
OBAN HIGH SCHOOL SITE - CONSULTATION

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates the Council on the outcome of the agreed public consultation for a preferred site for the proposed new Oban High School.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Council:
- 2.1.1 Note the results of the public consultation process; and
- 2.1.2 Agree on site 2A as the site for the proposed new Oban High School.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 27 June 2013 the Council agreed that the methodology for detailed appraisal of sites for delivering a new Oban High School and delegated the detailed arrangements for the public consultation to the Executive Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Education and Lifelong Learning (now termed Policy Lead).
- 3.2 As agreed by the Council, the sites that were subject to the detailed appraisal were:

	Site
1.	Glen Shellach – Land adjacent to Argyll College opposite the hospital
2.	Existing school and land behind Tweed Mill
3.	Dalintart and Glencruitten
4.	Land adjacent to Park Primary and Pennyfuir Cemetery

Through the appraisal process a fifth option was identified. This variant on sites 2 and 3, Option 2A, was reported to local members at the Oban Lorn and the Isles business day on 10 September 2013.

2 A	Amalgamate options 2 and 3 - Existing school and land behind Tweed Mill and Dalintart and Glencruitten
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- 3.3 The appraisal process of the five sites was conducted in a workshop scenario by officers from different parts of the Council representing, amongst others, Education, Facility Services, Planning, Economic Development, Roads and Legal Services. The officers assessed each option against the pre-agreed criteria and assigned a 'score' in relation to impact, affordability, deliverability and risk.

The sites ranked in the following order:

Rank	Site Option
1	2A - Amalgamate options 2 and 3 - Existing school and land behind Tweed Mill and Dalintart and Glencruitten.
2	1 - Glen Shellach – Land adjacent to Argyll College opposite the hospital
3	2 - Existing school and land behind Tweed Mill
4	3 - Dalintart and Glencruitten
5	4 - Land adjacent to Park Primary and Pennyfuir Cemetery

- 3.4 At its meeting on 31 October 2013, the Council considered a report that detailed the results of the appraisal process on the feasibility of the agreed shortlist of five sites for the new Oban High School. The Council agreed that Site 2A should be taken to public consultation as the preferred site, as it was deemed to be the most feasible and deliverable option.

The consultation exercise took place between 18 November and 8 December 2013 and included the following activities:

Milestone	Timing
Public Consultation period	Monday 18 November – Sunday 8 December (3 weeks)
Consultation commenced with launch event in Oban High School,	Monday 18 November, 7pm – 9pm
Open days at the Corran Halls	Thursday 21 November (10am – 8pm); Friday 22 November – (11.30am – 4pm); Saturday 23 November (10am – 1pm)
Focus group meeting, Corran Halls	Friday 22 November (10am - 11.15am)
Consultation period closed	Sunday 8 December
Collation of consultation results	From Monday 9 December
Report to Council	January 2014

3.5 The public consultation was advertised prior to commencement of the 3-week consultation period on the Council and Oban High School websites, and in the local press. During the consultation period information was made available in the following ways:

- School and Council websites;
- Through a “bag-drop” to all Oban High pupils, and to all pupils in the associated primary schools by Friday 15 November;
- Oban High School held an “open evening” for the public where they could see information on the proposed sites;
- Public viewing of the site information was available over two and a half open days hosted in the Corran Halls;
- A meeting was held with the focus group to discuss the site selection. The invited participants in the focus groups comprised local public and private organisations, and partners; Continued publication of the consultation process took place through websites, school newsletters (secondary and primary), text reminders, local press;
- Information on the sites was available throughout the 3-week consultation period on the Council website with a link from Oban High school website. Display booklets were available also to the public through Oban High and all associated primary schools, in Oban Library and at the Corran Halls;
- In Oban High School, school assemblies and tutorial sessions were used to highlight the site consultation process and to encourage pupils to complete and submit their own response to the site consultation;
- The Head Teacher of Oban High School along with other senior members of staff visited every associated primary school to discuss the site proposal with students and interested parents;
- In addition, separate information meetings were made available to all Oban High School staff, and for the members of the Oban High School Parent Council
- Consultation response forms were available through the Council’s website, Oban High School, associated Primary Schools, and at the Corran Halls and Oban Library.

