

Note of Public Meeting held at Tain Royal Academy, 7pm on 15 September 2014

Chairperson Alasdair Christie, Chairperson, Education, Children and Adult Services Committee

Highland Council Brian Porter, Head of Resources
Officials Maurice McIntyre, Area Education Manager
 Robert Campbell, Estate Strategy Manager
 Edward Foster, Finance Manager
 Robert Ferrier, Consultancy Manager
 Bruce Ross, Architect

Other official representatives

Ken Allan, advisor to Highland Council
Graeme Ross, Highlife Highland Area Facilities Manager

Attendees approximately 70 (attendance sheets available)

It was explained that the purpose of the meeting was to consult on the proposal to:

- To discontinue education provision at the following campuses – Tain Craighill Primary School, Tain Knockbreck Primary School and St Duthus Special School and to relocate provision to a new 3 to 18 campus to be established on the site of the existing Tain Royal Academy;
- As an interim measure, until the proposed 3 to 18 campus is available, to relocate current Pre School provision from St. Duthus School campus (English Medium) and the Tain Knockbreck Primary School campus (Gaelic Medium) to temporary modular accommodation on the current Tain Craighill Primary School campus;
- To establish a new 3 to 18 community campus on the site of the existing Tain Royal Academy comprising Early Years, Primary, Secondary, Additional Support Needs (ASN) and Gaelic Medium provision to replace all other local authority education provision within Tain, including the existing Tain Royal Academy building and Community Complex;
- To combine the existing school catchment areas of Tain Craighill Primary School and Tain Knockbreck Primary School to become the catchment area of the new combined Primary School within the 3 to 18 campus.

It was stated that the basis of the consultation procedure is set out in legislation in the amended Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the meeting was a statutory consultation in line with that legislation. Letters had been issued to relevant consultees, and notice given on the Council's website to alert people to the proposal, including the time, date and place of tonight's meeting.

It was explained that all the comments made at the meeting would be written up and included with any submissions received during the statutory consultation period, and provided to Education Scotland. The final consultation report will be made available to all interested parties at least 3 weeks before the Education, Children's and Adult

Services Committee meets on 11 February 2015 when it is intended a final decision will be made.

It was explained that at the meeting of the Education, Children's and Adult Services Committee held on 28 August 2014 it was agreed to consult on the proposal in the consultation paper. Following this decision the relevant consultation paper was issued to those potentially affected by the proposal and to other relevant parties and made available to the public at large. It was advised that all representations and submissions must be received by the closing date and should be sent to The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX **not later than 29 October 2014.**

A summary of the consultation process was explained by Brian Porter.

A summary of the educational benefits set out within the proposal report was explained by Maurice McIntyre.

A question and answer session then followed (name and status of the person asking the question shown where it was stated at the meeting).

David MacDonald – chair of Community Council

Q1 You say a meeting has been called but there was no notification anywhere in the town. It claims on the document that it is open to the general public how are the public to know if they cannot access the website?

A1 *The formal statutory consultation process, notifications and letters issued as described in the opening remarks was again explained by Alasdair Christie.*

Ian Morrison – parent and chair of Tain Royal Academy parent council

Q2A In terms of looking at the proposals one point is about the relationship with Tain Royal Academy Community Complex. Currently we have an issue with safeguarding children. Concern that members of the public are kept away from the children and the security of play areas.

A2A *There are two aspects that The Highland Council would seek to address. Firstly, the physical layout of the design with separate access points, physical segregation, which is being taken forward in other projects such as Wick. Secondly how the building is managed. The dining facility for example, there will be a single dining facility but it will be managed via separate dining times.*

Q2B There needs to be clarity between High Life Highland and The Highland Council on their roles within the new campus.

A2B *Through the community facility management by High Life Highland we can increase the utilisation of community space. High Life Highland has the skills and the expertise to ensure they can market the facility effectively. Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined.*

Q2C The concern of primary parents would be security at playtimes etc. What security has been built in?

A2C *Ken Allan: There will be further dialogue on design engaging with stakeholders. Very similar concerns were raised in Wick by the parent council and suffice to say they are satisfied with the final design.*

Mairi Campbell

Q3A I was concerned about the children getting moved from Knockbreck Primary School and St Duthus.

