

Agenda Item	12.
Report No	EDU/13/22

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Education Committee

Date: 15 September 2022

Report Title: Review of the statutory consultation exercise on the Relocation of St. Clement's School, Dingwall

Report By: Executive Chief Officer, Education and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following conclusion of the statutory consultation process, this report and accompanying information sets out a recommendation to relocate St. Clement's School to a new site off Dochcarty Brae, Dingwall, to permit the construction of a new school that will address accommodation problems at the current building and location.
- 1.2 The Highland Council has had a longstanding commitment to replace St. Clement's School. The school provides for some of the most vulnerable children in Highland, some with life-limiting conditions, and the current school accommodation is unsatisfactory. A new school building will provide an opportunity to place the needs of every child at the centre of the school's design. It would offer good quality accommodation that provides a safe, healthy and visually stimulating environment, flexible teaching spaces, better facilities for visiting specialists, and a healthier, less stressful environment. The Council has made budget provision for a new school in its capital programme.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. consider the proposal set out within the Consultation Report (Appendix 1) and associated appendices;
 - ii. consider the representations made at the public meeting (Appendix 2); and the report from Education Scotland (Appendix 4); and
 - iii. agree to recommend to the Council that St. Clement's School be re-located to the site off Dochcarty Brae to allow the construction of a new school building.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – Funding of £13million has been identified for the project within the Council's capital plan.
- 3.2 Legal - The statutory consultation has been taken forward as per the requirements of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – The school provides education for children with Additional Support Needs, and the Proposal will therefore have a positive impact on equality issues. There are no direct impacts on poverty or rurality factors.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – The new school will be constructed to modern building standards, more efficient than those of the existing school accommodation. Although the construction work will lead to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, the new school will be expected to lead to a lower carbon output in the longer-term.
- 3.5 Risk – i. The implementation of the proposal can only take place subject to the decision on this Statutory Consultation.
ii. The terms of the purchase of the new site have continued and will be reported for approval at a future meeting of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, subject to the decision of the Education Committee on the outcome of this consultation.
- 3.6 Gaelic – None.

4. Overview

- 4.1 **Appendix 1** is the proposal for decision. The original proposal that was issued for consultation, and relevant documents for consideration by the Committee, are all also circulated as appendices to this Paper. They provide details of all consultation comments received, the note of the public meeting, the report from Education Scotland, and the Council's response to comments arising from the consultation.
- 4.2 There is general agreement that the accommodation at St. Clement's does not adequately support the delivery of education for some of our most vulnerable pupils, who are unable to attend a mainstream school. The current school accommodation comprises the original main building, a modular annexe building that was installed in 2015 and an older modular unit. Overall the accommodation is currently rated "C – (Poor)" for both Condition and Suitability, mainly due to the state of the main building, having three separate buildings on the campus, and the limitations of some of the facilities, such as external areas. In 2014, following inspection, HMIe noted: "The buildings do not provide a satisfactory range or quality of facilities. Corridors and doors are narrow and challenge pupils with limited mobility. One classroom can only be accessed through the staffroom and there is a lack of space and specialist facilities." Whilst there have been some improvement works since, the current school is not suitable in its condition or layout as a special needs school.
- 4.3 Prior to the statutory consultation, the Council undertook extensive informal discussions with local elected members, with the Head Teacher of St. Clement's and with members of the parent body. Discussions with local elected members began in February 2019 and with parents in July 2019, and have continued since. The

identification of suitable site options and the provision of funding, along with the length of the informal dialogue that took place, were key factors in the time taken to arrive at the position set out in the Proposal Paper issued for statutory consultation. The informal discussions suggested that the parent body were overwhelmingly in favour of a new building for St. Clement's School. Once the statutory consultation began, the proposal was widely circulated to parents, pupils and others. There were no written responses received during the formal consultation period. A list of those who attended the public meeting can be found at the head of the note of the meeting at Appendix 2. The views of the pupils can be found at Appendices 3 and 3i.

