**Tiree Community Council’s response**

**to the consultation on the Argyll and Bute Council ‘Collective Leadership Model’**

**Summary**

We have consulted widely on this proposal, including a survey that attracted over seventy responses. Our conclusion is that the Tiree community is strongly against the proposed ‘Collective Leadership Model’ (‘the model’).

**Introduction**

The Council claims that the proposed model ‘expands on the success of shared Headship between Oban and Tiree schools’. In a number of ways, Tiree High School is currently closer to the proposed model than most other schools in Argyll and Bute. Despite the small size and peripheral situation of our school, this island community therefore has an important voice in the debate.

**How we came to our opinion**

We publicised the Council’s proposal, and discussed it at three public meetings. We got most response from an anonymous online survey using Surveymonkey, which ran for three weeks. At least 79 people answered eleven questions. (The uncertainty comes because only one reply was allowed per device, and some families may have answered collectively). Free text amounting to some twenty pages was also collected. Respondents included 38 parents (including 15 parents of secondary school pupils), 14 members of staff, 5 senior pupils and 24 members of the community. (The Tiree primary and secondary school roll in 2018 was 110).

A survey like this has its shortcomings. A response rate of between a half and third of the ‘school community’ may not be representative. One respondent also pointed out that this was a bad time to survey opinion because the school was only just emerging from the pandemic and there had been significant staffing issues over the past year. We should point out that the timing of this consultation was dictated by Argyll and Bute Council.

It also has its strengths. Our guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality allowed us to harvest a range of opinions from this small community that simply would not have been expressed at a public meeting.

**Our findings**

1. Opinion was emphatically of the view (by almost three to one) that the model will not benefit pupils attending Tiree High School.
2. Some members of staff told us that they valued working with colleagues at Oban High School.
3. However, the majority (including a majority of respondents who were staff) thought that the model would not help teaching or learning in Tiree High School.
4. Respondents were evenly split on whether the model would increase the range of courses and opportunities offered at Tiree High School.
5. Large majorities thought that the model would increase the numbers of young people leaving Tiree and that the model would not attract families to the island. This is crucial because reversing population decline on the island is a fundamental policy of Tiree Community Council.
6. A number of respondents pointed out that there had been substantial investment in the school over the last two years. However, most people thought that the proposed model would ultimately lead to an overall drop in funding for smaller schools like Tiree. Many saw this proposal as a cost savings exercise and would lead to the eventual closure of senior secondary school classes on Tiree.
7. The majority believed that the model would result in less Gaelic being spoken on the island. We note that the original ‘Collective Leadership Model’ document did not include the word ‘Gaelic’. This is another core objection. Reversing the decline in the community use of Gaelic on the island is a central policy of Tiree Community Council.
8. It has been our experience that closer links with Oban High School have led to an increase in teaching using VC at Tiree High School. Significantly, a large majority (including all responding pupils and a majority of responding staff) wanted to see a reduction in VC teaching.
9. We did not specifically ask this question, but many respondents expressed an opinion typified by one reply: ‘We need our own dedicated head teacher.’

**Our conclusion**

Tiree Community Council, having canvassed the views of our community, strongly opposes this ‘Collective Leadership Model’.

We understand that the world is moving fast. We absolutely see the need for our school to adapt in the face of new opportunities and challenges. We understand the benefits to Tiree High School in continuing to develop relationships and collaborative working with schools in the area.

Despite the Education Department’s claim that ‘The [Collective Leadership Model] has been developed by educationalists with extensive input from Head Teachers and local communities’, we are not aware of any input from our ‘local community’. But we who live here – we who understand the island best and have the biggest stake in the school’s success – want to be genuine partners in finding local solutions. We therefore propose that the ‘Collective Leadership Model’ is set aside and a new conversation about the future of Argyll and Bute’s schools begins.

Tiree Community Council

13 March 2022