

The Highland Council
Culloden Academy Stakeholder Group

Minutes of Meeting No.5

Thursday 24th June 2021 at 7pm

Attendees	Initials
Highland Councillors	
Councillor Carolyn Caddick	CC
Councillor Glynis Campbell-Sinclair	GCS
Councillor Ken Gowans	KG
Councillor Andrew Jarvie	AJ
Parent Council Representatives	
Jeni Alexander, Culloden Academy (Chair)	
Allyson Hill, Culloden Academy	AH
Graham Hopper, Culloden Academy	GH
Community Representatives	
Catherine Bunn, Culloden Community Council	CB
Gillian Spalding, Balloch Community Council	GS
Culloden Academy	
Dr James Vance, Head Teacher	JV
Odette Gordon, Principal Teacher	OG
Highland Council Officials	
Robert Campbell, Estate Strategy Manager	RC
Laura Burns, Project Manager	LB
Philip Shannon, Consultancy Manager	PS
Richard Jack, Senior Architectural Technician	RJ
Fiona Shearer, Area Education Manager	FS
High Life Highland Officials	
Richard Hanna	RH
Apologies	
Jane Day, Alan Robertson, Councillor Trish Robertson, Morven Reid	
Minute	
Laura Burns	

Item	Discussion/Comment	Action
1.0	Introduction	
1.1	JA welcomed everyone to the meeting and said she hoped it would be an open and honest account of progress and activity to date.	
2.0	Minutes Of Previous Meeting	
2.1	Item 2.1 from meeting no. 4 will be carried forward again to the next meeting. This relates to images showing the A96 dualling in relation to school site.	RC/JD
2.2	GS wanted to add to the minutes and record that Balloch Community Council have concerns about the placement of the	RC

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	school on the newly acquired land. They have had no response from Councillors to date – RC to issue a “holding response” but later in the meeting offered to arrange a meeting with representatives.	
2.3	Item 3.4 AH queried whether Morrison Construction were working on a £7.7M design, or with the anticipated increased budget. RC confirmed that Morrison’s had been working on several options. This had been halted given the recently proposed increase to the budget, and further discussions had taken place with school staff on the subjects that would be located in the larger extension.	
2.4	GCS: Disconcerted that Morrison’s have not designed anything yet – need to hurry things along. Design needs to be fully costed and the £9M extra needs to be justified. RC: Morrisons were asked to proceed with several options based on the budget approved at that time. Discussions have been held with JV on the larger scheme and which subjects are to be included in the extension. We are revising the accommodation schedule. GCS: When was RC aware of the extra money available? RC: Only in the last 2 weeks – aware that discussions were taking place when questioned at the Housing & Property Committee meeting on 10th June and had subsequently provided information for the report to Council. GCS: Other Councillors had been informed of a possible report. JA: Stopped the discussion and asked that we proceed with agenda.	
2.5	The approval of the minute was proposed by AH and seconded by LB	
3.0	Project Update	
3.1	RC provided a presentation updating on recent progress.	
3.2	Toilets Refurbishment – works commenced as per programme on 14th June.	
3.3	Modular Units – due to arrive on site during the summer. If not ready for occupation at start of new session, the school have a Plan B that mirrors the arrangements currently in operation.	
3.4	Outdoor Areas: Construction will take place on a new muster point, which will be tarred and marked with halfsize basketball courts. There are covered areas to be installed for outdoor dining/other events to allow social distancing. A catering unit, similar to the one installed at Inverness Royal Academy, is also being considered.	
3.5	Increased Scope: RC advised that the report was approved at HC Committee meeting today, outlining additional funding for 5 projects with an additional £9M for Culloden Academy. Liz Denovan (Finance ECO) gave a commitment to this additional funding with the full scope, timescale, associated cost and	RC

