

**BRIEFING NOTE: DUNOON AREA SHARED PRIMARY
AND PRE 5 CAMPUS CONSULTATION**

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This supplementary report outlines the consultation approach planned for the Dunoon area shared primary and pre 5 campus and should be read in conjunction with Executive agenda item 9 (19th April 2012) “Scottish Government – Funding of Schools for the Future Projects, Proposed New School Facilities for Dunoon and Campbeltown Governance and other Matters.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council was invited to submit a project proposal to the Scottish Government’s Building for the Future schools programme phase 1. This programme offered 50% match funding for primary school building projects and the council submitted a proposal to develop a shared campus to replace Dunoon PS, Kirn PS, St Muns PS and the Clyde Cottage pre 5 service. The submission received an indicative approval which allowed the initial project work to be developed in conjunction with Architecture Design Scotland (ADS) whose services were offered to the Council free of charge as part of their involvement in the programme.
- 2.2 An initial business case was developed and presented to Council in March 2011 which included a recommendation on the preferred site for the project should it progress. The preferred site agreed by Council would be the site of the existing Kirn PS. The Council agreed in its approved budget in February 2012 to make funding available to meet its contribution to the build cost of the project if it progresses to site.

3.0 CONSULTATION ACTIVITY TO DATE

3.1 Champions Group and Pupil Involvement

Following the approval of the outline business case, the Council established a “champions consultation group” comprising staff, pupils and parent council representatives from the 3 schools and pre 5 centre. The champions group engaged with ADS in workshop events to establish the priorities features for a newbuild replacement shared campus and further input was provided from a consultation with pupils where their views on what the features of a replacement

school should have were recorded. The champions group also undertook visits to newbuild schools in Argyll and Bute and in other authority areas which included very successful shared campus developments.

3.2 Master planning meeting

The work with the champions group was also followed up by a master planning meeting which brought a wide range of stakeholder groups into the development process including planning, roads, school transportation, sustainable transport and environmental protection. Additional site survey work was carried out to understand the site ground conditions. The master planning meeting provided a statutory agency perspective on the features that would need to be considered as part of the development proposal and allowed for some site layout plans to be prepared.

3.3 PAC Process

The Council's technical staff carried out a Pre Application Consultation (PAC) process between August and December 2011 which was designed to get feedback from stakeholders on issues of concern they may have to ensure that these issues were considered in preparing the outline planning application and the eventual full business case for council consideration. The PAC involved public stakeholder events at the Queens Hall on 15th September and 5th October and at Dunoon Grammar School on 20th September.

3.4 There were separate consultation meetings with 13 organisations as part of the PAC process ranging from sportscotland, sports clubs, the Cowal Highland Gathering, community councils and the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles. A copy of the PAC report including responses from the design team to the issues that were raised was published on the Council website along with details of all parties that were consulted. In addition to the meetings, additional information was held on the council website and there were opportunities for comments or queries to be raised either to a dedicated e mail account or using an online or hard copy comments form.

3.5 During the PAC process, a total of 47 feedback forms were returned along with 61 e mails and one letter. Comments received at the various meetings were also considered in preparing responses and updates to the issues raised. It is fair to say that many attendees or those who made contact, having misunderstood the early stage of the project were expecting a significantly detailed set of designs to comment on and even operational issues such as what time would lunch hours be. It was explained at the meetings and in newsletters issued to parents that the project was at a very early stage and still had a number of approval and consultation stages to go through before detailed designs would be ready.

3.6 Future Consultation and Approval Stages.

3.6.1 Planning Permission

The council will submit an outline planning application which seeks approval in principle to the development and land use. This stage will be reached when agreement is reached with sportscotland regarding pitch provision. This application will be subject to a statutory consultation. A more detailed full planning application would be submitted at a later stage of the project cycle once detailed designs are prepared and again this would be subject to the statutory planning process.

3.6.2 Arrangements for Kirm PS During Construction

Of particular interest to the parents of pupils at Kirm PS will be the proposals for continuing their children's education during the construction phase. Options are being assessed at this time and once a preferred option is available there will be a consultation with affected parents. It is expected that this would happen shortly after the summer recess in 2012.

3.6.3 Education Design Brief

Education staff have been working with the Council's Facility Services on a design brief for the new building and the requirements to support primary and pre 5 education. If the full business case is approved by council, the design team will commence work with Hubco on a detailed design which will give illustration to what the shared campus building will look like, what facilities will be provided internally and externally and ultimately the layout of the property. It would be expected that staff, pupils and parents would be involved in that design process to help them influence the school for their children's future. It would however be sensible to conduct a consultation at a relatively early point of this stage with parents to gauge their support for the project before the council spends the majority of the designs fees which have been allocated for the project. Conceptual drawings showing elevations and indicative layouts will be developed to support this consultation which is likely to take place in the autumn/ early winter of 2012.

3.6.4 Statutory Schools Consultation

The Council is also obliged to carry out a statutory consultation in terms of the shared campus proposals – the current legislation for this stage is the Schools (Consultation) Scotland Act 2010 which is under review by the Scottish Government. The Council may seek agreement from the Scottish Government to conduct the consultation in terms of the current legislation as it is unlikely that the new legislation would be enacted within the project timeframe.

3.7 Public Information

The Council has been aware of inaccurate information that has been circulated locally in the Dunoon area by opponents of the project. Some of these include:

- “The shared campus will be the biggest school in Scotland” – this is incorrect and there are a great many schools operating successfully with larger school rolls.
- “This will mean the end of the Cowal Highland Games” – there have been a number of meetings with the organisation to accommodate their requirements and concerns and this has already seen alterations to the proposals. The Council is a major funder of the games and recently agreed a 3 year extension to the grant it provides.
- The Council intends merging other schools in Cowal into this development – this is incorrect, the scope for the project includes only the three primary schools and pre 5 centre mentioned above.
- The proposals will lead to religious tensions through segregation – this is incorrect and the Council is working closely with the Diocese to ensure the shared campus operates as successfully as the shared campus in Oban and those thriving elsewhere in Scotland.

Through the consultation activity outlined above, all stakeholders will have a number of opportunities to contribute to the project, the consideration of whether to progress with the proposals and if so, ultimately to the design of the new £13.5m school and pre 5 facilities in the Dunoon area.

4. CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

- 4.1 The Council is committed to consulting at every stage of the project lifecycle to support decision making at the various approval stages of the project life cycle. The project is still in the very early stages of this work and the process outlined above gives the sequence of this work and where decision points are reached.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy:

5.2 Equal Opportunities: .

5.3 Personnel: None

5.4 Financial: Financial approvals are detailed in the council’s 3 year capital programmes and on item 9 on today’s Executive agenda.

5.5 Legal: All statutory consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant governing legislation.

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