A3A *Maurice McIntyre: St Duthus: we are hoping to have 4 demountables on site in the near future. The transition will be sensitively managed. In terms of Knockbreck Primary School we are talking about children local to the town and it will be within walking distance, as is currently the case for the majority of pupils.*

Q3B What will the time difference be for them being in Craighill Primary School before going to 3-18 campus?

A3B *Maurice McIntyre: No time frame at this stage.*

Q3C The children moving from Knockbreck Primary School will be moved and moved again.

A3C *The details of that can be looked at in more detail and in consultation with parents.*

Fiona Norman – parent

Q4 I am curious about how the whole design brief will be managed and will the teachers have an input to that?

A4 *The staff do form part of the stakeholder group and would have the opportunity for input. Several designs will be put forward to the stakeholder group and then to the wider community for comment.*

Wendy Milligan – Parent St Duthus

Q5 I would like to know the philosophy behind the move from St Duthus to the new school. Will it be separate or merged in? It concerns us from the document that it is not necessarily providing the environment that they need?

A5 *Maurice McIntyre: The new St Duthus school will be integrated into the one building. We can explore the detail of this as part of the stakeholders' phase, once the project is considered at Committee. The design and facilities in this part of the new building will reflect the needs of children.*

Karen - Parent

Q6 On the transfer of Knockbreck and St Duthus to Craighill Primary School, have any of the panel been at Craighill Primary School at 8.50 am? I would like to know:

- a) how are you going to get all the children there?
- b) the traffic, how is that going to work with parents, children and cars?

A6 *We have a dedicated team within the council who review and provide recommendations in relation to Safer Routes to School and who would take forward discussions on appropriate solutions.. Other possibilities can be explored such as staggered starts during the construction phase to minimise traffic congestion.*

With the new health centre creating extra traffic it will be ridiculous.

Neil Munro – Community Council

Q7 Having looked at the basic plans we have seen, the school roll - how future proof with regards to school roll it be, will be it continue to be big enough?

A7 *Brian Porter: In terms of school roll, the proposal report takes account of projections to 2027-28 and accommodating the forecast numbers over that period. School roll projections are clearly an estimate and can be difficult to estimate over the long-term. In terms of how the council takes forward the plans for schools, account is taken of expansion.*

Susan Weir – parent

Q8 With a conservative estimate of 1000 people accessing this site twice a day how can this be managed? That does not include the increased community complex activity.

A8 *The traffic impact was a key part of the site selection process. The existing Tain Royal Academy site was the best site in terms of traffic flow in the view of the professionals that manage traffic at The Highland Council. A safer routes to school team will be setup as the process runs forward to advise on appropriate arrangements.*

David MacDonald – chair of Community Council

Q9A The report states that the Community Council was part of the consultation process but I was not aware of anything more than being drip fed information.

A9 *Alasdair Christie: I am disappointed to hear that.*

Q9B This is potentially Tain's most prestigious ever development affecting all of us and those in the wider catchment area as well. I am concerned like my colleague that there is limited scope for expansion. I would like very much to see how you are going to cope with expansion 3 or 4 generations down the line.

As representatives of the Community Council we will feed back to the Community Council later this month and will submit questions in due course.

In terms of school projections, the Inner Moray Firth local plan states there could be 725 new houses in the catchment area if these are developed I wonder to what extent that figure has been taken into account?

To what extent are you taking into account the proposed growth of the Cromarty Firth area?

When does all this detail become available for further consultation?

At that stage will we have comprehensive plans to look at?

A9B Response to school roll and capacity questions were answered in response to earlier question.

Detailed design and proposals would be taken forward after a decision is made on the consultation proposal, and stakeholders would be engaged in that process.

Lorna MacKay – parent

Q10 Whilst we appreciate £44m going into the new building, the buildings are not the most important thing - it is the teaching and the staff. Will there be rationalisation of teaching staff or would you be expanding teaching staff? Will there be a crossover of staff between secondary and primary schools?

If you did have extra staff would you look at the them teaching other subjects as we do not have certain subjects taught in Tain Royal Academy that are taught in other parts of Highland.

