

**PARSONS  
BRINCKERHOFF**

**Date & time:** 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014  
**Venue:** Wick High School  
**Contract title:** Wick High School  
**Contract No:** 3511443A/NMW  
**Purpose:** Wick Stakeholder Forum

|                   |  |   |
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| <b>Attendees:</b> | Gail Ross<br>Lawrence Bews<br>Iain Bark<br>Allan Farquhar<br>Lesley Henstridge<br>Arlene Farquhar<br>Pat Bowers<br>Tracy Billington<br>Traylan Peat<br>Ruan Peat<br>Keith Moncur<br>Simon Swanson<br>Andy Somerville<br>John Ritchie<br>Chris Connor<br>Lillian Wark<br>Elena Koponen-Baikie<br>Rebecca Machin<br>Anna McBride<br>Sheona Henderson<br>Anne MacBeath<br>Ally Budge<br>Ewen Pearson<br>Bill Fernie<br>Ron Mackenzie<br>Mike Felton<br>Tom McIntyre<br>Philip Shannon<br>Brenda Jones | The Highland Council<br>Head Teacher North Primary<br>WHS/PA Parent Council<br>RMWCC<br>North School<br>North School<br>Head Teacher, South School<br>South School Parent Council<br>Disability Access Panel Caithness<br>HLH<br>HLH<br>HLH<br>Miller Construction<br>Miller Construction<br>Miller Construction<br>Pulteneytown Academy<br>WHS & Pulteneytown Academy<br>Wick High School<br>Wick High School<br>Wick High School<br>Wick High School<br>Head Teacher Hillhead Primary School<br>Hillhead Parent Council<br>The Highland Council<br>The Highland Council<br>Hub North Scotland<br>Rector, Wick High School<br>Architect, Highland Council<br>Project Manager, Parsons Brinckerhoff |
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**Apologies**

| <b>Item</b>  | <b>Action</b> |
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| <b>1.0 Welcome</b><br>GR welcomed everyone to the meeting  |               |
| <b>2.0 Minutes of previous meeting</b><br>Accepted   |               |
| <b>3.0 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on agenda</b><br>AF asked for a copy of the current programme | <i>RM</i>     |

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#### **4.0 Project update**

##### **4.1 Affordability Cap**

RMA summarised the briefing note issued to members of the Stakeholder Group last week.

The project affordability cap has been increased since the procurement process started.

##### **4.2 Tender returns**

MF advised that tenders for the work packages have now been received. These are over budget in some instances.

This demonstrates the actual extra cost of building in Wick as well as market conditions generally. For some work packages, no contractors have been willing to submit tenders.

This provides evidence for a discussion with the Scottish Futures Trust.

RM advised that the Council's own estimate of the additional cost of building in Wick compared to Inverness is 8%.

MF advised that it has proved particularly difficult to get contractors interested in the Campus, due to the size of the project.

MF advised that the tender process is as follows:

- Hub and THC agree the tender list for each work package
- THC review the work package design information prepared by Hubco
- Miller Construction review the tender returns, conclude any necessary clarifications and provide a tender report to Hubco's Quality Councils' QS, who review the tender returns and proposed cost.

AS advised that it has been very difficult to get tenders for decoration works, e.g. the lowest tenderer pulled out as he only wanted to do part of the work. Miller Construction is working hard to identify alternative companies.

##### **4.3 Affordability Gap**

The Council and Hubco are close to reaching a conclusion on the costs for the project. After that, the Council will seek to close the gaps by:

- Seeking additional funding from SFT
- Putting in more Council funding
- Seeking commercial savings from Hubco/Miller Construction

RM advised that the Council is committed to not reducing the quality of the schools.

RM advised that the funding gap is in the region of £3m-£5m.

RM advised that the Council are in discussions with SFT re the funding gap, in particular to establish the reasons for the gap.

#### **4.4 Programme**

- a) North of the River Primary School

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MF advised that two early works contract have been let to avoid delay for the programme. The first contract was for set-up of the site. The second one is for ground works and early ordering of some materials.

MF advised that the contractor for both early works packages is Miller Construction. MM Miller was the sub-contractor for the first contract. Gunns are the sub-contractor for the second contract.

MF showed the milestone programme for the NOTR School. RM confirmed there is no Scottish Government funding for this school.

b) Campus

MF advised that the handover date for the campus has changed from March 2016 to June 2016. An early works contract is planned to set up the site and do critical works. The Council will need to be confident that the affordability gap can be closed in order to award the enabling works contract.

MF advised that Miller Construction will be the contractor for the enabling works as well as the main contract. AS advised that the ground works sub-contractor will be let to a Central Belt Contract, but they are planning to take on a local company as their sub-contractor. AS confirmed that a contractor is ready to start.

MF advised that the contract for the North of the River Primary School will be very similar in form to the contract for the Enabling Works. The main issue remaining is the exact specification and cost. The Council is in the process of reviewing the specification and cost. There is a small affordability cap to be overcome. One of the issues is that the price must include for inflation, as Hubco cannot claim extra if inflation goes up.

RM advised that the Council is working hard to close the affordability gap on the NOTR; the gap is in the region of 3%. RM advised that it is unlikely that the signature of the NOTR contract will be delayed.

MF confirmed that the specification has been drawn up.

