

This report refers to the second of these three requests.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Mid Argyll and Kintyre Area Committee:

- Considers the request of Achahoish Parent Council to increase the catchment area of Achahoish Primary School (PS).
- Supports the recommendation that if the proposal be approved existing children and younger siblings would not be required to transfer school for the duration of their primary education as a result of the proposal.
- Decides whether the report should be presented to the Council in June 2015 to request officers are instructed to carry out a full consultation on the proposed change as defined in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- Notes that on completion of the consultation period a report will be presented to Council detailing the results of the consultation for consideration.

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3. INTRODUCTION

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.

The 2010 Act has recently been amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The amendments which came into force on 1st 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 the amendments. In September 2014 Argyll and Bute Council Community Services Committee:

- a) Noted the amendments to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the revised timeline and process for the public consultation.
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 - d) Agreed that subsequent requests for altering the catchment area of a school following either a decision to refuse a request to do so or a decision following the publication of the consultation report not to proceed with such an alteration will only be considered if there has been a material change of circumstances from those originally considered.
- 3.1. In May 2014 Achahoish Primary School Parent Council made a formal request to the council to consider rezoning their current catchment area.
 - 3.2. Rezoning requests received since 2010 have not been considered due to the advice from the Scottish Government that the legislation was not fit for purpose and subsequently the report of the Commission for Rural Education which recommended amendments to the legislation.
 - 3.3. The Council administration has made it clear that they have no plans to review the school estate at this time and the recommendations in the report prepared by the Commission for Rural Education are being considered by the Scottish

Government and COSLA, joint commissioners of the report. However, none of the 38 recommendations in the report would prevent us from reviewing school catchment areas at this time

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4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That the Mid Argyll and Kintyre Area Committee:
- a) Considers the request of Achahoish Parent Council to increase the catchment area of Achahoish Primary School (PS).
 - b) Supports the recommendation that if the proposal be approved existing children and younger siblings would not be required to transfer school for the duration of their primary education as a result of the proposal.
 - c) Decides whether the report should be presented to the Council in June 2015 to request officers are instructed to carry out a full consultation on the proposed change as defined in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
 - d) Notes that on completion of the consultation period a report will be presented to Council detailing the results of the consultation for consideration.

5. DETAIL

- 5.1 The existing boundary between the current catchment areas of Achahoish PS and Tarbert Academy Primary is shown in appendix 1. The request by Achahoish Parent Council was for the catchment area to be increased. The preferred choice for boundary change is for Achahoish School to Tiretigan Farm, Kilberry – appendix 2.
- 5.2 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 Kilberry being expected to attend Tarbert Academy P S.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 At a meeting of Achahoish Parent Council on 11th March 2015 the proposal was discussed and a new proposed boundary identified. One councillor attended the meeting and several councillors made representations. The Head Teacher was present.

- 5.5 The proposal by Achahoish Parent Council is supported by Tarbert Academy Parent Council. As stated in the School Rezoning Policy, support for a boundary change is required from both schools' parent council. A letter of support from Tarbert Academy Parent Council has been submitted.

From the new proposed boundary the distance to Achahoish PS is 9.6 miles. The distance to Tarbert Academy is 13.7 miles. All travel in this area is on a single track road with passing places.

- 5.6 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.

The authority is aware of 2 children of primary school age living in the area, 2 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.

- 5.8 School transport is currently provided to 5 children between Achahoish School 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. The bus travels on to arrive at Lochgilphead Joint Campus at 08.44 and the final destination at Ford at 10.27. Pupils from Achahoish Primary School are picked up on their homeward journey at 15.35 by the bus which has left Ford at 14.24 arriving at Kilmaluag at 15.47. Two children are then collected by parent transport travelling to Coulaghailtro.

- 5.9 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)
Achahoish	30	13	15	10
Tarbert	135	100	120	81

The roll of Achahoish PS in 2015/16 is expected to be 11, and in 2016/17 is expected to be 10 children.

- 5.10 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.

- 5.11 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 following applications were approved for housing in the Achahoish catchment in the 3 years up to 01/04/2014 but will lapse after 3 years from decision date unless development has commenced.
- 5.12 Achahoish is not included as a priority in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan. No housing pressures or requirements have been identified.

6. Impact of changes

- 6.1 This proposed change affects one family who currently attend Achahoish PS on a placing request. In the future it may mean a family who intend to return to the area will attend Achahoish rather than Tarbert. For the next two years the pupil numbers at Achahoish are expected to remain very similar therefore staffing will not be affected. It will have no impact at present on Tarbert Academy Primary
- 6.2 The family furthest from Achahoish PS, who attend on a placing request travel 7.4 miles to Achahoish PS. The distance to Tarbert Academy PS is 15.6 mile, more than twice the travel distance to Achahoish Primary. All travel in this area is on a single track road with passing places.
- 6.3 The travel time from Coulaghailtro (where the furthest travelled family live) to Kilmaluag and on to Achahoish PS is 25 minutes total. The travel time from Coulaghailtro to Tarbert Academy PS is 49 minutes. Effectively, by moving the Achahoish PS boundary to Tiretigan, travel time is reduced from 49 minutes to 25 minutes, decreasing the daily travel for children significantly.
- 6.4 If the council is minded to approve this boundary change there will be considerable impact on school transport - both method and cost.
- There will be a requirement to 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 Coulaghailtro area. The cost will rise to £22,500 if the driver and escort are resident in either Tarbert or Lochgilphead, or
 - The local bus service could be extended to Tiretigan – the cost for this would be £23,000.

- 6.5 The proposal will not affect the existing arrangements for pupils going to secondary schools. The boundary change will however create a unique situation in that pupils from Achahoish Primary School who have learned together through primary school will then attend different secondary schools.
- 6.6 The proposal is not anticipated to have any impact on any other school in the area.
- 6.7 The South Knapdale Community Council supports the proposal. They state that this change could encourage young families to remain or even move in to the Kilberry area as children can attend the nearest school safely and with cost free transport over a relatively short distance.
- 6.8 Any transport arrangements that are in place at present or in the future could be affected by families moving in to the area.

7.0 Next Steps

- 7.1 The proposal from Achahoish Parent Council to increase their catchment area qualifies as a permanent change to a school as defined in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 7.2 As detailed in the September 2014 Argyll and Bute School 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.
Therefore if the Council makes such a proposal it requires
- to prepare an educational benefits statement,
 - prepare and publish a proposal paper
 - give notice of the proposal to relevant consultees and invite representations
 - to hold and give notice of a public meeting
 - to involve Education Scotland
- 7.3 If Council were to approve the proposal by Achahoish Parent Council, officers would begin steps 2 to 5. The full consultation report, step 6, would be presented to Council after the summer recess for a decision on the proposal.
- 7.4 Education Scotland has also indicated that it expects councils to properly reflect on their comments prior to finalising their reports
- 7.5 If Council were mindful to agree the changes to the boundary of Achahoish Primary School these changes could be made in time for registration for the 2016/17 academic year.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Policy - if the proposal is adopted it will result change to the defined primary school catchment boundaries
- 8.2 Financial - There will a cost to the service in carrying out a public consultation. If a change is approved there will be a requirement to
- 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 Coulaghailtro 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.
- 8.3 Legal - as per the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010
- 8.4 HR - there are no HR implications
- 8.5 Equalities – an equalities impact assessment will be carried out as part of the consultation.
- 8.6 Risk – N/A

Appendices

- 1: South Knapdale Primary Catchment Area
- 2: Achahoish Primary School Proposed Boundary