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	<p>funding options for the 5 school priorities to be reported to the next meeting in September.</p> <p>The extra funding will provide additional capacity to meet future demand until at least 2028/29. The completion date for the Phase 1 extension is now anticipated to be August 2024, and there are further discussions to be held with Planners and the Principal Contractor regarding the design and form of the proposed building. RC committed to bringing a revised construction programme to the next meeting.</p>	
3.6	<p>KG: Disappointed that there was no straight answer at the Council meeting. Funding is not 100% approved, still requires ratification in September Committee.</p> <p>RC: As per 3.6, assurance was given that the £9M is guaranteed for Culloden. We will be progressing on the basis that the additional £9M has been secured.</p>	
3.7	<p>CC: In 2018 improvements to Culloden Academy were approved in the capital programme and stakeholders were briefed in 2019 on a substantial planned building. Thought this included Science – but other subjects were to be agreed – how much bigger than the original building planned is the new extension, or has this been scaled back? It was pressure from the Councillors that secured the £9M.</p> <p>RC: The 2019 briefing was based on the information available at that time; the approved budget was an allocation from the available funding in 2018 and was not based on a defined scheme. JA: Let's move forward with our discussions, rather than keep referring back to previous events.</p>	
3.8	<p>GH: Excellent news on the new budget, however let us have one single source of truth moving forward. The project requires openness and transparency. The information we require should include a high-level risk matrix; opportunities to have certainty on programme and cost; methods of modern construction; lessons learnt and outcomes. This should provide towards sustainability and pupil and teacher wellness.</p> <p>RC: Confirmed that the methods referred to form part of HC's approach to major projects and are standard operational tools which will be used for the new build. Outcomes are in line with those required of the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Improvement Programme, particularly with regard to energy efficiency targets.</p>	
3.9	<p>AJ: Going back to funding again, Liz Denovan has made a commitment to the project, however HC have a practice of putting things forward and not funding them. The key is keeping up pressure as a parent body with the backing of local Councillors. Culloden Academy should be funded in full, with a commitment to a larger extension.</p> <p>RC: Confirmed that the project team is now working on the basis of the increased budget.</p>	

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	<p>JA: Thanks to all the Councillors for their efforts – she would be aghast if the monies weren't available now. Also noted that the parents had been courteous ahead of the budget decision, and had not made comment to the press, although several approaches had been made to them. They were content to wait and discuss at the stakeholder meeting.</p>	
3.10	<p>RC returned to his presentation which demonstrated the impact on all subjects due to increasing roll, and the projected numbers up until 2028/29.</p> <p>AH: Asked whether the slides could be circulated to stakeholders, and this was agreed. She also queried whether it would be appropriate to share slides on the PC Facebook page. It was agreed that there was nothing confidential in them.</p> <p>RC: Advised that additional classrooms for some subjects from August 2022 would result in a requirement for further modular units on site, along with internal refurbishment works.</p> <p>JV: Agreed that the exercise of reviewing each subject against the roll forecasts has been a worthwhile one but noted that choices can change all the time. He said the data collated confirmed a focus for the project, but it would be an ongoing process in future years.</p>	RC
3.11	<p>GCS: Advised that the new Boundary Commission report anticipates a 54% rise in population which will have a huge impact on Culloden Academy. Will school roll forecasts be accurate? Stratton/Culloden East/Culloden West/Chapelton are all growing. School rolls don't have any margin for error.</p> <p>RC: School roll forecasting methodology has improved in recent years, Education work with Planning on the updated Housing Land Audit data each year, and this information is factored in. The projections are as robust as possible and are taken into consideration in determining capital investment priorities.</p>	
3.12	<p>KG: Felt it was appropriate to provide an explanation on why the motion taken to the Council meeting today was not heard. He explained that it was judged to conflict with another item on the Agenda, and that not all Councillors voted to hear the motion – that is why there is still some uncertainty on the funding.</p> <p>JA: Advised that she had watched the Webcast of the meeting and it had been very enlightening.</p> <p>KG: Added that it was a cynical mechanism, and he was disappointed not to be heard as his motion was in support of the item on funding, not in conflict with it.</p>	
3.13	<p>CB: Originally, we were told the new building would take STEM subjects – we seem to be going backwards and changing things again. Are Morrison's scoping out what's needed? I don't understand why we are not budgeting to requirement. Also, have you moved the location of the new build?</p> <p>RC: The location has not changed – the orientation may have to as it is now a larger building. Science is confirmed as going into</p>	

