

Ness Castle Stakeholder Group Meeting Minutes

7 September 2022 at 6:30 pm

In Attendance	
Councillors Cllr Jackie Hendry Cllr Andrew MacKintosh	JH AMK
Parent Council Representatives Martin Fitzgerald, IRA Parent Council Andrew Martin, Holm Parent Council William Porter, Ness Castle Parent Council	MF AM WP
Community Representatives Gail Beveridge, Holm Community Council Murray McCheyne, Holm Community Council Scott McRoberts, Resident	GB MMC SMR
Ness Castle Primary Craig Connon, Head Teacher Shona MacLean, Depute Head Teacher	CC SML
Highland Council Representatives Robert Campbell, Estates Strategy Manager Dorothy Gibb, Principal Estates Officer Ian Graham, Road Safety Officer Carol Lobban, FM & Cleaning Officer Finlay MacDonald, Head of Property Services Alan Paul, Education Officer Fiona Sangster, Estates Co-ordinator Liz Scott, ELC Commissioner Gordon Stewart, Education Adviser	RC DMG IG CL FMD AP FS LS GS
Kier Construction Philip McDowell, Regional Director Steven McRoberts, Contracts Manager Finlay Niven, Project Manager	PMD StMR FN
Apologies Cllr Alasdair Christie Ruth MacKay, Head Teacher, Holm Primary Evelyn Miller, Cleaning & FM Manager Fiona Shearer, Area Education Manager Sandra Reynolds, Education Officer Janine Webb, Holm Primary	

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- RC welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made for the benefit of new members.
- As it was the first site meeting of the stakeholder group, FN issued some construction site health and safety instructions before leading the group up into the upper floor of the building.

2. UPDATE

- RC informed the group that the planned handover date of 30 September would not now be achieved and confirmed that the new building would therefore not be ready to open to pupils at the start of the new term on 24 October.
- PMD explained the challenges that Kier had been faced with and noted that they were not unique to this particular project in this difficult time for the construction industry.
- Supply issues, delays with material deliveries and sourcing staff, despite using local companies had impacted on the programme.
- The target now is to get over the line and deliver a high-quality building with limited snagging.
- RC reiterated the need for THC to receive a building that was 100% complete and to the required quality standards.
- PMD agreed to monitor progress closely going forward and committed to drive the project forward without compromising quality.
- CC noted that staff would appreciate a clear date for the move, and that the lead up to the Christmas break would not be a good time for the school to relocate on top of the usual activities planned for that time of the school year.
- The group agreed that the best plan would be for staff and pupils to begin the new term in January at the school building.
- This would also allow an enhanced transition if pupils and staff were able to visit the building and familiarise themselves with it ahead of moving in.
- SMR asked if something could be done to address the road safety concerns at Holm if the Ness Castle pupils were to be there for another term.
- CC agreed that some traffic management might well be needed during the winter months.
- AMK asked if winter weather might also cause further delays with the build.
- PMD noted that weather was not a concern. The key concern now is resources which he will monitor on a twice weekly basis and report back to THC.
- SMR also asked for clear communication with staff and parents about the new date.

