

**Fortrose Academy**  
**Stakeholder Group Meeting No. 1**  
 Wednesday 4th February 2026 – 6.30pm  
 Via Microsoft Teams

<b>Attendees:</b>	<p><b><u>Highland Councillors</u></b>          Sarah Atkin          Lyndsey Johnston          Morven-May Maccallum</p> <p><b><u>Parent and Community Representatives</u></b>          Joanne Pugh - Fortrose &amp; Rosemarkie CC          Rosie Brunton – Avoch &amp; Killen CC          Anne Mackay – Kilearnan CC          Catherine Holmes – Knockbain CC          Lynsey Ross – Fortrose Parent Council</p> <p><b><u>Fortrose Academy</u></b>          Nigel Engstrand - Head Teacher          Muir Morton – Acting Depute Head Teacher (Project Liaison)</p> <p><b><u>Highland Council Officials</u></b>          Robert Campbell - Strategic Lead for Estate &amp; Investment Planning, Property &amp; Assets          Susannah Holmes - Programme Manager, Property &amp; Assets          Simon Swanson - Head of Investment &amp; Programme Management, Highlife Highland          Annika Jansson - Area Quality Improvement Manager, North Schools          Sarah Gitsham - Estates Manager, Property &amp; Assets</p>	<p><b>SA</b> <b>LJ</b> <b>MMM</b></p> <p><b>JP</b> <b>RB</b> <b>AM</b> <b>CH</b> <b>LR</b></p> <p><b>NE</b> <b>MM</b></p> <p><b>RC</b> <b>SH</b> <b>SS</b> <b>AJ</b> <b>SG</b></p>
<b>Apologies:</b>	Cromarty CC, Ferintosh CC, Resolis CC	
<b>Minute:</b>	<b>Sarah Gitsham</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Discussion/comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	It was noted that the meeting will be recorded, with the recording to be deleted after issuing of the minutes.	<b>Note</b>
<b>1.2</b>	Meeting chair <b>LJ</b> welcomed attendees with introductions provided by all THC members and officers.	<b>Note</b>
<b>1.3</b>	It was noted that <b>LR</b> was attending the meeting on behalf of Fortrose Parent Council Chair Kevin Gallacher.	<b>Note</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Terms of reference</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<b>RC</b> provided an overview of the Terms of Reference (TOR) document. It was noted that the TOR is a standard	<b>Note</b>

	document that is used for all Stakeholder meetings; it details the purpose of the stakeholder meeting, as well as setting out its overall remit.	
<b>2.2</b>	<p>It was noted that the TOR also sets out the governance regarding communication and occurrence of meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The TOR details the members of the group, both internal and external.</li> <li>• Noted that meetings are chaired by a Ward member.</li> <li>• Other members of the project delivery team, such as the appointed main contractor, will be brought into future meetings as and when required.</li> <li>• Meetings will usually be held once a school term.</li> <li>• If there is development between each meeting cycle, an email update will be issued to all relevant members of the group.</li> <li>• Meetings will usually be held over TEAMS.</li> <li>• Public drop in events will also be organised at key development stages of the project, to allow the public to comment on items such as the draft design proposals.</li> <li>• Noted that invites are sent to the generic inbox's detailed on the TOR.</li> <li>• Invitations for stakeholder meetings will only be sent to group members – forwarding of invites is not permitted. The Group organiser should be informed of any changes in group attendance.</li> <li>• Noted that all feeder primary schools will be invited to future meetings.</li> <li>• Noted that pupil representatives will equally be invited to future meetings.</li> <li>• The Council website was noted as the main point of contact for all stakeholders to view updates and minutes as the project progresses.</li> </ul>	<b>Note</b>
<b>2.3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Benefit was noted as a key component of all Major Capital projects.</li> <li>• There will be significant investment across the Highlands and THC are keen to see that there's tangible benefits and a positive legacy, particularly around construction projects.</li> <li>• THC are also keen that all appointed contractors will additionally invest in creation of apprenticeships, trainee opportunities during the project. Contractors will be working together with the council and the delivery partner on achieving this.</li> </ul>	<b>Note</b>

