

The Highland Council
Culloden Academy Stakeholder Group
Minutes of Meeting No.10
Tuesday 27th September 2022 at 7pm

Attendees	Initials
Highland Councillors	
Councillor Glynis Campbell-Sinclair	GCS
Councillor Duncan MacPherson	DM
Councillor Morven Reid	MR
Councillor Trish Robertson	TR
Councillor Andrew Sinclair	AS
Parent Council Representatives	
Jeni Alexander - Chair	JA
Ally Hill	AH
Peter MacDonald	PM
Community Representatives	
Catherine Bunn, Culloden Community Council	CB
Gillian Spalding, Balloch Community Council	GSP
Culloden Academy	
Dr James Vance, Head Teacher	JV
Highland Council Officials	
Robert Campbell, Estate Strategy Manager	RC
Mark Rodgers, Executive Chief Officer, Housing & Property	MR
Gordon Stewart, Education Adviser	GS
Susannah Holmes, Principal Estates Officer	SH
Laura Burns, Project Manager	LB
Paul Short, Estates Co-ordinator	PS
Apologies	
Jane Day, Fiona Shearer and Simon Swanson	
Minute	
Laura Burns/Paul Short	

Item	Discussion/Comment	Action
1.0	Introduction	
1.1	JA welcomed everyone to the meeting and started with a message about the positive impact that a well-designed building environment can have on enhancing learning opportunities for pupils.	
1.2	GCS asked to say a few words before the meeting started. She had not attended the previous meeting but had been made aware that an officer had been accused of being “underhand” in reporting progress. She requested that an apology be made and	

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	<p>added that the efforts made by the project team and contractors should be acknowledged and that in the current climate construction costs are inevitably increasing. She felt it was unfortunate that Members had previously stated that the budget for Culloden was secured. The new Administration was currently reviewing the Capital Programme, but she was heartened to see progress.</p> <p>PM and AH advised that there had been a retraction of the comment during the meeting; JV agreed and requested that the minutes were amended to reflect this.</p>	RC
2.0	Minutes Of Previous Meeting	
2.1	<p>Minutes from previous meeting were agreed, with the following comments or update on actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1: RC had circulated the Risk Register as requested. • 3.1: JV advised that the Primary School Head Teacher meeting had been postponed and he would update further regards representation from that Group; also, a Senior Pupil will attend the next stakeholder meeting. • 4.3: Minutes had been issued timeously as requested. • 4.4: RC had issued an interim update advising that the planning application for the synthetic pitch and muster point had been approved. • 4.5: LB advised that further remedial works to the grass pitch will be carried out during the October holiday period. • 4.14: PM requested a correction to acknowledge that the basketball court will not be bookable; RC to check with Simon Swanson. 	<p>JV</p> <p>RC</p>
2.2	The approval of the minutes was proposed by CB, subject to the amendment highlighted in 1.2, and this was seconded by AH.	
3.0	Project Update	
3.1	<p>RC shared a presentation covering the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress Update • Programme: Extension Block/Synthetic Playing Field • Key Risks • Floor Plans/Capacity Increases • Next Steps 	
	Progress Update	
3.2	Repairs to the ramps to the modular units had been carried out – JV confirmed that he was content with the works.	
3.3	Planning approval had been granted for the synthetic pitch and muster point and work is programmed to be completed by August 2023.	
3.4	Updated floor plans of the extension block will be shared after the presentation; there has been recent discussions with JV and staff, and some minor amendments were still required.	
3.5	Works on the new access road off Barn Church Road are due to commence within next 2 weeks.	