- 4.4 In their report, Education Scotland agreed that there are considerable educational benefits in the proposal to replace and relocate St Clement's School. They noted that all stakeholders that HM Inspectors met supported the proposal.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The legislation requires that any proposal for decision must be published at least 3 weeks in advance of the meeting at which any decision may be made, to allow time for further representations. The proposal was published on 15 August 2022. As of the time of writing, one further representation had been received and is attached as Appendix 3ii. It is from the St. Clement's School Parent Council and expresses support for the Proposal. Any other further representations that are received will be tabled at the meeting for the attention of Members.
- 5.2 As this report relates to a statutory consultation, any decision taken by this Committee will be considered by the full Highland Council before being implemented.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer – Education and Learning

Date: 1st August 2022

Author: Ian Jackson, Education Officer

Appendices: Appendix 1: Report reviewing the Consultation Exercise
Appendix 2: Note of Public Meeting
Appendix 3 List of Facilities suggested by Pupils - March 2022
Appendix 3i: Note of a Discussion at the St. Clement's Pupil
Council 25 March 2022
Appendix 3ii: Response from St Clement's School Parent Council
Appendix 4: Report from Education Scotland
Appendix A: Original Proposal Paper issued for Consultation
Appendix B: St. Clement's School - approximate boundary of site
Appendix C: Site Location in relation to Dingwall



HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND LEARNING SERVICE

REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE ST. CLEMENT'S SCHOOL, DINGWALL, TO ALLOW THE CREATION OF NEW ACCOMMODATION

This report has been prepared following a review of the proposal:

- To relocate St Clement's School, Dingwall, to a new site located off Dochcarty Brae, Dingwall, to allow the creation of new school accommodation

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period.
- Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting held online on 10 March 2022.
- The report from Education Scotland.

This document has been issued by the Highland Council under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

After reviewing the consultation exercise, the Council considers that the Proposal should be implemented. The reasons are explained in detail below.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 Highland Council's Education Committee, at its meeting on 24 February 2022, agreed that a statutory consultation be undertaken on the proposal to relocate St. Clement's School in Dingwall, to allow for the construction of new school accommodation.
- 1.2 **Appendix A** is the original consultative paper and provides full details of the above proposal. **Appendices B - C** are the appendices to the original proposal.
- 1.3 It is recognised that the current. St. Clement's School has poor quality accommodation. Relocating the school will permit the construction of a replacement school with greatly improved facilities.

2.0 Consultation process

- 2.1 The formal consultation period ran from Wednesday 2 March 2022 to Friday 29 April 2022. Written representations on the proposal were sought from interested parties as defined within the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

2.2 In accordance with statutory requirements, the following were consulted:

- (i) Parents of pupils attending St. Clement's School; including parents of pre-school pupils.
- (ii) The Parent Council of St. Clement's School.
- (iii) All Community Councils for the Highland Council wards of Dingwall and Seaforth; Black Isle; and Cromarty Firth; as well as Strathpeffer Community Council
- (iv) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.
- (v) Staff of St. Clement's School.
- (vi) Trade Union representatives.

2.3 The proposal document was also advertised on the Highland Council website.

2.4 A public meeting was held online on 10 March 2022. The meeting was advertised in advance on the Highland Council website, Twitter Account and Facebook page, and in the *Ross-shire Journal*. The minute of the meeting is at **Appendix 2**.

3.0 Review of proposals following the consultation period

3.1 Following receipt of written representations received by Highland Council and consideration of oral representations made at the public meeting, officials reviewed the proposals.

3.2 The feedback from the consultation was considered by a range of Council officials. This ensured that the Council met the requirements of the 2010 Act.

3.3 The outcome of this review process is reflected in the response, conclusion and recommendations outlined below.

4.0 Responses received

4.1 No written responses were received to the formal consultation, although the Parent Council of St. Clement's School were heavily involved in discussions with the Council prior to the formal consultation, and have been enthusiastic about the prospect of a new school for St. Clement's.

4.2 The views of the pupils at St. Clement's School were sought and are summarised at Appendices 3 and 3i. The pupil suggestions relate to facilities and other resources to be provided to the new school.

5.0 Overview of Issues raised during the consultation period

5.1 Excluding Council officers and HMIE, the public meeting was attended by a total of 21 people, including 11 parents and other members of the local community, 7 members of the school staff, and 3 elected members of Highland Council (see **Appendix 2**). A total of 15 questions are recorded in the note along with the associated answers.

- 5.2 The main issues raised at the public meeting concerned the facilities to be included in the new school building, and its location at the edge of Dingwall. Parents are concerned to ensure their children will still have access to the community facilities in the town centre. These points were all addressed during the public meeting, with the responses noted at Appendix 2.
- 5.3 The current statutory consultation is being undertaken to establish the principle that a new school should be provided at the site off Dochcarty Brae. The detailed facilities and resources to be provided will be discussed at the regular stakeholder meetings which will continue after the conclusion of the current statutory consultation.