<b>3</b>	<b>Membership of group</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	It was noted that High life Highland will also be key member of stakeholder group regarding sport & leisure provision	<b>Note</b>
<b>3.2</b>	Membership from other external relevant community groups was discussed, noting that there are 7 community council groups within the Fortrose Catchment area.	<b>Note</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>LR</b> queried whether feeder primary school parent councils should also be invited. <b>RC</b> confirmed that they will be invited in future. They will be included on the email circulation list going forward.	<b>SG</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>RB</b> queried whether it was acceptable for Avoch amenities association to be added to the stakeholder group. <b>RB</b> also mentioned that Avoch amenities group are keen to deliver an all-weather pitch within Avoch. <b>LJ</b> noted that there are multiple amenities groups across the black isle, so this will be something to review going forward. <b>SA</b> also advised that the group size must be manageable. It was acknowledged that Community Councils would normally take back information from these meetings to be relayed back to community. <b>MMM</b> agreed that whilst it is good to have many attendees, the group needs to be manageable. Bringing local groups and other attendees in as and when required was confirmed as the best approach.	<b>Note</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Council update</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<b>RC</b> presented an overview of the Fortrose project progress. Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council established the Highland Investment Plan (HIP) – significant investment totalling £1 billion over 10 years in first phase.</li> <li>• Schools will be key component of the HIP. THC are looking to improve condition but also create ‘touchdown’ accommodation within new school builds that may be used by the local community or other partners – referred to as Points of Delivery (PODS).</li> <li>• Noted that Fortrose has large number of community groups when reviewing ‘touchdown’ space.</li> <li>• Funding has been provided to secure 2 days a week of school leadership time to assist with the project – Muir Morton noted as Project Liaison.</li> <li>• Hub North Scotland Limited (HNSL) were noted as THC’s project delivery partner appointed to deliver all 7 projects across the HIP.</li> </ul>	<b>Note</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THC are committed to providing a legacy of community benefit for staff as well as school leavers.</li> <li>• HNSL will appoint contractor and designer to take the Fortrose project forward – contractor appointments are to be announced later this month. HNSL will be invited to the next stakeholder meeting.</li> </ul>	
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b>Key elements of the new Fortrose project:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New 3G synthetic pitch</li> <li>• Improved parking and drop off</li> <li>• Demolition of Art &amp; Maths block – This block was noted as poor condition as well as lacking efficiencies within its current layout.</li> <li>• New classroom block to be installed in its place – this would mainly consist of practical subjects.</li> <li>• Demolition / review of redundant accommodation – further discussion is required for which of the remaining elements to refurb or retain.</li> <li>• Futureproofing is a key consideration for all HIP projects noting the impact of the Green Freeport as well as multiple infrastructure projects across the Highlands.</li> </ul>	<b>Note</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<p><b>Next steps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Membership governance of the group was noted as agreed.</li> <li>2. HNSL to be invited to next stakeholder meeting.</li> <li>3. Capacity modelling exercise to be finalised, reviewing the number of classrooms required and where they would be located; some will be in the new extension block and some within the existing building.</li> <li>4. Consideration to be given to mitigation of disruption during the construction period – The site was noted as constrained in terms of location and general size.</li> <li>5. THC will be working alongside High life highland in terms of assessment of community facilities in the leisure centre as well as Academy building. Interest from local clubs and groups in terms of the new synthetic pitch is to also be reviewed. External funding opportunities for sports provision to be explored.</li> </ol>	<b>Note</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<p><b>JP</b> queried the programme for the project.  <b>RC</b> mentioned that at this stage, a general update will be provided noting that there are various elements to the project; it was noted that the scope for the pitch will be a key consideration, plus reviewing the possible dates for demolition of the arts and maths block – Sequencing of</p>	<b>Note</b>

	works across the whole programme will be an important element that HNSL is reviewing.	
<b>4.5</b>	<p><b>LR</b> noted that the Fortrose Parent Council were given an outline of the draft programme last Feb 25 and asked whether a revised programme is known at this stage. <b>LR</b> also mentioned that funding for the school project was to be approved at the March 25 committee. <b>LR</b> queried whether the money that was agreed at the meeting in March 25 is ringfenced to Fortrose.</p> <p><b>RC</b> confirmed that the budget was approved for Fortrose at the March meeting and is ring-fenced to this project. <b>RC</b> advised that as dates are currently being reviewed, it would not be sensible to confirm formal dates at this stage. A more detailed update regarding the programme is to be shared next stakeholder meeting.</p>	<p><b>Note</b></p> <p><b>RC/SH</b></p>
<b>4.6</b>	<b>SA</b> wished to clarify whether funding of the new synthetic pitch will hold up the project. <b>RC</b> confirmed that the pitch would not delay the wider school project. <b>RC</b> noted that funding opportunities should be explored with Scottish Football Association (SFA) as well as Sports Scotland.	<b>Note</b>
<b>4.7</b>	<b>SA</b> noted that the wider ASG in terms of funding for pitches across all areas should be reviewed. <b>RC</b> noted that THC are aware of general requirements so design could be taken forward hopefully quite quickly.	<b>Note</b>
<b>4.8</b>	<b>JP</b> detailed that a new synthetic pitch had already been raised years prior, with no development. <b>JP</b> also noted concerns about seagulls, climate change etc in relation to the new building. <b>SH</b> confirmed that HNSL have appointed architects (Holmes Miller) regarding the overall site layout and design. <b>SH</b> advised that while no plans are available currently, work to review the site layout, condition surveys, ecological surveys etc., are all being carried out in the background.	<b>Note</b>
<b>4.9</b>	<p><b>LR</b> asked if there will be space for pupil voices regarding the design of the new building. <b>SH</b> confirmed that future meetings would include pupil representatives as well as potential for individual pupil groups to be set up. <b>SH</b> further advised that the appointed contractor would arrange workshops to gather pupil feedback, as well as wishes and desires for the overall design.</p> <p><b>MM</b> to confirm pupil representatives.</p>	<p><b>Note</b></p> <p><b>MM / SG</b></p>
<b>4.10</b>	<b>MM</b> noted that there needs to be recognition that Fortrose Academy are part of the Scottish Rugby Union; With the school's partnership agreement detailing a need to cater for rugby. <b>MM</b> also detailed that Fortrose Union Football Club are based within the King George playing field. <b>MM</b> further noted that he is president of the North of Scotland schools football association.	<b>Note</b>