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3.6	Further remedial works to the grass playing field are to be carried out in October holidays.	
3.7	Planning consultation events were planned for w/c 24th October. This would comprise two public sessions at 4.30pm and 6pm at the Academy, with a subsequent online meeting for those unable to attend in person.	
3.8	Second phase of electrical upgrade works to take place 7th November – 19th December on a nightshift basis. One further phase required, hopefully next year.	
	Programme	
3.9	An application for Full Planning Approval for the extension block is due to be submitted in November 2022, targeting the Planning Committee meeting in May 2023, with the meeting in June as a fallback. All timescales are subject to the outcome of the review of the Council's Capital Programme. Next key milestone would be contract award for synthetic pitch.	
3.10	The programme for extension shows construction work from August 2023 to February 2025, based on an 18-month contract period – actual duration to be confirmed. The refurbishment of existing vacated spaces would commence once the extension block is operational.	
3.11	Synthetic pitch and muster point will proceed as a separate phase with a construction period of up to 4 months, to be complete by the start of the new school session in August 2023.	
	Key Risks	
3.12	<p>JA stated that she felt for the project team with regards to the cost increases that they were having to deal with, but at what point would the ratings for 1 and 2 (Cost and Budget) change from Amber to Red?</p> <p>RC advised that they were two separate issues but obviously linked to the review of the Capital Programme. The team was reviewing costs with the Contractor on an ongoing basis. Some pressures of supply and demand may be starting to ease, for example, some Local Authorities had paused some projects which may mean that projects that contractors and their supply chain were expecting to undertake may not go ahead. The Tain project was at tender stage at the start of the year just as these pressures were starting to have an impact and high market activity and availability of sub-contractors was a major issue.</p>	
3.13	<p>JA asked for clarity on Item 5 (pressures on subjects before handover of extension) and on maximum class sizes.</p> <p>RC clarified that it related to the impact on individual subjects. The overall number of classrooms available would be sufficient, but there could be a shortage of specialist classrooms for practical subjects, such as Science, before the new extension was ready, and further works may be required to address this. Practical subjects had a maximum class size of 20, while Non-Practical subjects were 30 for S1 and S2, and 33 for S3 to S6.</p>	

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3.14	PM: Works required in Summer 2023 to address subject pressures – would this involve additional modular classrooms? RC: Didn't anticipate a need for additional modular units, likely to be converting an existing room for use as a Science classroom.	
3.15	GSP: Where would the funding come from for this work, and how much additional funding is required for the overall project? RC: The cost of the work required in 2023 would be factored into the bid for additional funding, All major projects are in a similar position and estimated figures are not being discussed in public at this stage of the capital review process.	
Floor Plans/Capacity Increases		
3.16	RC explained the main changes to the floor layouts of the extension block. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Economics (HE) now included instead of Drama • Omission of Learning Plaza • Flexible classroom area – could be HE Kitchen if required in future • Omission of central stair 	
3.17	JA: Capacity was different in each local authority and a report in 2021 stated that the Council was reviewing the methodology, did this happen? RC confirmed that it was currently under review, and he was leading on this as part of a Working Group across the Northern Alliance Group of Local Authorities, and this was closely linked to Schools Roll Forecasts and Developer Contributions. A common approach is being developed and may be adopted across Scotland as our contact in Aberdeenshire Council intends to take this forward nationally.	
3.18	JA asked if the capacity figure was based on teaching spaces and what was the difference between Planning Capacity and Working Capacity. RC further explained that there was a formula approach based on the number and type of classrooms available with ratios applied to take account of factors such as timetabling, curriculum choice and class sizes. The Planning Capacity figure is used for planning ahead to identify when roll pressures are likely to occur and if Developer Contributions are required for housing developments; Working Capacity (which was more relevant to primary schools) is based more on actual room usage in a school session.	
Next Steps		
3.19	Confirm dates for planning consultation event. Take on board comments/feedback for events and develop November planning application. Agree construction duration for extension with Contractor. Submit funding application for synthetic pitch to Sportscotland. Agreed scope and timing of internal refurbishment works – PE changing area and further classroom improvements; take account of feedback from parents and	