6.0 Summary of the issues raised by Education Scotland

- 6.1 In line with legislative requirements, Education Scotland was invited to submit comments on the Council's proposals. A copy of the report from Education Scotland is appended – **Appendix 4**.
- 6.2 In their report, Education Scotland recognise that the proposed new building could bring considerable educational benefits for all current and future children and young people at St Clement's School. They agree that the new building should be of a quality that supports and improves outcomes for learners placed at the school. The current poor quality accommodation at St Clement's can pose issues for the dignity of children and young people, as well as accessibility issues.
- 6.3 HM Inspectors believe there are considerable educational benefits in the proposal to replace and relocate St Clement's School. All stakeholders that HM Inspectors met support the proposal. A purpose-built school would provide significantly improved facilities to support learners with complex additional support needs. Good access to the outdoors and improved teaching spaces could improve the learning experiences for all the learners who attend St Clement's.
- 6.4 HM Inspectors agree with the Council's desire to place the needs of every child and young person at the centre of the design of the new school. They advise that this should include consideration of facilities to support the development of lifeskills. They further advise that it will be important to ensure that the capacity and design of the new school meets possible future needs of learners. Points for further consideration are set out below.
- 6.5 HMIE suggest that, should the proposal go forward, the Council should continue to work with stakeholders to address concerns about the location of the new school on the edge of town. Stakeholders would welcome more detail about how children and young people will be able to access community facilities in Dingwall. Well-considered transition planning, involving all stakeholders, will be an important consideration in taking the proposal forward.

6.6 The Council agrees with the comments set out at 6.5 above, and commits to discussing these issues in future Stakeholder meetings.

7.0 Effects on the Community

7.1 The proposal is not expected to have any negative impact on the wider local community. It will retain the traditional link between St. Clement's School and the town of Dingwall, and the consultation exercise suggests there is wide community support for retaining that link.

8.0 Alleged omissions or inaccuracies

8.1 There were no alleged omissions or inaccuracies.

9.0 Review of Consultation Exercise

9.1 No opposition has been expressed to the proposal to build a new school to replace the current St. Clement's building. There appears to be widespread support in principle for a new school. Any concerns expressed were on points of detail concerning the design and resourcing of the new school building, and will be discussed during the informal consultation with stakeholders, that will continue following the conclusion of this exercise.

10.0 Legal issues

10.1 Throughout this statutory consultation Highland Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

10.2 As provided for in section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, it is the duty of the Council to ensure adequate and efficient provision of school education within Highland, such education to be directed towards the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of children or young persons to their fullest potential (Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000). As with all Council duties, the Council also has a duty to secure best value, and in securing best value the Council is required to maintain an appropriate balance between, inter alia, the quality of its performance of its functions and the cost to the authority of that performance (Local Government in Scotland Act 2002, section 1). Each of the above, and all other legislative requirements, have been taken into account in the preparation of this Report.

11.0 Equality Impact Assessment

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was issued with the proposal paper and can be found at Section 9 to the Proposal Paper. The consultation exercise did not identify any additional equality issues.

12.0 Conclusion

- 12.1 The consultation process has complied fully with legislative requirements and has provided an opportunity for all parties to identify key issues of concern. These issues have been fully considered and the Council's response detailed in sections 5 and 6 above. For the reasons set out above, Highland Council considers that implementation of the proposal is appropriate.
- 12.2 Education Scotland staff visited St. Clement's School, to speak to parents, pupils and staff. They also had the opportunity to review in detail the proposal document and all written responses.
- 12.3 The Executive Chief Officer (Education), on reviewing all of the submissions, the note of the meeting, and the Education Scotland report; concludes that the proposal offers educational benefits and that implementation of the Proposal in full is the most appropriate response to the reason for formulating the Proposal. The reasons for this conclusion are set out at Sections 5 and 6 above.

13.0 Recommendation

- 13.1 It is therefore recommended that Highland Council approves the proposal to relocate St. Clement's School to a new build school off Dochcarty Brae.

Nicky Grant
Executive Chief Officer (Education)
15 August 2022

CONSULTATION MEETING – RELOCATION OF ST. CLEMENT’S SCHOOL

ONLINE – 6.30PM, 10 MARCH 2022

MINUTES OF MEETING

Panel

Cllr. Margaret Paterson – Chairperson
Derek Martin, Area Education Manager
Brian Porter, Head of Resources
Ian Jackson, Education Officer, Resources
Robert Campbell, Estates Strategy Manager
Cllr. Graham MacKenzie
Cllr. Angela Maclean

Also Attending

Sarah Gitsham – Estates Officer
Ruth Malone – HT
Gordon Stewart, Education Adviser
Fiona Sangster – Estates Co-ordinator
Margaret Berry – Teacher, St. Clement’s
Matthew Brown – Teacher, St. Clement’s
Janet Cross – PSA, St. Clement’s
Karen Howie – PSA, St. Clement’s
Jane Drummond – PSA, St. Clement’s
Karen Campbell – PSA, St. Clement’s
Liz Angus - HMIE

Avril Robertson – Parent
Nadia Gillespie - Parent
Kirsten Kirkwood – Parent
Colin Pettinger – Parent
Donald MacLean – Parent
Caleb MacLean – Pupil
Karen Ross – Parent
Karolina Gość – Parent
Tracey McBain - Parent
Emma Pearce - Parent
IB - ?

