

NEW OBAN HIGH SCHOOL – SITE SELECTION

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed approach and methodology for identifying the preferred site for the location of the new Oban High School (OHS). It identifies the approach to long listing of sites and the criteria for shortlisting and identifying the preferred site(s) to be taken forward for Council approval and public consultation. The report also sets out a proposed process for engaging with the public in respect of the preferred site(s).

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended the Area Committee agree that:

2.1.1 – The option appraisal methodology set out in paragraphs 3.2 to 3.6 of this report, and the attached Appendix 1, should be applied, by Council staff, to determine which of the long listed sites, identified in Appendix 1, should be taken forward for public consultation as the preferred sites;

2.1.2 – The Area Committee should undertake a public consultation, in respect of the preferred sites identified in 2.1.1, in accordance with the methodology set out in paragraphs 3.7 to 3.14 of this report; the detailed arrangements for the consultation to be delegated to the Executive Director of Community Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Education and Lifelong Learning; and

2.1.3 – The processes identified above should be undertaken in accordance with the timescale set out in Appendix 2 of this report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following an invitation from the Scottish Government a bid was made for funding in July 2012, under the third phase of the Scotlands Schools For The Future Programme. In September of 2012 the government announced its list of schools which is to be included in this 3rd phase. This included the replacement of Oban High. An Initial Business Case (IBC) for the development of the new OHS has been prepared and informed the budget submission that was agreed by the Council on 14 February 2013.

- 3.2 As part of the development of the new OHS proposal a process requires to be undertaken to identify the preferred site for the new school. In 2012 a process of site appraisal and public consultation was implemented successfully for the new Campbeltown Grammar School resulting in a selection of the site by the Council in January 2013. It is proposed that a similar process should be followed for the new OHS this is set out below. The intention would be to have close collaboration and liaison with Development and Infrastructure Services in regard to their proposed Master planning exercise in Oban South. This would ensure the Council captures synergies from both processes.

The consultation process will run alongside the development of the Education and Technical Brief which will be utilised to develop the design of the new school. This will be developed by Education and Facility Services with an introduction meeting being held with all school staff, proposed for 18 April 2013. This would involve an early closure for the school on that afternoon to allow a presentation to staff followed by a discussion and formation of a champions group to help develop the brief and promote the project. The champions group will be developed by Facility Services and the management of Oban High school to comprise representation from pupils, staff and parents.

Proposed Site Appraisal Methodology

- 3.3 As part of this process the Council is looking at possible sites in and around Oban for the proposed construction of the school. The intention is to pursue a site options appraisal process that will identify the optimum site having regard to a number of factors which include: Educational benefit; Community access; Affordability relating to the potential costs associated with each site and; Deliverability taking into account the complexity of delivering the project on any given site.
- 3.4 The detail of the option appraisal process is set out in Appendix 1 attached and would encompass two phases. These are broadly described as:
1. Long listing – This is the process of identifying the long list of potential sites that may be considered for the location of the new school. Facility Services staff would consult a number of stakeholders and it is intended that these stakeholders should include Local Members, the Council's Legal and Estates Services, Roads, Planning and Education Services. This process would generate a long list of potential sites that would be subjected to detailed option appraisal.
 2. Appraisal – It is intended that this process would be divided into two parts:

- a) Short listing – This would involve applying simple ‘pass/fail’ criteria to the sites to determine whether any sites are simply unfeasible for construction (see para 2.4 of Appendix 1) resulting in a short list of sites.
- b) Detailed Appraisal - the short list of options would be evaluated against criteria which should reflect the broad objectives of the project itself. The proposed approach is set out in para 2.7 of the attached Appendix 1.

- 3.5 It is intended that the Council officers would undertake the above option appraisal in a workshop format with contributions from the relevant Council stakeholders including Education, Finance, Legal, Planning, Community and Culture, Leisure and Transport. The result of the shortlisting process will be reported to Council for approval to take to public consultation.
- 3.6 Following the public consultation the options appraisal process identifying the preferred site for the new school would be expected to be completed and the results reported to the Council. A broad timescale for this process is set out in Appendix 2 of this report.