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	school staff on PE changing. Continue with the update of school roll forecasts and analyse revised data, such as the number of pre-school age children. Continue to contribute to the review of the Council's Capital Programme that is underway.	
3.20	<p>CB queried the school roll predictions which didn't seem to include the Tornagrain expansion which will now be required earlier than was previously planned, highlighted concerns with the extent of housing developments in the masterplan for the Culloden area and where the information is coming from, and the importance of ensuring that the information is correct.</p> <p>RC confirmed that the Tornagrain housing developments are in the catchment area for Croy Primary and are therefore factored into the current figures for Croy and Culloden. We work closely with colleagues in Planning and Housing Development proposals; Planning update the Housing Land Audit every year and review any changes in new house build rates. Housing development is the single biggest factor, and the methodology has been improved since Inshes Primary was opened in 2007, and an audit was carried out on the actual development rates at Milton of Leys. 15-year forecasts for secondary schools are more subjective the further ahead you look; for 5-year forecasts children are mainly at primary school; for 10 years some are not yet attending school; and for 15 years either not at school or not yet born.</p>	
3.21	<p>CB followed up by asking if the information could be shared as she thinks the figures grossly underrepresented what is going to happen in the local community based on the planned developments, and likely to be rapid acceleration rather than a steady increase. If the new secondary school was not affordable then it was important to ensure.</p> <p>RC agreed to discuss with colleagues although it would not be easy to abstract the information but could possibly summarise the housing development element of the forecasts.</p>	
3.22	<p>CB added that she was disappointed that the Learning Plaza had been taken out of the design as it was important to have breakout space for pupils and asked for an explanation.</p> <p>RC replied that Learning Plazas work well in completely new build schools and have been included in new schools across Scotland and recently in Highland. There had been some concern that it may not have been fully utilised fully in the extension block.</p> <p>SH added that at the new Ainess Academy they were used more for collaboration between non-practical subjects. The new extension includes practical subjects; Science and Home Economics tended to be more self-contained, and the Art area was based on a free-flow studio layout. However, Learning Plazas would be factored into the future phases.</p>	
3.23	GSP raised the following points:	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balloch football club currently travel to use the pitches at Inverness Royal Academy in winter – perhaps this could be referred to in the Sportscotland application – RC agreed to consider this. • Is there a car park included in Phase 1? RC confirmed that there were car park facilities to suit the size of the extension and that further car parking would follow in future phases. • Does the car park need to be tarred, other options may be better? RC confirmed that they are normally tarred, but we can consider alternatives. • She thanked RC for the update. 	
3.24	GCS advised that there was also a synthetic pitch with changing rooms planned at the UHI complex on this side of town.	
3.25	<p>JA queried how LEIP funding works, although Culloden is not included in this – was it a mix of capital funding and Government funding?</p> <p>RC advised that the Council fully funds the capital cost of the LEIP projects and Scottish Government provide revenue funding for 25 years once the buildings are operational.</p> <p>JA: When did the scheme come into operation, was it after 2019. and there are no LEIP funded schools open yet.</p> <p>RC: The scheme came into place in 2019. The previous scheme was based on capital contributions to projects; Alness Academy, Inverness Royal Academy and Wick Campus were in this programme and funding was reallocated from Tain to Inverness High and Merkinch Primary. No LEIP projects have been completed yet – contract just awarded for Tain, and Broadford and Nairn due to be completed by 2025.</p>	
3.26	<p>AH: RC had said at the last meeting that the Council didn't want to use companies from the central belt; given the number of projects likely to be carried out over the next few years, where did Culloden Academy sit in the pecking order?</p> <p>RC: Clarified that the aim was to reduce reliance on contractors from outside Highland where possible. Following the cost pressures on the Tain project we are keen to engage with local contractors and suppliers where possible, but this was unavoidable for some specialist work elements. The planned new primary school buildings are smaller scale projects so hopefully there will be more opportunities for the local supply chain. There had to be a balance, but the aim would be to retain funding in Highland where possible.</p> <p>AH: So Highland Council will use companies from outwith Highland if necessary.</p> <p>RC Yes, this has always been the case due to the peaks and troughs in workload in the Highland construction market.</p>	
3.27	<p>AH: Is the LEIP funding based on a 50/50 split?</p> <p>RC: It is a notional 50/50 split as they are two separate funding streams; the SG revenue funding goes into the Council's overall revenue budget, but it can't be used to directly fund capital</p>	