Chair Cllr Margaret Paterson opened the meeting.

For those who haven't participated in a Teams meeting, could I ask that you keep your microphone muted if you aren't actually speaking, as that reduces feedback. You should see a microphone symbol on the bar on the top of your screen, which you can toggle on and off. Secondly, Teams has a system under which anyone who wants to ask a question or make a point should "raise their hand" to attract the Chair's attention. You do this by clicking on the hand symbol on the bar at the top of your screen. To keep the meeting manageable, could I ask that anyone who wants to ask a question alerts me by clicking on the "raise your hand" symbol, and by clicking it off once you have finished speaking.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the proposal to relocate St. Clement's School, as set out in the recommendation to the proposal Paper.

We have a number of Council officials present tonight, and I'll just mention those that we expect to do most of the talking. We have Brian Porter, Head of Resources, Derek Martin, Area Education Manager, Robert Campbell, Estates Strategy Manager, and Ian Jackson, Education Officer.

Ian Jackson will now describe the consultation process and the detailed reasons for issuing the Proposal.

Ian Jackson - As the Chair has indicated, the Council is proposing to relocate St. Clement's School, and the relocation of a school is subject to a statutory consultation process, of which this meeting is part. We are currently in the initial phase of that consultation, which is due to end on Friday 29 April, and I would urge anyone who wants to submit views in writing to do so by that date. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to gather views, and we will try to answer any questions that are raised.

To clarify, we are asking for people's views as to whether St. Clement's should be relocated to the proposed site off Dochcarty Brae, and we welcome expressions of opinion on that, whether for or against.

My colleague Derek Martin will shortly set out the educational basis for the Council's proposal to relocate St. Clement's, but before that I will briefly describe the rest of the consultation process.

The formal process has a number of stages. Once the public consultation ends on 29 April, Education Scotland becomes involved. They will look at the Proposal Paper, the note of the meeting tonight, and any written representations, and will form their own view on the educational benefits of the proposal. Education Scotland will contact St. Clement's, and they will be keen to hear from any parents who wish to make their views known. The Council has to take account of Education Scotland's view on the educational benefits and respond to any points raised by their report, as well as any representations received as a result of the consultation process. Following Education Scotland's input, the Council will prepare a Report reviewing the

consultation exercise and present it to the Council's Education Committee. The Review Report will be published at least 3 weeks before it is submitted to Committee, and anyone who responded in writing to the initial consultation will be invited to make "further representations" during those 3 weeks. Any further representations that are made are submitted to the members of the Committee, either in advance or tabled on the day, so that members are fully informed of any issues that may have arisen. Members will also see copies of the original responses and the note of this meeting.

In summary, I would say that the consultation process provides multiple opportunities for views to be expressed to the Council before any final decision is made.

The Chair then invited Derek Martin to describe the educational benefits of the proposal.

Derek Martin – In the Inspection Report into St. Clement's in 2014, Her Majesty's Inspectors were clear that the buildings do not provide the quality or range of facilities appropriate to the pupils. Corridors and doors are narrow and provide obstacles to children with limited mobility, and one classroom can only be accessed through the staffroom. There is a lack of space and lack of specialist facilities. Despite the best efforts of the staff, pupils and community, it's clear that the building is not fit for purpose in the modern era. In looking to build a new school at Dochcarty Brae, we can look forward to a much better educational experience for our children. The design of a new school, most of all a special school, will take account of the wide variety of needs that the children have. By providing a suitable building as well as great staff, we have an opportunity to provide improved outcomes for the young people. The needs of every child at St. Clement's must be placed at the centre of everything the Council does. The proposal offers the opportunity to provide more flexible teaching spaces, better facilities for visiting specialists and a healthier, less stressful environment. Pupils will have the chance to access a much wider range of the core and wider curriculum.

The new school building would be environmentally efficient, allowing the children to enjoy a more comfortable, naturally lit and well-ventilated environment. Aspects of the design will include purpose-built classrooms, a suitable place for the children to have PE, dedicated lunch facilities, and the ability to use sensory and soft play. We should not forget the opportunity to have improved staff facilities, and the landscaping around the school will also be a better environment.

The location, whilst outside the town centre, is only a few minutes away, and that is good as it continues the strong links St. Clement's has with its local community and its local businesses. I believe that relocating the school to Dochcarty Brae will provide the opportunity to improve learning and teaching at St. Clement's.