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	<p>the new build, discussions are taking place on which other subjects are best placed to go with it.</p> <p>CB: Is that going to delay things?</p> <p>RC: The discussion with JV on subject numbers has been essential in identifying classroom requirements for each subject, both in the extension and the refurbishment works in the main building. We are continuing to develop a clear masterplan to take forward.</p>	
3.14	<p>GCS: I am confused, the pre-stakeholder meeting we asked what the issue was, and why things were getting pushed out to 2028? At the time you advised we only had money for half a science block. Councillors pushed for your additional £9M – we keep going back to design and not seeing any design plans.</p> <p>RC: The 2028 mentioned is the capacity requirement for the first phase – it is not a completion date. We are actively considering timescale, delivery and capacity – no one wants any slippage.</p>	
3.15	<p>GS: We need to ensure location is considered and the new building is not on the new agricultural land. Balloch CC were promised previously that the school would not be built there.</p> <p>RC: We have no option but to put the school there – we have no space to build on existing site, and the disruption to a live school would be difficult to manage. We can't build on the playing fields as we have done on other projects as there are restrictions regarded the view from Culloden House.</p> <p>GS: So, the entire Community will be disrupted because of a protected view – the A96 will be in their view too.</p> <p>RC/PS: We have discussed this with Planning, and they will not support a school building on the playing fields.</p> <p>GCS: If there are any contentious issues – all Councillors should be copied in. Any attempt to consider landscaping, then Balloch CC and Members should be aware.</p> <p>RC: We have discussed this with Planning during the Pre-Application process.</p> <p>GCS: Can Planning provide anticipated views – modelling/presentation?</p> <p>RC: The Pre-Application process and consultation will capture this. We can do this in-house and something similar was done for the Tain Campus project recently.</p> <p>PS: The Planning guidelines provide for a sense of place and quality.</p>	
3.16	<p>KG: Culloden House Hotel is no longer in the Conservation Area.</p> <p>AJ: Are they entitled to a view? Any development just needs to pay due regard to surroundings. I am no clearer as to what is actually happening. All this drama for 5 years future proofing and it has taken nearly 20 years to get to this point. What we need is one sheet of A4 stating if it is going on the new site, and the programme to be followed:</p>	

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	<p>JA: I feel there is value to these meetings – information is being given to us – it is taking longer, but things are moving forward.</p> <p>RC: In response to AJ – we have an approved budget; we have appointed a main contractor; the completion date is stated as August 2024 and we will work with all parties to deliver this project in a positive manner.</p> <p>JA: Can we just move on please.</p>	
3.17	<p>JA: Communication – the stakeholder group needs the same information as others so we can move things forward – we need to improve on communication. Let’s have the minutes on the website and the agenda out on time. Everyone is putting a lot of effort in.</p> <p>RC: Keen to get the project on a proper footing and engage further with the Chair and Members going forward.</p> <p>KG: Feels there is a lot of inertia – backwards and forwards – however a new term is coming. Let’s agree on goals, expectations and key milestones going forward.</p> <p>GCS: We need to all work together – the Councillors were hoping to get their motion heard today – we all want the money to be available. I have full confidence in RC delivering this project, he always does. We just hoped for better news today.</p> <p>JA: The Parent Council wrote to the Chief Executive earlier this year and still have had no response.</p> <p>KG: Advised that it was raised at Council meeting today and they were given a very generic response that she receives a high volume of correspondence.</p>	
4.0	AOCB	
4.1	<p>The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 24th August at 7pm on Microsoft Teams.</p> <p>Note: Meeting subsequently postponed and an interim update issued on 4th September.</p>	
4.2	LB confirmed that a contractor’s programme will be made available to the Group at the next meeting.	LB
4.3	<p>JV: Asked whether it would be worthwhile postponing the next meeting until after the next Council meeting in September in case there is still some doubt on budget ratification and asked for Members’ thoughts.</p> <p>GCS: We should meet on 24th August to look at timeline and design.</p> <p>FS: Agreed we should meet in August, to chart progress. We are futureproofing towards 2028, not moving backwards, and we are building something that is required by the school.</p>	
4.4	<p>CB: Can we have a sketch showing the A96 and Housing Developments adjacent to the school for the next meeting?</p> <p>LB: confirmed that these would be requested from the main contractor.</p>	LB
4.5	KG: Agreed that a meeting should go ahead in August – it will inform Councillors ahead of Committee on 9th September. He	

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	suggested that Inverness City Committee may also have an interest in developments.	
4.6	<p>GS: Stated that the fencing on the new land marking out a boundary seemed wrong and did not reflect the area correctly. The land purchased should allow for the school to sit back, and work with the contours of the land.</p> <p>RC: suggested that he meet up with GS and Balloch CC along with Planning colleagues to get a clearer picture of layout.</p>	RC
4.7	KG: Noted that the school, parents and staff had done a wonderful job and recognition should be made to JV and his staff.	
4.8	Meeting was closed by JA at 20:25.	