

Appendix 4

Long List Options Appraisal 20-11-23

UPDATED after community workshop feedback

Summary of previous consultation

- Consultation was carried out to inform the Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Development Plan 2023-28 and separate consultation was also carried out by TDCA Sub Committee specifically around the school and the playpark, generating 30 responses.
- A wide range of suggestions were received and these have been collated to produce the long list of options below for early analysis.

Key areas of focus from the Development Plan

- Increase the stock of affordable housing, including in re-purposed buildings
- Recycling Hub and improved waste management
- Allotments and polytunnels
- Potential for more community and out of school activities to be run
- Improved public toilets and chemical toilet waste disposal (*likely to be provided in conjunction with potential future campsite community purchase and rebuilt National Trust visitor centre*)

Key criteria taken into account when appraising the long list of options

- Must not compete with the Loch Torridon Community Centre (lochtorridoncentre.co.uk) which includes a large hall, smaller spaces and office space for hire, café, art gallery and community gym. It runs or hosts activities ranging across arts and crafts, food markets, dance, yoga and film nights.
- Generates an income to cover running costs.
- Is deliverable, with identified people and organisations to deliver it. *Note - TDCA is considering owning and managing the building, but is unlikely to have the capacity to set up new businesses / activities to run within it.*
- Does not impact negatively on the surrounding environment.
- The asset remains in community ownership
- Building is fully / partially accessible to the community. *If TDCA own the building and space is leased out to a business or used for accommodation, it will not be accessible for the wider community, although community benefit will be realised through income generation and delivery of required facilities.*
- Addresses relevant actions in the Development Plan including: more affordable housing; re-purpose Torridon Primary School; access to allotments; and better managed green spaces. *Note – actions including refurbished public toilets, chemical waste disposal facilities and tourism management could be dealt with through the future potential campsite purchase and NTS visitor centre development.*

Key Points from discussions

- The community would like the school to be used as a community building in the future, or at least to benefit the community.
- The need to generate an income to cover running costs is recognised by TDCA.
- **Playpark** - the focus is on open space, allotments / shared communal garden / polytunnel / compost heap and space for outdoor community events and active lifestyles (to be delivered as separate community projects). **SKS has not included options for building on this land, as this is not supported by the community.**
- **Motorhomes** - there is no interest in motorhome hook ups, toilets and showers for visitors at the school site. Other plans are in place to address these issues, so this is not an option to be pursued.

- The community is keen that the school building does not become a second home – anecdotally it was estimated that 50% of the current housing stock second homes. (NB – CHT Housing report 2018 states this is 28%)

Playpark Area

The area known as the 'playpark' is an open space that the community is keen to retain and not build on, although it was initially intended for housing by the Council. The playpark itself is no longer in existence, and some people would like it reinstated as there are five families in the Torridon / Annat, with a further five in Kinlochewe. There are also visitors in the summer who would be likely to use facilities if available.

Strong feedback in the Development Plan highlights that this area needs to be retained as community open space. **SKS will therefore not include any options for building on this space, as it is clearly not supported by the community.** Suitable uses for the Playpark area that could be developed as separate community projects have minimal income generation potential but high community benefits. These would be likely to require some subsidy from income generated from the use of the school building, to cover repair and maintenance costs, and include:

- Reinstatement of play equipment
- Outdoor pop up events
- Outdoor gym
- Men's shed
- Recycling / environmental and ecology hub / climate change resilience / tourist information
- Crazy Golf
- Allotments / shared community croft / compost heap – e.g. <https://www.earth-in-common.org/leith-community-croft> (NB previous projects have had low community uptake)

Key points re Playpark redevelopment

The future use of the playpark site to provide play facilities and /or activities such as those listed above could support the better integration of Shildaig and Torridon communities. Children on the Torridon side of the loch have to travel to Shildaig for school, playdates, and after school activities. It would significantly reduce their isolation if families from Shildaig visited Torridon for an attractive playpark. A playpark could also support children's activities at the community centre.

If TDCA opts to own and reinstate the playpark as a community project, then an annual maintenance cost could be provided from income generated by the school building, depending upon the chosen use. This would require the school building to generate sufficient income to cover its own running costs together with a small surplus per year for maintenance and repair costs.

Some members of the community feel that this site is not the most appropriate for green space as there are nicer areas locally. They would like to see it used for housing, although this a minority view.

Options for School site ownership and management – to be further explored

- TDCA could potentially own and run the school site to generate income and

community benefit. There is limited capacity for the organisation to set up and manage viable social enterprise activity within the building, so leasing accommodation or business / social enterprise space to third parties would be the operational model.

- Another suitable organisation could materialise to own and run the site, depending upon the likely final use, if there is a local appetite for this.

Any redevelopment can not compete with these existing or planned local facilities:

- Loch Torridon Community Centre (lochtorridoncentre.co.uk) which includes a gym, large hall and runs activities ranging across arts and crafts, food markets, dance, yoga and film nights.
- The Communities Housing Trust (CHT) is planning approximately 8 affordable houses of mixed size and tenure behind Darroch Park in Torridon. These plans are at an early stage of development currently.
- There is a hotel two miles away, hostel and campsite, plus two cafes (one in the Community Centre) and a shop
- The National Trust Visitor Centre at the Torridon junction is currently closed, but a redevelopment is planned to create a visitor centre there.
- There is a potential for the community to take ownership of the basic campsite in the future.

Key concerns raised in the community feedback

- Don't compete with existing facilities and services
- Support the Community Centre and run as much as possible from there
- Can the community successfully use another building? Don't spread yourselves too thin.