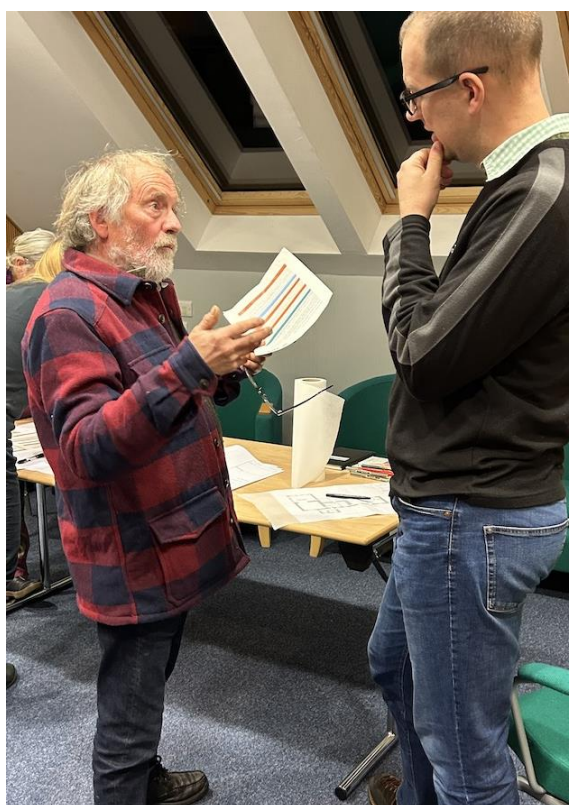
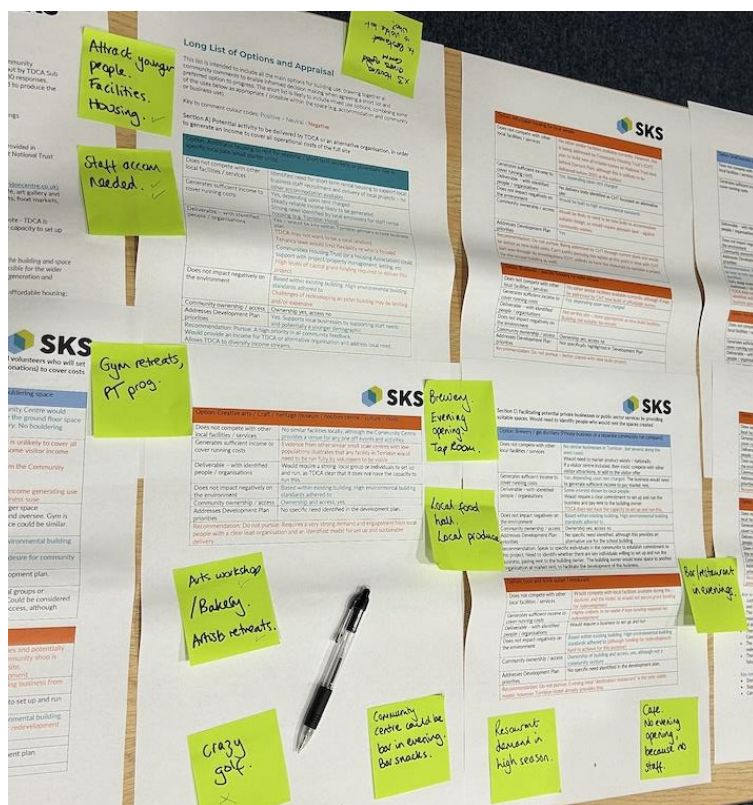


Appendix 1

Stakeholder Consultations and Community Engagements



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SKS reviewed previous community engagement activities, including an analysis of the previous community survey and planned a series of consultations with the community and stakeholders.

1. Review of Community Survey

The Action Plan Group surveyed the local community in early 2023, asking what they would like to see happen with the school building and playpark area. The community was asked to suggest ideas which could be part of a sustainable business plan.

Below is a summary of the results of the survey:

Main School	School House	Playpark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellness/retreat/artists/mixed use educational space x 5 Outdoor ed / Activity Centre x 4 Mens Shed x 4 Microbrewery/ Distillery x 4 Affordable housing x 3 Seasonal accom /holiday letting x 3 Year-round employment generator x 2 Pub x 2 Retirement Accommodation x 1 Relocate shop x 1 Restaurant x 1 Community Hub x 1 Daycare x 1 Hospitality Training Centre x 1 Indoor play/ Gym/ Ball pool x 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable housing x 5 Seasonal staff accom x 2 Long term rental x 1 Holiday let x 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain the playpark x 15 Community garden x 4 Green space x 3 Relocate to Mat's croft x 2 Community croft x 1 Pop up outdoor event space x 1 Community composting x 1 Outdoor activities x 1 Campervan site x 1 Accommodation x 1

NB The numbers indicate the number of people who mentioned the function.