Proposed Public Consultation Methodology

- 3.7 It is expected that the Council will wish to seek as broad and deep a view on any preferred sites as possible. Oban High School management have expressed a clear wish for the school to lead the process of public consultation with assistance from other Council staff. In this way the School would be, and be seen to be, the owners of and drivers of the process.
- 3.8 The principal objectives in consulting on the preferred sites would be to:
1. Provide contextual information in relation to the sites and the considerations the Council has had in identifying these as preferred sites;
 2. Obtain the view of the public, against the contextual information provided, regarding which site is considered the most appropriate.

Contextual Information

- 3.9 To achieve the objectives above, the Council would intend to provide contextual information in relation to the long list of options, how this was reduced to the short list of preferred sites, the considerations in relation to each in respect of such matters as educational benefit, community access together with the likely affordability and deliverability position.
- 3.10 It will be made clear to the public that the outcome of the consultation will be a material consideration which will inform the debate on the final selection of the

site to be taken by the Council. The clear message would be a positive one that the Council is proposing to provide a new OHS. The choice of the site is one where the Council wants to obtain the optimal site that will bring the most benefit to Oban, having regard to a range of determining factors. While the Council requires to balance considerations such as cost and affordability it wishes the public to contribute their view to help inform the Council's thinking. This would allow the public to form a reasoned opinion in relation to the preference for any site.

Proposed Process

3.11 Information required in support of the consultation:

Identification of initial long list of potential sites, including location maps to be utilised from the site selection process.

Description and explanation of site options appraisal undertaken to move from long list to short list of sites based on 'pass/fail' criteria. Information to be provided on each site for the public to understand the process used to arrive at short list of sites.

3.12 Short listed sites:

Public asked for their views based on the information above for the optimum site. The public view would, as with the other factors listed, be one of the factors taken into account when considering the optimum site.

Public Consultation Period

3.13 A number of factors will determine the timing of the consultation period.

- Overall project timescale
- Approval gained to consult (Council)
- Time to produce information required for displays, website creation, response forms
- Availability of facilities for open events
- School holidays. Consultation should not fall during the holiday period and/or not to start or end within the holiday period.
- Time to collate and analyse responses
- Date to report back to Project Board and Council.

Key features:

3.14 Oban High School to host initial meeting. An evening event is proposed.

This meeting to focus on:

- The good news story for Oban
 - Background to funding, timescale of new school development
 - Site selection process
 - Consultation process
- 3.15 This meeting would provide also the first opportunity for the public to view the detailed site information as listed above. Thereafter, during a 3 week consultation period, the same site information is available in the following ways:
- School and Council websites
 - In addition, Public viewing of the site information would be available over two and a half open days hosted by the school (Champions Group) but not held within the school in order to avoid disruption to school activities. The detailed site information would be available for viewing within a convenient Town Centre location
 - At the same time continued publication of the consultation process would take place through websites, school newsletters (secondary and primary), text reminders, Twitter, local press and radio, displays in OHS and local primary schools
 - During the suggested 3 week period opportunity will also be taken to meet with focus groups to discuss the site selection. The focus groups would encompass the participants including ACHA, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, Argyll and the Isles Enterprise, Argyll College, CHORD, and private sector businesses, in addition to staff from roads, planning, and education.

Consultation Responses

- 3.16 Consultation responses to be made through links on school/council websites, a dedicated e-mail to OHS, hard copies received by post to the High School or handed into local schools (primary and secondary).
- 3.17 It is proposed that the consultation process may be assisted by an independent third party, such as Architecture and Design Scotland, who could assist in mediating focus groups and the open days.
- 3.18 It is considered that the consultation process could run for a period of three weeks, in accordance with the dates set out in Appendix 2, and with the results of the consultation process being collated and reported as soon as possible thereafter. A proposed timescale for the entire process is set out in Appendix 2 to this report.
- 3.19 At the end of the consultation period the School, assisted by the Project Team, would collate the results of the consultation responses in relation to the preferred options. This would then be reported in the first instance to the

Project Board and then to the Council in the context of the considerations in relation to impact, affordability, deliverability and risk. This would allow the Council to determine which would be the preferred site for the new school.

