Comann Nam Pàrant Response for Full Assessment
Education (Scotland) Act 2016
Requested by Argyll & Bute Council

1. The information provided by the local authority relating to the request

Statutory Guidance is that, at the stage of full assessment, statutory consultees should be given details of the request. We have received details from the local authority on the numbers, ages and location of children included in the request as well as other factors taken into consideration as part of the initial assessment.

2. Outcome of the Initial Assessment

Following initial assessment, the local authority has determined that there is a potential need for GMPE in the assessment area which has been identified by the council as the Mid Argyll area.

Comann nam Pàrant agree with the findings of the initial assessment.

3. GMPE Location of provision and catchment area

The council has not yet identified a location for the proposed new provision but given that most demand from parents is in the Lochgilphead area a central location within this area would be appropriate to minimise travel for families. We also recommend that the council undertake a consultation on the catchment area for the new provision as soon as possible after it is established. A local authority has an obligation to promote and support GME and provision which is accessible and attractive to families will make it easier for the authority to fulfil this obligation and achieve growth in GME.

The decision on accommodation should also take the future requirement for pre-school Gaelic provision into consideration. Statutory Guidance currently states that “Education authorities should give consideration to commencing and supporting Gaelic provision for children below school age” and the Scottish Languages Act 2025, once fully commenced, will amend the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 to allow parents to request Early Learning and Childcare in Gaelic.

4. Information relating to the demand for GMPE in the area from parents of children who are under school age and have not commenced attendance at a primary school

The interest in GMPE from families named on the request is the result of minimal promotion through parental word-of-mouth and the Gaelic early years group in the area. It is possible that if the local authority were to undertake a more robust assessment of demand that more families would be identified. To grow the numbers in the Gaelic medium class the council will need to promote the new service to families in the area on an ongoing basis and Comann nam Pàrant are happy to support this.

5. Staffing

Other local authorities have found good practice to recruit for principal teacher posts when establishing new provision. This recognises the additional responsibilities of the post, and a principal teacher may also be able support provision in nearby schools with Gaelic medium provision with advice and support where necessary.

6. Argyll & Bute Gaelic Language Plan

Argyll & Bute Council's proposed new Gaelic Language Plan has not yet been agreed with Bòrd na Gàidhlig. However, the current plan has a commitment to promote, establish and expand both GME and GLE at primary and secondary levels.

6. Summary

This parental request for GMPE, and subsequent finding on initial assessment that there is potential demand for GMPE in the assessment area provides an opportunity for the council to expand Gaelic medium education within the authority and grow the overall numbers in Gaelic medium education within Argyll & Bute. There are still many areas of Argyll & Bute where families have no access to Gaelic medium education and provision in Mid Argyll could be a first step towards achieving more widespread provision.

We fully support the introduction of Gaelic medium education to Mid Argyll following a reasonable request from parents to the council and look forward to seeing provision established.

Comann nam Pàrant (Nàiseanta) 26.10.2026