

**The Highland Council**  
**Lochaber Area Committee**  
**27 February 2014**

Agenda Item	<b>7</b>
Report No	<b>LA 4/14</b>

**Capital Investment in Schools in the Lochaber Area**

**Report by Director of Education, Culture & Sport**

**Summary**

This report provides an overview of the current and proposed investment in schools and community facilities in the area. The report also provides details of some of the potential benefits to the local economy in terms of employment and apprenticeships.

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Education Culture & Sport (ECS) Service is carrying out a strategic review of the school estate across the Highland Council area over a 10 year period. This review, known as the Sustainable School Estate Review (SSER), commenced in the Fort William area. As a result, the following changes are planned in the future education provision in the area:
- Replacing the existing Fort William Primary School and Upper Achintore Primary School buildings with a new combined Primary School at Lundavra Road;
  - Replacing the existing Fort William RC Primary School, Lochside Primary School and Caol Primary School with a new joint-campus school in Caol (this campus also includes a replacement for the existing Caol Community Centre building)
- 1.2 In addition, as a result of the Highland Council's on-going commitment towards Gaelic Medium education a new standalone Gaelic School will be built in Caol to serve the greater Fort William area.
- 1.3 The Lochaber 21 project will result in the complete redevelopment of the existing Lochaber High School campus on a phased basis. Phases 3 and 4 are currently being progressed. In addition, the existing synthetic pitch at the school will be replaced by a 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation surface as part of this project. This will provide a state of the art synthetic surface which will cater for a wide range of outdoor sports.
- 1.4 Finally, the increasing pupil roll at Spean Bridge Primary School has necessitated increasing the physical capacity at the school. As a result, modular classroom accommodation will be provided during the course of academic year 2014/15.

1.5 Details of the total project costs, primary school capacities, indicative start/completion dates and contractors (where known) are shown at **Appendix 1**.

## **2.0 ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

2.1 The four projects in Fort William each have Employment and Life Skill Plans that identify 14 areas and targets that need to be met by the contractors, including work placements and apprentices. These are summarised in **Appendix 2**.

2.2 In relation to the actual employment levels relating to the projects outlined in Appendix it is difficult to be precise at this early stage. However, as an indication of the potential employment figures it is estimated that there will be on average between 40 and 50 employees on site each day during the Lochaber High School redevelopment project. If this employment level is used as a benchmark and applied to the other school projects which will commence this calendar year it is estimated that a daily average of between 150 and 200 employees could be employed on school construction projects between Spring 2014 and late 2015.

2.3 If required a more detailed economic impact assessment could be carried out at the end of the school building projects to assess the overall benefit to the Lochaber economy.

2.4 The creation of modern purpose-built educational facilities will have a positive impact on learning and teaching in the area as similar experiences elsewhere provide evidence that there is a demonstrable correlation between the quality of the learning environment and the “feel good factor” amongst pupils and staff. For this reason it would be reasonable to assume that attainment and achievement, allied to strong leadership in each establishment, will lead to improvement.

## **3.0 IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 **Resource implications** – the estimated investment school and community provision in the Lochaber during the period between May 2013 and February 2016 is estimated to be £51.5M, although the precise investment figure will not be known until each of the projects has been completed. This investment is within the approved ECS Capital budget. In relation to the on-going operating costs, the availability of energy efficient modern buildings will result in lower operating costs on a sustainable basis.

3.2 **Legal implications** – all projects are fully compliant with current statutory requirements.

3.3 **Equality implications** – building projects provide the appropriate environment and facilities for individuals with specific needs where appropriate.

3.4 **Climate change implications** – new buildings comply fully with current

Highland Council policy requirements

- 3.5 **Risks** – risk management is undertaken in accordance with recognised good project management practice.

**Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to note and welcome the level of investment in schools and community facilities in the Lochaber area along with the considerable education and skills benefits arising from the schools projects.

Signature: Hugh Fraser

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014

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## APPENDIX 1

School Investment In Lochaber	Total Estimated Project Cost	Primary Classrooms	Start Date	Handover Date	Contractor
New Primary School at Lundavra Road	£35,000,000	11 Classrooms	Mar-14	Jun-15	Graham Construction
New Joint-Campus Primary School in Caol		Caol - 8 Classrooms; RC - 6 Classrooms	tbc	tbc	tbc
New Gaelic School		4 Classrooms Initially	Mar-14	Jun-15	Robertson Ltd
Redevelopment of Lochaber High School - Phases 3 and 4	£16,000,000	N/A	May-13	Apr-15 (Phase 3 only)	Robertson Ltd
Extension to Spean Bridge Primary School	£500,000	Increased to 5 Classrooms and GP Room	tbc	tbc	tbc
<b>Total</b>	<b>£51,500,000</b>				

## Appendix 2 - Employment and Skills Plans

	<b>Employment and Skills Areas</b>	<b>Lundavra</b>	<b>Caol</b>	<b>Gaelic</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	Work Placement (16 plus years) - persons	8	11	8	8	35
2	Work Placement (14-16 years) - persons	3	4	3	1	11
3	Curriculum Support Activities - individual engagement	5	6	5	5	21
4	Graduates - persons	0	1	0	0	1
5	Apprentice Starts - persons	3	5	3	3	14
6	Existing Apprentices - persons	3	4	3	3	13
7	Apprentice Completions - persons	2	3	2	2	9
8	Jobs Created on Construction Projects - number	2	4	2	2	10
9	S/NVQ Starts for Subcontractors - persons	3	6	3	3	15
10	S/NVQ Completions for Subcontractors - number	3	5	3	3	14
11	Training Plans for Subcontractors - number	4	4	4	4	16
12	Supervisor Training for Subcontractors - persons	4	5	4	4	17
13	Leadership and Management Training for Subcontractors - persons	2	3	2	2	9
14	Advanced Health and Safety Training for Subcontractors - persons	4	4	4	4	16