The Chair then invited Robert Campbell to provide an update on the project itself.

Robert Campbell – There are a couple of areas I will cover. Firstly, the site selection process, and also where the project sits within the Council's capital funding allocation.

A new school for St. Clement's has been talked about for many years and we've been working closely with local members and the Parent Council since about 2019. We came up with an initial long list of sites. Most of these were ruled out early on, some because they were too small to accommodate a modern school, and others because much of Dingwall sits on flood risk plain. We did look closely at a site at Ferry Road, but it was impossible to make that work due to the flood risk and road access issues. We've since looked at the site at Dochcarty Brae. It's not owned by the Council, it's owned by Dingwall Mart, but we've been in discussion with the Mart and they have been very co-operative, and we've built up a good relationship with them. We've come up with a scheme we think will work, and are still in discussion with the Mart. There are a couple of options as to how the school will sit within the site. The statutory consultation has to run its course and we can't complete the legal process of buying the site until the consultation has been completed, but we are well advanced with that and we wouldn't have taken the statutory consultation process forward if we thought there was any risk of things falling through. I think we've got a good site and the best we can identify in Dingwall.

With regards to the capital programme, just last year there was a report to the Council in June, where Members agreed that the project would be a priority, and a further report in September where it was formally agreed as part of the capital programme.

The Chair advised that Mr Porter, Mr Martin, Mr Campbell and Mr Jackson were available to answer questions.

Q1 – Nadia Gillespie – I'm new to Dingwall. Could you explain to me exactly where Dochcarty Brae is please?

A1 – Robert Campbell – [Robert shared his screen with a Google maps view]. Coming in from Dingwall from the Inverness direction, we meet the traffic lights by the Council Offices, then we turn left onto the A834 Strathpeffer road. Dochcarty Road comes off the Strathpeffer road and leads onto Dochcarty Brae. The road crosses the River Peffery and there is a flood risk adjacent to the river, so we are building above that.

Q2 – Avril Robertson – How much funding has been formally approved for the whole project?

A2 Robert Campbell – There's a total of £13 million that has been set aside.

Q3 – Kirsten Kirkwood – Is there any space available for a small swimming pool similar to the Puffin Pool? I know the children are really keen on that. It would be great for their confidence and mental health.

A3 Robert Campbell – No, there's no funding included in the capital programme for a pool.

Q4 (Follow-up) – Would that be an option for the future, if funding could be found?

A4 Robert Campbell - We do have an expansion zone, which is something we incorporate into every new design, in case of a future increase in roll. I think though that the footprint for a swimming pool would be quite a bit larger than the expansion zone we have allowed for.

Q5 (Follow-up) - The children love the Puffin Pool, but it breaks down quite a lot and it's really hard for me as a parent to get a slot for my child, outwith the school taking her.

The Chair commented that this was a useful marker for the future, although the Council couldn't promise anything at present.

Cllr. Graham MacKenzie - The Puffin Pool is ideal for this, and I'm sure the Pool Committee will overcome the current problems. It is unlikely that there would be a second such facility created in Dingwall, but at previous stakeholder meetings we have discussed the need for transportation. Officers are on board with the idea that transportation would have to be made available so that all of the facilities of Dingwall would be available to the children.

A5 – Derek Martin – Cllr. MacKenzie has summed that up very well. It's vital that in building the new school, we consider the needs of the children, and we alluded to that earlier. Apart from the Puffin Pool, there are the HLH facilities. The need to ensure transportation to provide access to a wide curriculum is very much in our thoughts.

Q6 – Avril Robertson – I want to endorse the comments made earlier about the Puffin Pool. The benefits of hydrotherapy are huge, and at the moment there are only limited time slots for the children due to demand. However, my question is, how protected is the expansion zone Robert referred to?

A6 Robert Campbell – It would be part of the overall site we would be purchasing, so it will be up to us to decide how we use it. We would lay out the new building in such a way within the site that we could expand in the future, if necessary.

Q7 (Follow-up) - Does that mean it is protected for use by St. Clement's?

A7 Robert Campbell – It would be an Education Service site and I can't imagine any other part of the Council would want to use that space. It would be used as outdoor space for the school in the meantime.

Q8 – Nadia Gillespie – Do we have a rough date for completion?

A8 Robert Campbell - Assuming all goes well with the statutory consultation and that is completed later this year, we normally reckon on 3 years from then. We have

the Planning process to go through, and the construction period itself of course. We will be working up the design in conjunction with the current consultation.

Q9 - Cllr. Angela MacLean – Could you expand on what the design might look like? I know that both the children and parents have put forward ideas.