MF advised that the two projects are being tendered in tandem, so the Council is benefitting from the economics of the scale. The projects would be more expensive if they were not being done together.

MF confirmed that if the project is delayed further, there is a risk of additional inflation.

RM advised that the Council will issue an update to the Stakeholder Group on the project affordability and costs. The Council is committed to providing a state of the art school.

*THC(RM)*

## **5.0 Progress on North of the River site**

AS showed progress photographs of works to date. The temporary playground is complete. An area for site car parking has also been created.

The second phase of early works started 28<sup>th</sup> April. This will involve stripping off topsoil and installing foundations. Some topsoil has been retained on site for later use, the rest has been removed.

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AS showed a 3D animation showing the process of building the school.

AS to issue stills from the film and try and reduce the file size so that it can go on the project website. *MILLER*

## **6.0 Update on community benefits**

### **6.1 Training**

AS advised that Miller is in discussion with their potential sub-contractors to agree the appointment of apprentices.

The ground works sub-contractor has advised willingness to take on apprentices. The M+E sub-contractor is also looking to take on apprentices.

AS confirmed that he is liaising with the school and Construction Skills regarding recruitment of apprentices.

## **7.0 Safe Routes to School**

BJ gave a summary of progress on implementation of Safe Routes to School works (presentation attached).

The final scope of works will be issued to members of the Stakeholder Group. *PB*

## **8.0 Naming of new Primary School**

The short list for South of the River will be agreed next week. A short list of five has already been agreed for North of the River.

Ballots will be issued 28<sup>th</sup> May to:

- All pupils
- All parents

Everyone who lives within the catchment area will be able to vote. The ballot period will be 2 weeks.

AF asked whether the Council would meet the cost of new uniforms. PB and LB advised that most parents need to replace uniforms on a regular basis anyway.

Once the names have been agreed, the HT's will work on the process for agreeing new uniforms. *HT'S*

## **9.0 Transition arrangements**

RM gave a report on behalf of Graeme Nichols. The initial focus is on staffing. PB and LB advised that they had not been invited to attend Transition Group meetings. RM to ask GN to arrange a meeting in June. *RM*

RM advised that the HT's for the new Primary Schools will be appointed one year before each school opens.

RM advised that the council is still in discussion with the Trade Unions on the process for appointing new HT's. This process should be agreed in June. The meeting expressed concern about the delay in progressing the HT appointment. RM advised that the Council could not start this process until it has been agreed with the Trade Unions.

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|             | RM to ask GN to clarify the timing of the change to the primary school catchment areas.   | <i>THC(RM)</i>                    |
| <b>10.0</b> | <b>Any other business</b>   |                                   |
| 10.1        | Community Building drawings<br>SS advised that HLH will organise a meeting with user groups to present the drawings before the next meetings. SS explained that this has not happened yet because the drawings have not been finalised.   | <i>HLH</i>                        |
| 10.2        | High School revenue budget<br>IB asked GR to take an action to ensure that the new High School does not have a revenue budget deficit when it opens. GR to investigate.<br><br>IB expressed concern about further delays leading to additional costs and the impact on the quality of the fixtures and fittings in the school. He asked for the scope to be reviewed by the former rectors of Wick and Thurso High School.<br><br>RMach emphasized the need for the building to be adequately maintained. GR committed to checking that there is sufficient funding for this. RM advised that he is not aware of any current issues in respect of Health and Safety. RMach advised that her concern does not related to Health and Safety concerns. GR noted that the Council has a process for dealing with any safety concerns raised by staff or pupils. | <i>THC(GR)</i><br><br><i>NOTE</i> |
| 10.3        | Fitness equipment<br>CJ reported similar concerns about the condition of fitness equipment in the gym. SS advised that the gym equipment is leased, so if there is a problem with it, it should be rectified. CJ to provide information to SS, who will investigate.  | <i>SS</i>                         |
| 10.4        | High School muster point<br>AMCB asked when details of the alternative muster point will be agreed. AS to arrange for Miller's Project Manager to liaise directly with Anne McBeath.  | <i>MCUK<br/>(AS)</i>              |
|             | <b>POST MEETING NOTE</b><br>The Council has applied for planning permission to install a toilet block and storage at Bignold Park, to support pupil use of the Park for sports during the project.  |                                   |
| 10.5        | Expenditure to date<br>AF asked for details of expenditure to date.   | <i>THC(RM)</i>                    |
| 10.6        | Future meetings<br>LB advised that it is hard to hear people.   |                                   |
| 10.7        | The first Hubco-procured school project (James Gillespie HS, Edinburgh)<br>AF asked how this project is going. AS gave an update, as he was working on this project until recently. The project is progressing well, and is on programme. The contractor is working closely with the school to ensure they are aware of planned construction work.<br><br>AS advised that James Gillespie was over budget when the contract was let. This is partly due to market conditions and the impact of so many companies having ceased trading due to the recession.<br><br>MF advised that a new High School in Aberdeenshire is about to reach contract close (also via Hub North).   |                                   |

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**11.0 Date of next meeting**

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> August, 7pm at Wick High School

RM noted that he would give an update to the Stakeholder Group after the meeting with SFT. MF noted that this may not be immediately after the meeting. *THC(RM)*

RM will notify the Group when the project contracts have been signed. *THC(RM)*

**DISTRIBUTION: Attendees, Apologies, other members of the Wick Stakeholder Group**