4.11	<p><b>RC</b> advised that THC have standard design specifications for synthetic pitches, noting the varying shock pad and pile lengths required for multiple sports. <b>RC</b> noted that existing rugby pitches within the Estate are generally designed to accommodate training; A pitch designed for competitive rugby would be much larger and therefore more expensive.</p>	<b>Note</b>
4.12	<p><b>AM</b> queried whether any asbestos remains within the school building, as well as the noted poor condition of the wall at the main school entrance.</p> <p><b>RC</b> confirmed that there is a management regime in place for any asbestos that's currently in the building; Any residual asbestos would be removed as part of the project. <b>RC</b> confirmed that all structural and fabric issues will equally be reviewed as part of project.</p>	<b>Note</b>
4.13	<p><b>RB</b> commented regarding congestion in the car park, as well as the car park being shared between the school, library and leisure centre. <b>RB</b> queried whether there has been an impact assessment done for the black isle leisure centre and library.</p> <p><b>SH</b> confirmed that a consultant will be appointed to review the schools current traffic management. <b>SH</b> noted that while it is not known what the specific impact on the Black Isle Leisure centre and library is, this assessment will capture a wider review of the whole site, with reference to improvement of pupil flow and traffic movement. <b>SH</b> further detailed that constraints within the site in terms of general size and movement of traffic has been flagged as one of the major concerns to be reviewed by the design team.</p>	<b>Note</b>
4.14	<p><b>LR</b> queried whether the programme to be to be finalised is just for the construction phase or if this also includes pre-construction. <b>LR</b> asked if this programme can be shared.</p> <p><b>RC</b> advised that the full programme would cover all pre-construction and construction stages, covering items relating to the initial design, planning, procurement and tendering stages. <b>RC</b> noted that there are various elements to be delivered within this project, and a more detailed update will be provided at the next stakeholder meeting.</p>	<b>Note</b>
4.15	<p><b>LR</b> asked whether the planning application will be in stages, or one application.</p> <p><b>SH</b> advised that while a phased application could be an option, the intention is to submit one application. <b>SH</b> noted that this is to be further reviewed once the updated programme is received. <b>SH</b> noted that a standalone application may be needed for the synthetic pitch. <b>SH</b> confirmed that this will be reviewed with HNSL and the Tier 1 contractor.</p>	<b>Note</b>

<b>4.16</b>	<b>LR</b> asked if the programme will be fixed, or whether there will be an opportunity for stakeholders to comment. <b>SH</b> confirmed that the programme can be shared for comment.	<b>Note</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Education / school matters</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	<b>RC</b> noted that this section will be a standing item within the agenda and is an opportunity for the school to raise any matters of concern.	<b>Note</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>MM</b> expressed that it is difficult to make any comment now without design plans available. <b>MM</b> advised that a staff survey has been issued to school staff in terms of gathering feedback and to lead staff through the next development. The staff survey is to be shared with the wider project team.	<b>Note</b>  <b>MM</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>NE</b> noted that this is an exciting opportunity for the Fortrose community and school. <b>NE</b> mentioned that productive discussions have been held with officers, and staff have been briefed regarding the initial information available. <b>NE</b> acknowledged that having been Head Teacher at two previous schools, there is recognition that some challenges will arise, but the school team are confident in dealing with matters or concerns as they appear. <b>NE</b> mentioned that the complexity of this project in comparison to others however may be significant.	<b>Note</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	<b>RC</b> suggested w/c 23 <sup>rd</sup> March for the date of the next meeting. It was noted that the next parent Council meeting is to be held on the 24 <sup>th</sup> of March, so is to avoid this date. <b>MMM</b> queried whether a poll should be created so that stakeholders can vote for their preferred date; 23 <sup>rd</sup> or 25 <sup>th</sup> were suggested. <b>SG</b> to issue.	<b>Note</b>  <b>SG</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>AOCB</b>	
<b>7.1</b>	<i>Post meeting note:</i> <b>JP</b> queried whether a Padel Court can be constructed on the Fortrose site; This will be reviewed as part of the wider Sport Strategy.	<b>SH / SG</b>