A9 Robert Campbell – We already know the majority of the facilities that will be going into the school - new classrooms, a proper games hall, dining space, and as well as the larger classrooms, breakout spaces. There's still a bit of discussion to be had with parents and pupils as to how this all fits together. We do have space standards that we have to work within, based on the capacity of the school, so it's not a completely blank sheet of paper, but we will be working with Ruth and her staff and the parents and pupils as well, to make sure everyone is involved with the final design. Gordon Stewart, who is at the meeting, has been seconded as an Education Adviser and will be heavily involved with that process. I think he has already had initial meetings with Ruth and Avril.

Gordon Stewart – The key for us is involving the staff, parents and pupils. They must have a say in the design. I've already visited the school and Ruth has invited me to the next meeting of the Pupil Council. If there are any issues arising from this meeting, I'm happy to get in contact with parents about them.

Ruth Malone – It's very important to get the pupils' voice. Gordon and Avril are coming to the next meeting of the Pupil Council. We will be working together and getting the pupils' views at every stage.

Q10 – Donald MacLean – This is a question from myself and Caleb. Given that the school takes nursery, primary and secondary age pupils, will the outside space be big enough to accommodate the needs of the various children?

A10 Robert Campbell – The simple answer is yes. This will be one of the key issues we will be working on with Ruth, the parents and the pupils – how that space is divided up, how it's managed. There will be hard and soft play areas and maybe some playing field provision. We'll be looking to cover everybody's requirements and have been through the same process with St. Duthus.

Q11 – Caleb MacLean - What about music and science?

A11 – Derek Martin – It's good to see you here Caleb, and a really good question. I don't know whether you can see Gordon Stewart on your screen? Gordon will be coming into the school and that will be a good opportunity for you to speak to him about what you are looking for in terms of music and science.

Q12- Kirsten Kirkwood – Just following on from Caleb's question, I think a separate music area would be amazing. A lot of the children would really value that. It is so good for them, and so therapeutic, even if they can't keep a rhythm. It would be very beneficial for the children to have a separate music department with a proper music teacher.

The Chair added that she was sure those comments would be taken on board.

Q13 – Colin Pettinger – My little boy attends St. Clement’s, and the highlight of his day is the mile walk. We have been so impressed at the work that the staff have put into this, as it has given him something I thought he would never have, which is a sense of citizenship. Has there been any consideration given to the impact on the sense of citizenship and community that could arise from moving the school from the centre of Dingwall to the periphery? The town centre will no longer be walkable for pupils.

A13 Derek Martin – When we started to look at different locations, it was clear from the outset that once we moved from the centre of town, we might get a visually appealing location with lots of space, but there would be an issue with ensuring that the school continued to engage effectively with the town community, and you’ve raised another aspect of that. Clearly, the daily mile will not be able to take place in the way it has up to now. The school will look at what facilities they have and what space they have, but we are also looking at a transport solution, as was mentioned earlier. That’s not strictly part of the statutory consultation, which is about the relocation, but we recognise it would form part of the effective delivery of education in the new location. We don’t know the detail of that yet, but we want to keep the kids out and about and engaging with their community.

Q14 – Emma Pearce – I totally agree with Colin’s comment. My son also goes on the mile walk and it’s not just the exercise, they get to meet people as well, so they are making connections. Where the school is at present, they have everything around them, and I think it helps everyone. I am a bit concerned about the limitations on the amount of land to be purchased. There was mention about a possible future expansion – would that mean the school would lose outdoor space if it did need more classroom accommodation? My other question is about the capacity of the new school. I know the schools struggles with capacity at the moment. Will the new building have increased capacity?

A14 Derek Martin – I’ll try to answer the first question and maybe Robert will address the second part. You’ve echoed what Colin said earlier. The school itself will sort out the detail of their activities once they are up and running, but we have a variety of facilities in Dingwall, such as High Life Highland in the quadrangle near St. Clement’s, and the Newton Room. If the school moves to Dochcarty Brae and the children are travelling into the town centre for activities, then there might be a natural muster point at somewhere like the library, where they could pause to have a snack or something, so that it’s not just “in and out”. The Council could support the school with the detail of that.

Ruth Malone – We have 48 pupils at the moment and 52 after the summer.

Robert Campbell – At St. Clement’s we work out the number of classrooms based on multiples of six. Compared to the school at the moment there will be a big increase in space, but that’s where the future proofing comes in as well. For the external areas, we will make sure we have enough. If anything there might be too much to begin with, and if the school does expand in the future we would ensure the external space remained adequate.