3.6 A total of 480 returns were received. The majority of these were from primary and secondary pupils.

The consultation process asked the public for their comments on the preferred site. The results of the consultation were:

Type of response	Total No of returns	Positive returns	%	Negative returns	%	Neutral / indeterminate	%
Paper responses	465	413	88%	21	6%	31	6%
Website responses	11	2	18%	4	36%	5	45%
e-mail responses	4	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	480	419	87%	25	5%	36	8%

Some of the key themes arising from the consultation responses were:

- 1 The provision of education should not be disrupted during the construction and handover period.

Response - Ensuring the continuity of education provision during the construction and handover phase would be a key priority for the Council. The Council would work closely with HubNorth Scotland (Hub) in the formulation of the construction programme to ensure that any disruption to the operation of the school and provision of education is minimised. Hub are experienced in school projects of this nature and are aware of the priority to be given to the continuity of Education.

2. Concern that the pitches would not be available during the whole construction period.

Response - The Council would work closely with Hub in the formulation of the construction programme to ensure that any disruption to the availability of the pitches is minimised having regard to the requirement to provide a clear site for Hub to construct the new school. In addition an assessment of the pitch provision in Oban and the surrounding area would be undertaken to ensure that alternative pitches are identified and their use maximised as required. This would likely require to be done in partnership with Community and Culture and Development and Infrastructure.

3. Provision should be made in the new school facilities for a shinty pitch.

Response – it is envisaged that there will be provision in the new facility for a 2G and a 3G pitch. 3G pitches are a suitable surface for playing shinty. The surface is usually provided in dimensions suitable for football. While this allows for shinty play and training, the dimensions required for competitive shinty matches would be in excess of those for football. An assessment would be made during the design phase as to whether there would be enough space provision to accommodate a larger 3G pitch suitable for competitive shinty.

4. Some pupils expressed concern in regard to the distance between the new school and the proposed pitch provision at site 3.

Response – the likelihood is that the new school building will be constructed on the site of the current pitches. There is a direct line between that site and site 3 allowing a new path to be constructed connecting the two. The school have looked at this matter and do not consider that this is an insurmountable issue providing some level of storage / accommodation can be sited at the off-site pitches.

- 3.7 Council officers have recently met with representatives of the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) and Hub to progress matters in preparation of submission of the Council's New Project Request (NPR) to Hub. This is the document that will formalise the Council's engagement with Hub and commence the process to ascertain the design and cost of the proposed school facilities. This will follow on from the work carried out to date on regard to gathering site investigations and information to determine the deliverability of the site and the ongoing collaboration between the Council, SFT and Hub. It is intended that the NPR can be submitted to Hub in March 2014 and that matter will be reported to the Council as matters progress to that point.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The public consultation for the site of the proposed new Oban High School has been concluded. The results of the consultation are shown at paragraph 3.6 above. The Council is now in a position to decide on the preferred site for the proposed new Oban High School.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1	Policy	This report sets out the results of the public consultation process agreed by the Council
5.2	Financial	The final cost of the schools' project will only be ascertained once the Council has chosen sites and engaged in the design process with Hub
5.3	Legal	None at present.
5.4	HR	None at present.
5.5	Equalities	None at present.
5.6	Risk	The Council have followed a clear and transparent process for site selection and consultation to ensure community engagement. Any delay in deciding the site for the new Oban High School could have serious implications for the overall project programme.
5.7	Customer Service	Implementation of this process has enabled community engagement in a consultation process to assist in the selection of the site of the new Oban High School.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director of Community Services
9th January 2014

For further information please contact Cleland Sneddon - 01546 604112