2. Stakeholder Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used for discussions with key stakeholders, which were carried out online and in person. These interviews enabled specific topics to be explored, whilst at the same time providing the flexibility to adapt and tailor the interviews to the individual perspective.

The aims of the interviews were to explore and understand how each organisation/individual might be interested in using the school space (both indoor and outdoor) and get their feedback on the main themes from the previous survey.

The main themes are shown in the tables below, with a summary of the comments from stakeholders divided into opportunities and challenges.

2.1. Rental Accommodation (long-let)

OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
<p>Need from local employers for staff rental housing.</p> <p>More accommodation means more people using the local facilities.</p> <p>Potential younger demographic, potential to put down roots.</p>	<p>Challenges of an older building.</p> <p>The appetite for the community to be a landlord.</p> <p>Funding.</p> <p>Private residential tenancy laws would prevent eviction of tenants.</p>

Potential for steady income for TDCA projects, or money to invest back into the building. 1 or 2 bed flats needed. Communities Housing Trust could support with project/property management, letting, etc. (and keep the flats in community ownership).	
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The Torridon Resort – they are building more staff accommodation, can't run at 100% because there is nowhere to house staff.

Nature.scot also struggle to house staff locally, with most staff commuting from the east of Scotland.

The Communities Housing Trust – would like to build 6 to 8 housing units, with 2 to 3 bedrooms on National Trust for Scotland land, behind Darroch Park. They are part way through the feasibility study and are looking at the ground and possible constraints. They are in discussions with NTS to acquire the land, but they don't have planning permission or funding.

One stakeholder thought that the long-term rental shortage could be eased if there was a grant for second home owners to divide houses into flats or divide large local houses with elderly residents into two flats, a carer could live in the other flat.

2.2. Business Unit

Business Unit	
OPPORTUNITIES Accommodation with a business unit. Tourist based business – activity centre. Export business. Low maintenance for the TDCA. Distillery. (combine as visitor attraction /shop) Mirco mill to process wool (combine as visitor attraction /shop). Wool festival. Bakery. Personal training / gym centre. Restaurant	CHALLENGES Outdoor activities provider – “won't work as a stand-alone business year-round”. Community benefit less clear cut. Potentially need to “spread the net wider” to find someone to run a business. Private funding for individuals' business investment. Need to a robust business plan. Not displacing current businesses / community centre activities.

The common theme was finding the right people to run a business. Someone with the right “entrepreneurial” mindset to be able to work in such a fragile local economy.

Micro mill idea – There is a lot of waste in the sheep industry and by-products, such as fleece are low value. There are few places to process the wool to make it useful e.g. for felt makers. It wouldn't need to be a large space. This might fit with a number of funding pots around agriculture, rural, artistic, environmental etc. (There is a small [micro mill](#) on North Uist which could be used as a case study to explore this idea further).

2.3. Education Centre

OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
Potential for accommodation, catering and study to be under one roof. Arts and skills based retreats. Writer's retreat. Music school. Mix of education and tourism.	Duplication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Already have a Youth Hostel and the Community Centre where these types of activities could be run. ○ Beinn Eighe has capacity to run field trips from their centre with accommodation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Couldoran House potential development. ○ Wester Ross Biosphere is planning to build a research station in the area with office space and potentially accommodation. ○ Slattadale – early stages of an outdoor activities site. ○ NTS Gateway Visitor Centre – office, meeting and education space. No café. No retail currently planned. <p>Funding for these sorts of activities. School groups often lack transport to reach the remote location.</p>
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University of Aberdeen – don't use Torridon Youth Hostel as they don't have enough numbers to hire out the whole building. They need accommodation for 20-25 students, self-catering facilities, and a room for study work.

Wester Ross Biosphere – They looked at the school building but it doesn't meet their needs. They hope to build a carbon-neutral, fit for purpose research station near the nature reserve and Beinn Eighe. It will include facilities to carry out research, visitor and staff accommodation, potentially café/shop. Open year round. They have no need for any space in the school, temporarily or longer-term. In talks with NatureScot about the land, only carried out a "high-level" feasibility study so far.