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	<p>borrowing. Scottish Government announcement was that the LEIP programme would be based on £1Bn of revenue funding with Local Authorities providing the same amount in capital funding, which must be largely borrowed and paid back through revenue loan charges.</p>	
3.28	<p>AH: Disappointed that Culloden Academy wasn't championed at the recent Council meeting, and there appeared to be some confusion on which schools were the priorities to be put forward?</p> <p>RC clarified that there were two separate issues; the projects put forward were the best fit with the LEIP funding criteria and this would maximise chances of a successful bid and therefore the revenue funding that the Council would receive; capital priorities will be dealt with later this year with as part of the review process.</p> <p>GCS confirmed that the funding position had been clearly explained; a LEIP bid can be made for a new school or a refurbishment but not for both in one school project. It was clear that the LEIP bid was for the 5 schools, but the report stated that Culloden was still in the Capital Programme, and we had been provided with good information tonight.</p> <p>MR agreed that LEIP funding is not Capital Grant funding, solely revenue for 25 years linked to the running costs while capital is borrowed and funded separately. The LEIP report did not imply that the Culloden project was not being funded, it is in the capital programme and the works that have been carried out to date were funded from that. LEIP bids were either for increasing school capacity or for a refurbishment project, but not both elements in one project. The 5 schools were put forward following extensive discussions and were considered to have the best chance of success in relation to the LEIP criteria.</p>	
3.29	<p>PM raised a concern that the projects that are LEIP funded are more likely to be included in the Capital Programme after the review and queried the school roll projections as he felt Culloden's roll should mirror the increase in the feeder primary schools which it doesn't see to. He would forward an e-mail to RC with more details.</p> <p>MR responded that it is a complex situation, we have over 200 schools and approximately 36% of the school estate doesn't meet the required standard. We invest approximately £65M per year from the current capital programme and we have a range of other buildings as well as schools, and a lot of schools are not receiving any capital investment. The changing financial position means that less can be achieved with the same amount. The Council tries to do the right thing and provide the best educational environment possible, and the challenge is to balance how the available budget is used against the demands that we are facing.</p>	

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	GCS supported MR's comments and the challenges the Council is facing, and that it was important to remain positive to deliver the huge investment that is planned.	
3.30	<p>CB: We do appreciate the work that is being carried out, but stakeholders need to continue to push. With regard to the synthetic pitch, UHI is still quite a distance away and it is important that a big effort is made for an early contract award to ensure that the new pitch is ready for August.</p> <p>RC: Confirmed that we are working to deliver it for the start of the new school session.</p>	
	Changes To Floor Plans	
3.31	<p>RC shared the updated floor plans and highlighted some changes that need to be made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground Floor – Science classroom in bottom right corner should be the same colour as the other classrooms; the main entrance is now on the gable end. • First Floor – Home Economics now included instead of Drama, with a smaller footprint; ICT suite should be coloured yellow as it is part of the Art department; additional classroom included with adjacent meeting room that could be combined to form an extra HE classroom should this be required in the future. 	
3.32	<p>PM asked if the teaching spaces in the new floor plans had changed in comparison to the previous plans, is it just the Learning Plaza and stairs that had come out?</p> <p>RC: Including HE instead of Drama had reduced the footprint, an additional flexible classroom/meeting room space has been included, a different Art layout had been agreed with JV and GS, and there had been some minor changes to ancillary accommodation.</p>	
3.33	<p>JA asked if these changes were made because that is what the school wants?</p> <p>RC confirmed that we have worked closely with the school and Education on this and following detailed analysis of the current timetable and impact of the increasing school roll.</p>	
3.34	<p>CB asked if the overall footprint was smaller than previous plans?</p> <p>RC confirmed that the changes had reduced the area by approximately 150m² per floor, 300m² overall. It is a smaller building, but it has been futureproofed for the subjects included and the additional modular units that had been installed earlier this year had provided additional teaching space and could be retained if necessary.</p>	
3.35	<p>CB: When would external images be available?</p> <p>RC: The masterplan hasn't changed other than the size of the extension. The previous public events had taken people through the process and further events had always been planned; stakeholders would see images at next meeting.</p>	

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3.36	<p>GSP queried where the external doors were on the new extension, raising a concern about only one main entrance for the number of pupils and width of corridors.</p> <p>SH confirmed there was one main entrance door and two escape doors. The link corridor to future phases would be from the main entrance. The corridors were approximately 3 metres wide (minimum requirement is 1.8m).</p> <p>RC: The walkthrough animation would be updated for the next meeting.</p>	
3.37	<p>JA: 300m² is a big reduction in floor area.</p> <p>RC: Including the additional modular units, the overall area was greater. The extension building has been designed for the subjects included, and the other subjects can be accommodated in the main building and modular units.</p>	
4.0	Date Of Next Meeting	
4.1	<p>AH asked whether it would be possible to hold an in-person stakeholder meeting.</p> <p>RC advised that it had been agreed to continue to hold all the stakeholder meetings via Teams and that it had been working well for stakeholder meetings. The planning consultation events would be held in-person at the Academy.</p>	
4.2	<p>Agreed to hold a stakeholder meeting on Tuesday 25th October 2022 at 7pm via Teams and to postpone the planning events.</p>	
5.0	AOCB	
5.1	<p>PM requested that the presentation and updated floor plans were circulated.</p>	RC