A10 Maurice McIntyre: *The Highland Council has a no redundancy policy where at all possible. Consideration could be given to early retirement or redeployment in such circumstances. However an employee on a permanent contract would be subject to the agreed protocols with the teachers' unions and professional associations in terms of an alternative offer of employment in the event they were surplus to the needs of the new campus.*

Ian Morrison

Q11 There is jargon in the paper that talks about a campus manager, leader of learners. What is a campus manager and can you give us reassurance that this campus manager is not a head teacher on the cheap?

A11 Maurice McIntyre – *There will be a head teacher.*

Andrew Mackenzie – parent and representative of Craighill Primary School Council

Q12 Following on from that point, the report suggests that this is a move towards one head teacher as opposed to one secondary head teacher and one primary head teacher. So will there always be a primary head teacher on this campus? Has the uncertainty contributed to difficulties in recruiting a head teacher currently?

A12 Maurice McIntyre: *We are disappointed in the lack of interest but this is a national issue. In order to attract further interest, this vacancy is now advertised on a national recruitment website.*

Katie - parent Craighill Primary School Gaelic medium

Q13 I was just wondering if it is your intention to keep the Gaelic medium separate from the English medium?

A13 Maurice McIntyre – *this is currently the case in Craighill only because of lack of space. It would be part of the further discussion with all interested parties to determine which room(s) would be for GM education. However the main benefit for both EM and GM nursery pupils is that there would be in a single building with all the benefits (especially transition and cross stage pupil activity) would bring.*

Tom Agnew – technology teacher Tain Royal Academy

Q14 We lost out badly with the Fujitsu contract. Can we have a guarantee that ICT provision will be sufficient so we do not lose out twice?

A14 *Alasdair Christie – They will ensure the correct provision.*

David McAllister – retired teacher and member of Community Council

Q15 You mention the learning experience of secondary pupils there is no mention of a library, even in these days of ICT a library is still required.

A15 *Alasdair Christie – yes there will be a library.*

Derek – Community Council

Q16 Towards the end of the package of information there are cost tables. In Table 2 on capital costs it talks about construction costs being £44m, lifecycle costs £40m - I wonder if you can clarify what that is?

It is square with a flat roof. I am sure people here will remember that a flat roof has not really been thought of as an optimum solution. Wick and Inverness Royal Academy both seem to have flat roofs. The design shows it will be south facing so it will benefit from passive solar but will solar thermals also be taken into account as part of the design? You could have 6 months of free hot water, you should be looking to benefit from where the building is facing.

A16 *Alasdair Christie: Design details will be discussed once a decision has been reached on the consultation proposal, at stakeholder group meetings.*

Fiona Robertson – Parent and Councillor

Q17 Maurice, can we change the document and all future documents to remove reference to campus manager and show there is a secondary HT and a primary HT to eliminate further confusion?

A17 Noted

Wendy Milligan

Q18 The paper states the primary head teacher will also be head teacher of St Duthus. We have had a period of that and it doesn't work. The role of the primary head teacher will get bigger as will the role of St Duthus. What is the thinking behind not having a St Duthus head teacher and is that set in stone?

A18 *Maurice McIntyre: The staffing profile is illustrative only.*

Alasdair Christie: Some tasks can be undertaken by the primary head teacher. There will be discussions with parents on this.

Duncan MacGillivray

Q19 I am rather surprised that a building costing £44m only lasts for 60 years and I wonder if that is because the roof is going to be flat?

A19 60 years is the typical period used to consider costs over the lifecycle of the building. The illustrative layout is just that, not intended to represent a detailed design.

Anon

Q20 I just wonder how the design of the building will be procured and can we be really careful about ensuring the designer actually listens to the stakeholders?

A20 Stakeholders will be engaged as part of the detailed design process.

Tom Agnew – technology teacher Tain Royal Academy

Q21 In the consultation process we have got a nominal time scale of 4 years. At what time and at what level do the pupils and the staff join the stakeholder process?

A21 *Alasdair Christie – The process will start as early as possible after February 2015*

Heather McAllister - retired teacher Tain Royal Academy

Q22 What happens to the existing Tain Royal Academy buildings and what are the health and safety implications if they are to be demolished and what happens to Craighill Primary School and Knockbreck Primary School?