The Shielling Project – Offers an education and tourism mix of events. Off-grid bothies and classrooms set up in Struy, near Helmsdale. They doubled their turnover in the four years that Sam Harrison worked there, but they didn't cover costs. He thought they would never be self-sustaining and would always need funding, which was very hard to get for that type of project.

2.4. Playpark Space

OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
Community gardens Community allotments Reinststate playpark – though there aren't many local children, people would come to use it and use local facilities. Natural playpark.	"Small pokey space. Much nicer green areas available." "Better used for housing"

One of the Action Plan Group members has volunteered to take on reinstating the playpark as a project.

2.5. Gym

OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
Could be popular with local staff at larger employers, providing income stream. More space to provide a better experience.	Taking traffic and income stream from the Community Centre.

One individual was interested in running personal training from a larger gym in the school building.

2.6. Other Suggestions

North Highland Initiative – keen to support projects that repurpose old buildings and could potentially contribute some funding. Funds available cover community infrastructure support, energy projects and feasibility studies.

They have a new project – Press Pause – which aims to support communities on the NC500. They fund a review of the local community area, looking at the positive and negative effects of the NC500. They will then go on to help fund any projects that come out of this work.

3. Community Engagement Events

SKS visited Torridon 15th to 17th November 2023. During this visit several workshops and engagement activities were planned. They were publicised with a leaflet drop, posters, emails and social media posts.



Timetable:

Wed 15 Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3pm - Meeting with sub-committee 4.30-7pm - Community drop-in session at Torridon Community Centre. Discussion of options appraisal and input from architect.
Thurs 16 Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am – Community drop-in session at Torridon Stores & Café 12.45 – School show round 1.30pm – Meeting with sub-committee 3-6pm - Community drop-in session at Torridon Community Centre. Discussion of options appraisal and input from architect.
Fri 17 Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am – Meeting with sub-committee

SKS were pleased with the attendance at all the community sessions, with an estimated 50 people attending over the three main events.

Summary of comments written and recorded:

Housing Option A (tied to local jobs) – strong support registered x 10

"I've met 5 or 6 young couples since I started work in the area 2 weeks ago, who are looking for accommodation locally. They all work several jobs, but there is no accommodation available."

"Business space could be partially funded by the rental income from accommodation".

Bar/Restaurant x 5

"Follow example of Old Schoolhouse, Diabaig and let for set number of years (5 or 10) then option to make full time".

"Homely pub and restaurant"

"Restaurant and pub with reasonable prices"

"Restaurant demand in high season"

"Restaurant is a viable option but who would run it"

"Café has no evening opening because no staff"

"Community centre could be a bar in the evening with bar snacks"

Artists workshops x 3

Crazy golf x 2

Tourist washing facilities – showers and laundry x 1

Elderly day care facilities – 4 people currently have to travel to Lochcarron x 1

Accommodation for older people x 1

Gym retreats and personal trainer programme could be run from the school rooms x 1 (individual identified)

Bakery and artists retreat/workshop x 1 (individual identified)

Local food hall with local produce x 1

Brewery with tap room x 1

Playpark x 1

"The playpark attracted lots of families to the area, holiday makers, locals visiting for the day. Play equipment removed without consultation or warning in Jan 2018. Shieldaig, Kishorn and Garve have all successfully gained new equipment fundraising from local businesses (KLP, fish farms etc)."

Educational use x 1

"Couldoran House, Kishorn a good example to be used as a Rainforest Centre. Educational/Heritage Group such as Wester Ross Biosphere."

"Duncan Darroch Deeds for building state building land within walls should be for education/housing use or offered to his successors before any sale"

Rental accommodation and housing for younger people moving to the area for work, was anecdotally the most common comment. The biggest concern was how to ensure the housing was allocated to the "right" people, people who want to work in local businesses.

People like the idea of **mixed use; accommodation and business units**, but few sustainable business ideas were offered. One lady would like to set up a bakery and artists studio. One man would like to set up a gym-based business. One lady knew someone in Inverness who would be interested in opening a restaurant if they could find accommodation. All of these respondents were asked to follow up their suggestions with an outline business plan.

A **restaurant and bar** were also popular choices, however, most respondents were aware that current facilities existed that could be adapted to fill this need if there was the demand and available staff. A good atmosphere, affordable food and a sociable drink were popular requests.