

The Highland Council
St Clements Stakeholder Group
Minutes of Meeting No.3
Monday 7th March 2022
Via Microsoft Teams

Attendees	Initials
Highland Councillors	
Councillor Margaret Paterson (Chair)	MP
Councillor Graham Mackenzie	GM
Councillor Angela Maclean	AM
Parent Council Representatives	
Avril Robertson	AR
Joanna Dymock	JD
Community Representatives	
Jack Shepherd, Dingwall Community Council	JS
St Clements	
Ruth Malone, Acting Head Teacher	RM
Highland Council Officials	
Ian Jackson, Education Officer	IJ
Sarah Gitsham, Estates Officer	SG
Fiona Sangster, Estates Co-ordinator	FS
Gordon Stewart, Education Adviser	GS
External Officials	
Helen Brown, Senior Case Worker	HB
Apologies	
Robert Campbell, Derek Martin, Councillor Alister Mackinnon, Crystyna Ferguson, Bill Couston, Donald Maclean, Steven Maciver	
Minute: Sarah Gitsham	

Item	Discussion and comment	Action
1.	Introduction	
1.1	It was noted that Gordon Stewart has been appointed as Education Adviser for Capital Projects, so will be liaising with parents and the school going forward. Helen Brown, Senior Case worker for Kate Forbes MSP also attended the meeting.	Note
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting	
2.1	Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as accurate.	Note
2.2	Follow up items reviewed: Pupil & PSA representation at future stakeholder meetings – SG advised that this is noted, however it will	Note

Item	Discussion and comment	Action
	be more beneficial for pupils to join once initial concept drawings have been drafted.	
3	Project update	
3.1	<p>SG provided an update on progress so far in relation to the new build project. Key points as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formal approval of Consultation process agreed at the meeting of the Education Committee on 24th February. <p>Land acquisition of the site – Meetings continue to be held with the Mart and noted that discussions remain positive. SG advised that it is hoped a final agreed red line boundary will be concluded within the next few weeks.</p>	Note SG
3.2	<p>GM raised concerns that this is the 3rd Stakeholder meeting, but the sale of Dochcarty Brae has still not been concluded</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SG advised that formal conclusion of the sale cannot be agreed until the end of the consultation. <p>IJ clarified that if sale is made before the end of the consultation, the Council would be seen to pre-empt the result of a legal statutory process. If parents' feedback is that they do not wish to pursue Dochcarty Brae, then we would need to look at an alternative site.</p>	Note
3.3	<p>GM also asked whether the Council has the funds to buy this land – SG advised that Robert will formally respond on this by email. Noted however that there is appropriate funding available, and discussions will continue to safeguard the best sale price for both parties.</p>	RC
3.4	<p>AR raised concerns over the site not being available – previous comment from SG that there is no 'Plan B' location in Dingwall if the Dochcarty Brae site is not approved. Parents understand the need for a consultation but very anxious over THC still needing to buy the land.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IJ re-iterated further that the consultation process is a legal requirement from the Scottish Government. As the Local authority it is up to us to listen to the views of the people. Sale cannot be concluded prior to consultation taking place. <p>MP queried whether sites had been bought in the past previously before the outcome of a consultation – IJ confirmed that this has not happened as it would invalidate the consultation.</p>	Note
3.5	<p>JS queried whether the school had to move at all as questions had been asked by members of the local community – MP confirmed that this had been</p>	Note

Item	Discussion and comment	Action
	<p>investigated previously and SEPA regulations ruled out</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> SG also advised that various sites had been reviewed in Dingwall, but SEPA and flood risk concerns had deemed them unsuitable. The current school campus is unfit for purpose and a new school building is the best outcome. <p>IJ noted that the point of the consultation is to receive views from parents and the local community which will determine the way forward.</p>	
3.6	<p>JS further detailed that the school's current location is handy for pupils accessing the main town but appreciate the building is not suitable.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> AR also confirmed that parents initial desire was to keep the school where it is currently but advised by THC it wouldn't be possible. SG mentioned that the current space constraints need to be recognised as well as the various other stakeholders on the premises, busy car park and that the school itself is spread across 3 separate buildings. Transport links to the town will be reviewed as part of the project. RM also mentioned that the school are currently looking to fundraise for a new minibus service – Noted again that Transport provision would be investigated as part of the project. <p>MP noted there would be more opportunities for wooded walks at the new site and access links to Dingwall Primary & Academy facilities.</p>	Note
4	Future use Of Tulloch Street	
4.1	<p>SG advised that further discussions regarding the proposals for the future vacant buildings will be needed with Finlay MacDonald (Head of Property & Housing) and Donna Manson (Chief Executive).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> GM advised that this needs to be reviewed in conjunction with the new build project. AM noted that a Planning Brief had been produced by Graham Chisholm for the site a number of years ago and could be updated in line with future plans. Also mentioned that the various other stakeholders within the premises will have a say in any future proposals. THC owned buildings however so perhaps an option for a community buy out or asset transfer. <p>JS queried whether there would be any potential restrictions on the buildings – MP confirmed this was looked into previously and the buildings are not listed.</p>	Note
5	Date of next meeting	
5.1	Monday 25 th of April at 11am is the proposed next	SG/FS

Item	Discussion and comment	Action
	meeting date (meeting was subsequently postponed).	
6	AOCB	
6.1	SG noted that Councillors can still attend meetings during the pre-election period as confirmed by Kate Lackie.	Note
6.2	<p>GS provided an update following the informal visit to St Clements on the 18th of February:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 GS will be working alongside the Estates team and will also ensure parents, staff and pupils are involved in the discussions for the new build. 2 Views expressed by pupils during the site visit were very helpful and noted that many aspirations for the new accommodation were basic items not currently available in the existing school. 3 GS to get in touch with RM after stakeholder meeting and confirm contact details. 4 RM also noted that GS will be invited to future pupil council meetings. 	GS
6.3	AR reiterated the concern of the land purchase but appreciates the work going on in the background to progress the new build. AR mentioned it is also paramount that pupils are involved at an early stage of the process as well as staff.	Note
6.4	<p>AM and parents expressed concerns around a move to the new school and that this is in a sensitive manner.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 SG confirmed that a gradual move to the new building will be considered – a one day move is not expected. Recognise that relocation will be difficult. 	Note