

Ness Castle Stakeholder Group Meeting Minutes

Microsoft Teams

26 August 2020 at 6:30 pm

PRESENT	
Councillor Callum Smith	The Highland Council (THC)
Councillor Alastair Christie	THC
Murray McCheyne	Holm Community Council
Gail Beverage	Holm Community Council
Scott McRoberts	Holm Primary Parent Council, and Minister, Church of Scotland, Inverness St. Columba
Ruth MacKay	Head Teacher, Holm Primary School, THC
Audrey Kellacher	Head Teacher, Lochardil Primary School, THC
Kenneth Murray	Interim Education Quality Improvement Officer, THC
Robert Campbell	Estates Strategy Manager, THC
Dorothy Gibb	Principal Estates Officer, THC
Fiona Sangster	Project Co-ordinator, THC
Neil Armstrong	Education Lead, Kier Construction Group
APOLOGIES	
Philip Shannon	Consultancy Manager
Evelyn Miller	Cleaning & Facilities Management Manager
Brian Porter	Head of Support Services

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES	ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dorothy Gibb opened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance. As it was the first meeting held in Teams format, she outlined how this usually works. Apologies were received from Philip Shannon, Evelyn Miller and Brian Porter Fiona asked for stakeholders to provide feedback by email after the meeting on how they found the overall Teams experience and if they would be happy to hold future meetings in this format. The next meeting is scheduled for 28 October 2020. 	All
2. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND STAKEHOLDER ATTENDEES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiona welcomed Gail Beveridge to the meeting as it was the first one she had attended. Gail has recently joined Holm Community Council and is also a resident of the Ness Castle housing estate. 	
3. PROJECT UPDATE AND PLANNING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert reminded the group that we had hoped to be on site by now with a view to the school opening in August 2021. Planning permission had been granted and we had been ready to proceed but explained that due to COVID-19 lockdown it had been agreed not to progress to the next contractual stage as there were too many unknowns regard to the impact the lockdown period might have on the construction industry and the timescales etc. However, the design team used this time well to work together on the planning conditions and finer points of the design of the school. It is hoped to move to 	

contract award in October with a potential school opening in August 2022.

- Neil agreed that this was a good summary of where we were with the project and that we had used the extra time during lockdown for additional engagement.
- Dorothy then presented a PowerPoint presentation which reminded Stakeholders of the layout, the school catchment area and the site location.
- It also showed how we were trying to improve the parking and access arrangements after consultation with various people including THC Energy Team, the Climate Change Team, Head Teachers from a number of new schools within Highland, the Safer Routes to School Team and School Transport Officer.
- Robert agreed that there were lessons to be learned from other schools and confirmed that we will be monitoring access arrangement when the school opens and can take steps and make changes if necessary.
- There was also discussion on how the landscaping was to be altered and Dorothy confirmed that we will be partnering with Inverness Botanic Gardens to ensure that the grounds of the new school will be functional as well as educational for the pupils and surrounding neighbours.
- Dorothy then welcomed questions from the group:
 - Murray enquired as to how THC would deal with conflict between nursery drop off/pick up and bin collections/deliveries at the school. Dorothy informed him that as at all our schools, deliveries are planned to avoid open/closing times. The school bin collections are also planned outwith these times and will be collected as part of a commercial contract and therefore not be collected at the same time as the Ness Castle residents' bins.
 - Murray asked why we were only installing two EVCPs. It was explained that we had sought guidance from our Energy Team and that they had advised us to install two to begin with, but to install cabling to allow for up to ten to be installed at a later date if and when they were required. Trickle chargers use very little electricity and therefore do not impact on the power supply planned for the school. Dorothy explained the possibility of opening these up for use by the community at times when school was closed.
 - Murray expressed concern at the number of car parking spaces compared to the potential staff numbers. There are currently enough parking spaces for 82% of staff at Phase 1. It was explained that from the outset, it has been envisaged that the new school will be carbon friendly and with that in mind active travel will be encouraged for both staff and pupils. For those who live too far away for this, incentives to use service buses and car sharing will be encouraged.
 - Ruth informed the group that a survey had been undertaken at Holm Primary which had identified that all but two staff travelled by car. Audrey added that only 3 members of staff currently cycle to Lochardil School with the remainder driving. Car sharing had proved challenging where staff had other commitments such as dropping of their own children for example.
 - As part of the School Travel Plan, the situation will be monitored and steps can be taken if a problem is identified.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray asked how safe the angled parking spaces in the drop off area were. Similar spaces have been installed at other schools and were thought to be more successful as parents were more likely to use them for drop off than standard parking spaces as vision was better for reversing out. • Scott indicated that he was happy to hear that the SRTS team had been consulted as he has concerns for pupils coming from Ness Side where there is a hill to climb and two roads to cross. Dorothy explained that one of the planning conditions was to install a crossing as well as additional streetlighting. • Murray explained that Barratts were required to install three crossing points in the approaching roads as a planning permission condition. • Alastair indicated that although he was impressed with the suggestion of a bus chaperone, he was concerned as some parents already drive as little as a quarter of a mile to get to Lochardil and that he thinks the same will happen at Ness Castle. He asked for HTs opinion. Ruth indicated that this was sometimes the case with working parents and that she didn't know the answer to the problem. However, she had noted that it had been a lot quieter since the return to schools where parents had been specifically asked not to drive up to the school to help with the Covid requirements. It is hoped that this will continue. • Audrey suggested promoting sustainable travel through Health & Wellbeing at school. Her concern is that if we reduce space at the school it will push the problem out to the surrounding area where parents will park and drop off instead, particularly in winter. • Dorothy agreed that there was no single answer to the problem but that it was hoped if the situation was clear from the start then people would realise that the car was not the way to travel to Ness Castle and that alternatives means were available. 	
<p>4. TRANSITION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenny indicated that discussions on staffing for the new school had taken place prior to lockdown but that this had come to a standstill as THC are not recruiting staff at present. He assured the group that a Head Teacher would be appointed well in advance of the August 2022 opening but that meantime, the input from both Ruth and Audrey would be extremely valuable. He indicated that whilst the return to school was taking priority at present, he would keep it on the agenda and let us know if there were any developments. • Robert indicated that although we were all referring to the school as Ness Castle Primary School, there was a process to be followed with regard to naming a new school and that suggestions would need to be sought from the wider community. Alastair suggested caution as it was already known within the community as Ness Castle Primary School but Kenny pointed out that the catchment of the school went beyond the Ness Castle area and that the residents of the full catchment area should have their say. 	
<p>5. COMMUNITY BENEFITS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray mentioned that as well as the noticeboards already requested, they would also like a bin for a stretch of road that had been identified as benefitting from one, and the installation of a Speed Indicator Sign at an area of road where speeding had been noted. The sign would cost around £2000. Dorothy was unsure if this would fit in with the 	

<p>Community Benefits scheme and that it would have to go through the Transport Engineers but agreed to make enquiries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alastair agreed that speeding was an issue and stated that he had asked for speed survey wires to be installed and that this should be chased up. He also suggested that Developer Contributions could be used to fund the sign. • Dorothy informed the group that the partnership with Inverness Botanic Gardens would see a community benefit for Holm and Lochardil Primaries as well as the new school and community as soon as COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. 	FS
<p>6. AOCB</p> <p>Murray asked what the next steps were with regard to the parking. Dorothy explained that we had now consulted with local members and the stakeholders and we would take on board what had been discussed, work through that and the other planning conditions and then go back to Planning in due course.</p>	DG
<p>7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>28 October 2020 at 6.30 pm on Microsoft Teams</p>	