

## **APPENDIX 1 (a)**

### **Note of the Main Points Raised at a Meeting held on 30 September 2013 at Àrainn Shuaineirt/The Sunart Centre to discuss a possible move of Strontian into the accommodation currently used by Àrainn Shuaineirt/The Sunart Centre**

In Attendance:

Ron MacKenzie, Head of Support Services, Education, Culture and Sport

Norma Young, Area Education Manager (West)

Ian Jackson Education Officer (West)

Chris Millar-Craig, Head Teacher, Ardnamurchan High School

Mindy Ogilvie, Head Teacher, Strontian Primary School

Eoghan Carmichael, Community Centre Co-ordinator, High Life Highland

Patricia Kennedy, Admin Assistant, Ardnamurchan High School

Pat Glenday, West Highland College

Dr. Michael Foxley, Chairperson, Sunart Centre Management Committee

Gill Calver, Sunart Centre Management Committee

Chris Evans, Sunart Centre Management Committee

Liz Ford, Sunart Community Council

Brian Evans, Sunart Community Council

Alan Thomson, Sunart Community Council

Claudia Nicolson, Sunart Community Council

Joan Madden, Strontian Village Hall Management Committee

Louise Cameron, AHS Parent representative, Sunart Centre Management Committee

Lyndsay Bradley, AHS Parent representative, Sunart Centre Management Committee

Elizabeth Carmichael, Ardgour and Achaphubuil Community Council

Ron MacKenzie outlined the proposals and explained that THC would be examining the financial, community and educational aspects. Educational aspects could be examined internally within the Council, and he particularly wanted tonight to hear about the community aspects.

Ron continued by explaining that any proposal to move the primary school would be subject to a full statutory consultation. Tonight's meeting was an informal one to allow the THC to understand the local issues, prior to any statutory consultation.

Ron outlined that there were two main options:

1. Keep Strontian PS where it is and invest in the building:
2. Move Strontian PS into the AHS/Sunart Centre building.

Mindy Ogilvie reported the views of the Parent Council of Strontian PS. They were in favour of the school moving but did not want there to be any loss of community facility or space as a result of the move.

Chris Evans commented that the Management Committee would be very unhappy if part of the community space were lost.

Elizabeth Carmichael asked for more information on the amount of use of the community part of the building.

Eoghan Carmichael commented that the loss of Àrainn Shuaineirt/The Sunart Centre would have a major impact on young people in the area. There is a well-attended Youth Club on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, that currently use the community room as well as other areas. It has been suggested that the YC move upstairs in compensation for losing the community room, but this would be impractical as it would require additional staffing to supervise pupils over this wider area. He added there would also be impacts on other users. The community room is used three times per week for psychotherapy sessions, and there are regular events and also commercial lettings to companies such as SpecSavers.

Chris Evans asked what effect there would be on the public library? She also asked whether the community area was big enough to accommodate the primary school.

Mindy Ogilvie commented that provision within Àrainn Shuaineirt/The Sunart Centre would be a major improvement on what the school currently had.

Norma Young advised that the library, foyer and public toilets would remain as part of Àrainn Shuaineirt/The Sunart Centre, and that the primary school would begin from the corridor that ran past the community room. The existing fire doors would be moved to create a secure area for the primary school.

Ian Jackson commented that new toilets would need to be installed for the primary school, as existing provision within the area described would not meet the legal requirements for a school the size of Strontian Primary.

Pat Glenday commented that, whilst it was important for WHC to provide services within a school setting, the current accommodation for the College, within the school, was off-putting for adult access.

Michael Foxley commented that AHS complex was not just a school with community rooms, but was a joint school/community facility. Rooms within Àrainn Shuaineirt/The Sunart Centre could not just be moved around into the school. When the building was constructed the community raised an additional £1.5 million to incorporate all the community facilities. This money was only awarded because Àrainn Shuaineirt/The Sunart Centre was not part of the school. There could therefore be legal issues around simply allocating this space to the primary school.

Brian Evans commented that moving the school into Àrainn Shuaineirt/The Sunart Centre was not really the solution to the primary school's accommodation problems. The primary school should have properly designed facilities of its own.

Mindy Ogilvie commented that there were 4 options:

1. Do nothing.
2. Adapt Strontian PS at significant cost.
3. Extend the facilities at AHS to accommodate the primary.
4. Use the existing facilities at Àrainn Shuaineirt/The Sunart Centre, with some adaptations for toilets and a playground.

Alan Thomson suggesting that move Strontian PS into Àrainn Shuaineirt/The Sunart Centre was the most sensible and low cost option. He indicated however that he spoke as a grandparent of children attending Strontian PS rather than as a representative of Sunart CC.

Gill Calver commented that Àrainn Shuaineirt/The Sunart Centre was not just a resource for Strontian, but for the whole peninsula.

Ron MacKenzie asked for further information on the current use of Àrainn Shuaineirt/The Sunart Centre. Would an annual timetable of bookings be available?

Chris Evans commented that the issue was not just one of current users.

Pat Glenday cited the example of the Kilchoan Community Centre, and what WHC had achieved there, due to having better facilities than existed at AHS.

Chris Millar-Craig commented that extending, college and community partnership was key to a broader curriculum, particularly for the senior phase.

Louise Cameron and Liz Ford both commented that the best solution would be an extension to the AHS building.

Ron MacKenzie explained that the PPP nature of the building was a significant factor. The Council's revenue budget was under severe pressure and the Service is struggling to fund frontline services. The Council pays an annual "unitary charge" to the PPP provider and any building work would increase the amount of that charge, perhaps significantly. Where the Council actually owns a building, such as Strontian Primary, it can borrow money to invest in the building. There is

therefore, a major financial incentive to spend money on the primary school rather than on extending a PPP building.

Alan Thomson asked whether THC would construct a new Strontian Primary School.

Ron MacKenzie commented that the Council had many competing priorities for capital spend and that existing commitments extended some 10 years into the future. He indicated that we would be interested to hear from the Community about their ambitions for the facility for the future.

Michael Foxley commented that the campaign for the new school at Acharacle had lasted 23 years and similar campaigns had taken place for the schools at Ardgour and Lochaline.

Michael added that he did not envisage anyone would object to a temporary decant of Strontian PS into Àrainn Shuaineirt/The Sunart Centre, to enable works to take place at Strontian PS.

Elizabeth Carmichael suggested that investment into Strontian PS would be possible if THC purchased some of the community woodland at the back of the school.

Ron MacKenzie thanked everyone for their contributions and indicated that all parties would be kept informed of developments.