The Chair commented that the new school site was close to Maggie's Wood. Whilst not every child would be able to access the wood, it could be an exciting space for those who could. It is a beautiful spot with birds and plants.

Emma Pearce - I agree. I'm an ex-Dingwall Academy pupil myself so I know it well. I had asked about capacity because I have a friend who couldn't get her child into St. Clement's, so I was hoping there would be a big jump in capacity.

Q15 Avril Robertson – It's really positive that so many people have attended tonight and asked questions. I think Derek's suggestion of a muster point is a great idea that we can discuss with Gordon. Perhaps there could be a shelter or something in the town centre?

A15 Derek Martin – I'm sure Gordon will take forward some ideas. We'll need to take account of course of what's already there. Just on Maggie's Wood, we could maybe have a look and see if anything could be done in terms of wheelchair access. Again, not part of the statutory consultation but a really good point to make.

Brian Porter – I just want to emphasise how much we value comments in response to the consultation. We will have captured the meeting tonight and that will form part of the paperwork that eventually goes to Committee, but any written comments are also welcome. If you want to tell us that our proposal is a great idea, we want to hear that, but equally, if you don't agree, please put your comments in. Genuinely, that is what this process is about, and as Ian said earlier, we have to consider and respond to points raised. I imagine our elected members will also feel that the more comments we get, the easier it is for them to make a decision.

Cllr. Graham MacKenzie – I think it would be useful if, following the election, Gordon could attend an early Ward Business meeting, and assuming we are still members, we could talk through the issues that arise from this consultation period.

Ruth Malone – I'd like to record my thanks to all the parents, pupils and staff who have given up their time to attend the meeting tonight.

Liz Angus – Just to say that I am delighted to have been able to attend tonight's meeting and I have already been in touch with Ruth about visiting the school. I'm looking forward to meeting the staff, pupils and parents after the public consultation period has finished.

There were no further questions.

Chair - Cllr Margaret Paterson

Cllr Paterson thanked everyone for coming and reminded everyone that representations should be sent to Ian Jackson, email Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk (address circulated in the letter), or via the online form, to arrive **no later than Friday 29 April 2022**.

She advised that the record of the meeting will be made available at least 3 weeks before the meeting of the Education Committee where it is intended that the report of the meeting, plus any submissions/representations and the view of Education Scotland on the proposal, will be considered.

From: Ruth Malone (Education) <ruth.malone@highland.gov.uk>
Sent: 24 March 2022 11:38
To: Ian Jackson (Support Services) <ian.jackson@highland.gov.uk>
Subject: Wish list

Hi Ian

Good to chat yesterday. Please see the list below from the Senior Phase pupils:

WISH LIST FROM THE SENIOR PHASE

- 1- Heating
- 2 - Lockers
- 3 - Flat for living skills -Bedroom/living room/kitchen/bathroom
- 4 - Seniors Common room
- 5 - Music room/recording equipment
- 6 - First Aid Room
- 7 - Science Room
- 8 - Art room
- 9 - Staff Room/toilets
- 10 - Cycle/scooter/running path
- 11 - PE Hall
- 12 - Swimming Pool/Hydrotherapy pool
- 13 - Outdoor Muga
- 14 - Outdoor Shelter
- 15 - Garden/Raised bed Area
- 16 - Sensory Room
- 17 - Multi Purpose Room for Drama/assemblies
- 18 - Cinema room
- 19 - Single Sex/Multi cubicle toilets
- 20 - Changing Facilities
- 21 - Flexible seating in classrooms
- 22 - Sound proofing
- 23 - Library
- 24 - Loads of storage in each class
- 25 - Outdoor seating
- 26 - Outdoor Sensory Area
- 27 - Drying room for wet jackets/clothes
- 28 - Private Car Park/ Staff Car Park
- 29 - Fobbed Doors throughout school
- 30 - Tracking for hoists in classes
- 31 - Smartboards/up to date Technology
- 32 - IT Suite
- 33 - Breakout rooms in each class for pupils that struggle to stay in class
- 34 - Noticeboard
- 35 - Nurturing room
- 36 - Dining room/tuck shop....
- 37 - Soft play area
- 38 - Ramps for doorways

39 - Automatic doors
40 - Mini bus

Kind regards

Ruth Malone

Acting Head Teacher
St Clements School
Tulloch Street
Dingwall
IV15 9JZ

01349 863284

From: Gordon Stewart (Education) <Gordon.Stewart@highland.gov.uk>
Sent: 28 March 2022 10:01
To: Ruth Malone (Education) <ruth.malone@highland.gov.uk>; Ian Jackson (Support Services) <ian.jackson@highland.gov.uk>
Cc: Sarah Gitsham (Property and Facilities Management) <Sarah.Gitsham@highland.gov.uk>
Subject: St Clements Pupil Council

Dear Ruth and Ian

Please see below. Wee summary of the meeting on Friday. I know that a minute of the meeting will follow.