A22A *Robert Ferrier: The contractors have experience of working on a live site.*

Alasdair Christie: There is a similar situation at the Inverness Royal Academy and there is a close working relationship between one deputy rector and the contractors in that they are willing to work around the exam period to include no noise.

David McAllister – retired teacher and member of Community Council

Q23 There are considerable concerns in the area roundabout the school about the development. It is a very confined site very close to houses. There will be four storey buildings being built 50 metres from private housing. How much disruption will there be for the surrounding area?

A23A *Alasdair Christie – This will form part of the planning process and discussed fully with neighbours, community councils and ward members. The community council will be represented on the stakeholder group.*

Wim Chalmet – acting head teacher Tain Royal Academy

Q24 As you mentioned there was an allocation of an extra deputy head teacher at Inverness Royal Academy will that be available for this project?

A24A *Alasdair Christie – There is capacity within the existing staffing arrangements at the Inverness Royal Academy to allow for a deputy to work closely with the constructors and managements arrangements changed to free time for this.*

Jane MacGillivray

Q25 I am very curious as to how many publications are out there with regard to psychological reports when children are condemned to a 3-18 campus. I wonder if there are many reports out there?

A25 *Maurice McIntyre : I am not aware of any studies but I would challenge the use of “condemned” as if approved the council is committing to expenditure of over £40M to provide the most up to date facilities it can. In light of the replacement of existing and in the case of Knockbreck PS overcrowded existing accommodation, I would be surprised if everyone occupying the eventual campus were not energised with new and state of the art facilities.*

Carol MacRae – grandparent

Q26 Has there ever been on the table two separate sites, one for secondary and community and one for primary and early years?

A26 The proposal is for a 3-18 Campus on a single site.

Anon

Q27 Could you explain to us briefly why The Highland Council feels that the 3-18 model is of such good benefit to our children? I appreciate the financial concepts but for the children and teaching do you actually feel it is a better model?

A27A *Alasdair Christie – Section 5 of the proposal explains in detail the educational benefits.*

Maurice McIntyre – The transition for nursery pupils to primary 1 is a lot easier as well as bringing the EM nursery onto the same campus.

Community Council

Q28 There is an issue with the block at the end that deals with special needs, nursery and primary. I am assuming ASN will be on the ground floor with the nursery and that primary will be on the first and second floor. Are there any schools out there that have this and is it a good idea? I am questioning the suitability for primary children.

A28 This is an illustrative layout. These matters would be considered as part of detailed design discussions.

Anon

Q29 For every positive you have mentioned I see a negative far outweighing the positive. You say it is easy to monitor and track my child from P1 to S6 but I would like my child to attend a primary school where they are known as a person. Secondly you say it makes transition easier, that raises negatives about issues getting to and

from school and I don't want my P1 going to school at the same time as secondary children.

A29 *Maurice McIntyre: There will be different start and finish times for dining. Pupils will be known as individuals which I can confirm having experience of a 1,000m pupil primary in the central belt, where the staff were on first name terms with the children across all stages. We have a duty as a service to track and monitor individual progress to ensure we are delivering a high quality experience for your children and young people.*

Roy Munro – Parent

Q30 The funding for the whole project - am I right in thinking it is a fully council owned project and there are no other partners involved?

A30 Brian Porter: at this time the Council expects the project to be a traditional capital project i.e. construction procured and financed by the Council, and build owned by the Council.

David McAllister

Q31 In Table 2 of the document it mentions third party contributions of £1.25m, where would this be coming from?

A31 *Brian Porter – This is estimated capital receipts.*

Anon

Q32 Will the transcript of tonight's meeting be available on The Highland Council website or be available in some way for people to look at?

A32 *Brian Porter – we had hoped to have an audio recording of this evening, however this was not possible due to technical difficulties. The council are obliged to provide Education Scotland with a note of the meeting..*

Anon

Q33 What happens if the decision is no? Do we go into another consultation or does the whole thing stop?

A33 *Alasdair Christie – The proposal is solely on a 3 – 18 campus.*

Summation:

The process going forward was explained and a reminder of the deadline for comment of 29 October was explained by Alasdair Christie.

Meeting closed.