Relationship to other projects

- 3.20 The Scottish Futures Trust (SFT), on behalf of the Scottish Government, have previously expressed a preference for the new Oban High School to be delivered in conjunction with the improved Campbeltown Grammar, Dunoon, Kirn and St Muns Primaries in Dunoon as a single project. The possibilities for the future improvement of the Dunoon schools are currently being reviewed, as previously reported in June 2012, and the results will be reported to the Council.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 In September 2012, the Scottish Government included the Council's proposal for a new Oban High School in its third phase of the Scottish Schools for the Future programme. This means that the Council has now been provisionally allocated support for a new schools in Campbeltown and Dunoon, as well as Oban, as part of this programme. A preferred site has been chosen for the new Campbeltown Grammar School and a process is in place to identify a site(s) for the improved Dunoon schools. The implementation of the process set out in this report will provide a transparent and robust methodology for selecting a preferred site for the new Oban High School.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------|---|
| 5.1 | Policy: | Agreement of this report would be in line with capital programme agreed by the Council on 14 February 2013. |
| 5.2 | Financial: | It is anticipated these measures can be implemented within existing departmental budgets. |
| 5.3 | Legal: | None |
| 5.4 | HR: | None |
| 5.5 | Equalities: | None |
| 5.6 | Risk: | If the Council do not have a clear and transparent process for site selection and consultation it is less likely that effective engagement will happen. |
| 5.7 | Customer Service: | Implementation of these measures will enable the community engagement in the selection of the site of the new Oban High School. |

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director of Customer Services

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director of Community Services

2013

APPENDIX 1

Option Appraisal Brief Oban High School Development Site Selection

1. Introduction

1.1 As part of the development of the new Oban High School the selection of the site will be of considerable importance in delivering the project objectives. The practice followed in other Council reviews has been to undertake an appraisal of the various options available in order to determine the optimum 'preferred' option.

1.2 The option appraisal process would be carried out in two phases, firstly to identify a list of potential sites for the construction of the new school and, secondly, to assess each of the potential sites against agreed criteria.

2. Appraisal Process

Stage 1 Long listing

2.1 This is the process of identifying the long list of potential sites that may be considered for the location of the new school. Facility Services staff would consult a number of stakeholders and it is intended that these stakeholders should include Local Members, the Council's Legal and Estates Services, Roads, Planning and Education Services. This process would generate a long list of potential sites that would be subjected to detailed option appraisal.

2.2 This list will be issued to internal Council stakeholders for initial comment and consideration prior to commencement of the formal appraisal process. The comments received will be incorporated into the overall appraisal report.

Stage 2a - Shortlisting

2.3 Before undertaking a detailed appraisal of the options a sifting process will be undertaken to determine the sites where it is considered that it would be impossible or unfeasible to construct the new High school within the existing scope of the project.

2.4 The criteria below will be assessed by the design team on a site by site basis:

- Is there any site specific factor that would make it impossible or unfeasible for development?
- Is the site of a sufficient size to accommodate the required facilities?
- Would existing, operational Council buildings, which are currently located on the site, require to be replaced elsewhere if the High school is located at the site?

2.5 By applying the above provisions a short list of sites will be identified and these will be taken to detailed appraisal as described below.

Stage 2b - Detailed Option Appraisal

2.6 In order to generate the preferred options the short list of options requires to be assessed or evaluated against criteria which should reflect the broad objectives of the project itself. The criteria selected may also not be of equal importance to the Council in its determination. As such, suggested 'weightings' have been assigned to the criteria in order to reflect their relative importance to the Council.

2.7 The proposed assessment criteria are:

- **Impact** – The capacity of the site to maximise the potential educational and community benefit of the development. This would be considered the most significant criterion for determining the appropriate site for construction. Factors to consider may include:
 1. *Educational Benefit* – This will be a narrative consideration by the Education Service of the potential for the site to contribute to Educational aims and objectives and would consider, amongst other things;
 - a. Flexibility / size of the usable space on the site
 - b. proximity to other local educational resources (eg. Libraries, sports facilities, Further Education),
 - c. scope for accommodating changing educational needs in future
 - d. Safer routes to school
 2. *Community Access* –
 - a. Accessibility of site to the community,
 - b. Distance from population centres.
 3. *Planning Policy* – This would determine how consistent the site is with current planning / development policy in the area.