PMD

- WP asked if Kier were concerned about further delays with deliveries.
- FN noted that he did not expect any further delay and that all materials are on site except for one radiant heating panel.
- AMK asked if there would be any potential delays with furniture.
- DMG assured the group that the furniture had been ordered and THC had already asked for suppliers to delay the deliveries until the building can be accessed, so there will be no issues with deliveries.
- SMR enquired about the modular units currently being used at Holm and the previous information about them being needed elsewhere.
- RC noted that THC were sourcing alternatives for the other location and that the units can remain at Holm until they were no longer needed.
- CL asked about the removals required from Holm to Ness Castle before Christmas.
- FS agreed to keep Shona MacRae informed of any potential dates where the FM Team will be required to assist with this.
- AMK asked about the new furniture to be delivered and installed.
- DMG explained that the suppliers provide a delivery and installation service so they would have a team on hand to do setting out of the loose furniture and removal of packing materials.
- DMG noted that some of the new furniture at Holm would be left at Holm for their use, but all the new nursery furniture will be moved to Ness Castle Nursery, and this will be done by the FM Commercial Team.
- AM suggested that another meeting with Fiona Shearer would be appreciated to update staff and parents.
- RC to speak to Fiona Shearer to arrange this and for a letter to parents to be issued on 8 September to update them, as had been done previously to inform them of the contingency plan.
- MMC enquired about the site finish and noted the huge mounds of soil etc. currently on the site.
- StMR explained that a large amount of this would be needed to create the level sports pitch area of the site and the rest would used to create a level site and landscape features around the school.
- RC noted that discussions with CC were needed to establish exactly what the school needed in terms of the sports pitches going forward.
- DMG added that the position of the sports pitch and MUGA was now set back further away from the boundaries.

FS

RC

- StMR added that trees would be planted, and the soil seeded in some areas to allow for some growth over a six-week period ahead of the school opening.
- RC added that pupils could use the different areas of the playground as and when they were ready, and that temporary fencing could be installed to allow some grass areas to establish if necessary. As the school building would not be opening at full capacity, there should be plenty of room for play for the current pupils.
- AM noted the large number of boulders in the soil piles and the concern that these would be encountered over time by children and others in the soft playground areas if the material was spread across the site.
- StMR explained that some of the stones would be used as a base layer to provide drainage with a top layer of good quality topsoil above.
- DMG noted that the topsoil material visible from the window had been de-stoned to reduce the potential for large stones appearing as the topsoil settled once it was used across the site.

3. SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL

- IG noted that the approach to the new school would be a 20mph zone with four sets of speed bumps.
- MMC noted that there seemed to be drainage problem with some of the speed bumps.
- IG confirmed that this has been reported to the Planning team.
- The proposed date for the traffic lights to be installed at Holm roundabout is 17 October.
- IG to meet with the parent council, school, and community council to work together on improving the traffic situation at Holm.
- CC had received a request for a temporary bus service to be provided whilst the Ness Castle pupils were at Holm which he had passed on to Fiona Shearer.
- It was noted that the improvements to the access steps at the rear of Holm primary were a huge improvement.
- WP noted that there were approximately 80 steps which was a lot of a small child.

<p>4. EDUCATION/SCHOOL MATTERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC expressed thanks to everyone who had made it possible for Ness Castle Primary School to open in August in their temporary location. • He noted that the children were doing well and for some the shared campus had actually made it easier. • Joint working with Holm was going well for staff too. 	
<p>5. COMMUNITY BENEFITS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DMG noted that a number of benefits had been achieved and were listed in a recent report provided by Kier. The report would be uploaded to the Council's Ness Castle webpage. • DMG explained to Kier the original request for Community Benefits was for noticeboards and that this had come from the Community Council and had not been intended for within the school site. They were to be placed within the new housing community. • MMC confirmed that this was the case but that the CC had since purchased notice boards due to the time that had lapsed since the request. • MMC to contact LMN of Kier to discuss possible reimbursement or alternatives. • SMR to talk to CC about noticeboards for the school site. • CC expressed thanks for the programme events currently underway at the temporary location with visits from various people and the competitions that had been created. • DG asked if there was still time to request further items. • WP was keen to suggest a playpark/playpark equipment for the local children. • StMR suggested that WP contact Liz MacIntyre with his request. 	<p>MMC</p>
<p>6. AOCB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JH enquired if Kier had given any employment opportunities to UHI students. • DMG to check if this is mentioned in the recent Community Benefits report. There had been work interns taken on, some of whom had progressed to full-time employment with some of the sub-contractors. • AM asked if information on a meeting with Fiona Shearer could be shared in the letter to be issued to parents with the update, or at least organised through the same format when a date was agreed. • DMG requested Kier give a tour of the building. 	<p>DMG</p>

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
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- Date to be decided, with regular email updates as necessary in the interim.