- **Affordability** – This would assess the scale of the potential costs associated with each site beyond those of the basic construction. Factors to consider may include:
 1. Land remediation – particularly dealing with possible contamination and poor ground conditions;
 2. Land acquisition costs
 3. Demolition of existing buildings;
 4. Flood risk alleviation;
 5. Utility diversions;
 6. School transport costs; and
 7. Potential reduction in costs from proximity to existing facilities

- **Deliverability** – This takes account of the complexity of delivering the project on a given site and the likelihood that the building project can be successfully implemented in a timely manner on the site. Considerations may include:
 1. Ground contamination;
 2. Flood risk;
 3. Utilities;
 4. Planning considerations;
 5. Health and safety considerations (eg. Gas safety zone);
 6. Site ownership and other legal considerations;
 7. Roads / transport / safer routes to school implications.

- **Risk** – An assessment of the factors that might affect risk to deliverability of the project and also to impact and affordability. Assessment to be undertaken when Impact, Affordability and Deliverability have been reviewed.

2.9 A suggested scoring system, outlined below, would score the options out of 20 for each criterion with a score of 20 being the highest. The agreed weighting, shown below, would then be applied to arrive at the final score for the option.

Option X				
Criteria	Max Score	Score	Weighting	Weighted Score
Impact:				
1. Education Benefit	9		45%	
2. Community Access	6			
3. Planning Policy	5			
Impact Total	20			
Affordability:				
1. Land Remediation	4		25%	
2. Site acquisition costs	3			
3. Demolition of existing buildings	4			
4. Flood risk alleviation	4			
5. Utility diversion / connection	2			
6. School transport costs	2			
7. Savings from proximity to existing facilities	1			
Affordability Total	20			
Deliverability:			15%	

Option X				
Criteria	Max Score	Score	Weighting	Weighted Score
1. Ground contamination	4			
2. Flood Risk	3			
3. Utilities	2			
4. Planning considerations	4			
5. HSE Considerations	2			
6. Site ownership	3			
7. Roads / Transport considerations	2			
Deliverability Total	20			
Risk:				
1. Impact	7		15%	
2. Affordability	7			
3. Deliverability	6			
Risk Total	20			
Total	80		100%	

2.10 It is intended that the Council officers would undertake the above option appraisal in a workshop format with contributions from the relevant Council stakeholders including Education, Finance, Legal, Planning, Community and Culture, Leisure and Transport. The results of this process would be to identify the preferred sites that could be taken forward for public consultation.

2.11 It is expected that this option appraisal process will produce the short list of sites that will form the basis on which the public will be asked to submit their views on which site is the optimum site for the new school.

APPENDIX 2

Proposed Timescale

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Agreement of process by Area Committee	Community Services / SPT	10 April 2013
Reported to Council	Community Services / SPT	25 April 2013
Long listing process – Local members, internal council stakeholders, community councils, LACPG members	Facility Services / Education	11 April 2013 – 10 May 2013
Site commentary by internal council stakeholders complete	Facility Services / Education / Planning / Legal / Roads / Community Education / SPT	24 May 2013
Shortlisting process complete	Facility Services / SPT / Education / Internal Council Stakeholders	31 May 2013
Site technical investigations complete	Facility Services	23 August 2013
Ranked shortlist complete (shortlisting workshop)	SPT / Facility Services / Education / Internal Council Stakeholders	6 September 2013

Public Consultation commences	Education / Facility Services / Communications	23 September 2013
Open Days x 2.5	Education / Facility Services	26,27,28 September 2013
Focus group meeting	Education / Facility Services	Week beginning 7 October 2013
Public Consultation concludes	Education / Facility Services / Communications	11 October 2013
Collation of consultation results complete	Education / Facility Services / SPT	18 October 2013
Report to Council with recommended preferred site	Education / Facility Services / SPT	31 October 2013