A useful meeting – all very excited about the new school.

Ruth – hope you are feeling better.

Kind regards,

Gordon

St Clements Pupil Council 25/3/22

The Pupil Council were all keen to get a new school as they recognise there are things that they don't currently have on the current site that they would be very likely to have in a new school with a larger footprint. The things that were listed:

- A minibus – this was raised by both pupils and staff. The new site is further out of town and transporting pupils to Dingwall and beyond was key. The school have built up very useful community links – these are an integral part of the education of the pupils e.g. next week the pupils are visiting Ross County to make a video on a joint project between the school and the club. Pupils get to attend some Home games. Other places that they have strong links with: Deas Bakery, Tuesday UHI, L'Arche, Cantraybridge, Cycleability, horse riding, library visits etc.
- PE facilities – bike track. Playground – swings / slides / ground based trampoline, climbing frame, football goals – mini pitch, rugby, mini-golf. A small pool – 10 out of 11 pupils present felt a pool would be very worthwhile.
- Outdoor learning – gardens / fishing / animal husbandry.
- Other Curriculum areas in need of improved facilities- Science / Music / HE /Art / Performing Arts.
- Assembly Area.
- A Lifeskills flat would also be very valuable.
- Vending machines for food and drink.
- Staff in attendance also felt the following would be beneficial – water bed for comfort for some young people who may have life limiting conditions. Dark rooms / multi-sensory / hoists /soft play /appropriate car parking for access for all.

The Pupil Council will disseminate the following questions to all the classes in the school:

- What is good about St. Clements that you would want to see in a new school?
- What do you feel needs to be part of the new school that you currently do not have?
- To discuss the possibility of a muster point in Dingwall town – in terms of location and specification.

School staff will also create an ideas board or tree in school to capture the ideas of the whole school.

From: Avril Robertson
Date: 18 August 2022 at 22:38:48 BST
To: Gordon Stewart <gordon.stewart@highland.gov.uk>
Subject: Letter in response

Dear Members,

As a representative from the Parent Council I write this in response to the proposal to relocate St. Clements school.

We are extremely relieved, grateful, heartened and excited at the prospect of a new school for all the pupils at St. Clements.

As you are aware, the current accommodation is not fit for purpose and this impacts on learning and all activities of their daily living. A new school that is purpose built is an absolute must.

The kids at St. Clements

are the most important people to consider moving this project forward and they have been involved in the consultation process. I'm sure I can speak for everyone when I commend their engagement, enthusiasm and positivity. It's been an absolute pleasure to work alongside them. Their opinions are what matters and they have all made their requests known in regards to what they would like in their new school.

At the heart of any decision making please pay cognisance to their requests and consider how you can influence and improve their learning journey to enable them to reach their full potential. The ethos in St. Clements is inspiring ambition and nurturing happiness. These guiding principles are clearly evident in the school and the wider community. Dingwall have always embraced the pupils at St. Clements and have expressed their unwavering support for a new school to remain in Dingwall. A new purpose-built school that is future proofed and a centre of excellence is our goal. We implore you to please make this happen.

Kindest Regards
Avril Robertson

Sent from my iPhone

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HM Inspectors of Education addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The Highland Council to replace and relocate St Clement's School.

May 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of The Highland Council's proposal to replace and relocate the current St. Clement's School in Dingwall. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the 2010 Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the school; any other users; children and young people likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the virtual public meeting held on 10 March 2022 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
- visit to the site of St Clement's School, including discussion with relevant consultees; and
- visit to the proposed new site of the new school at Docharty Brae in Dingwall.

2. Consultation process

2.1 The Highland Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The statutory consultation period for this proposal ran from 2 March 2022 until 29 April 2022. Copies of the consultation proposal were made available to statutory consultees. This included copies being available at local public buildings and on the council website. Council Officers conducted extensive informal consultation with the headteacher and Parent Council. They also gathered the views of children and young people who attend St Clement's School. This includes a helpful 'wish list' for what learners would like included in the design of their new school.

2.3 The council held a public meeting virtually, in response to ongoing public health advice, on the 10 March 2022. This was advertised in the local press and on social media. It was attended by a total of 21 people, including 11 parents and other members of the local community, and seven members of the school staff.

2.4 The council received no written responses or objections from parents or other members of the public about this proposal. Stakeholders are in favour of a new school. A few parents raised concerns about the proposed location on the edge of the town. They are keen to ensure that children and young people can continue to access local facilities and be part of the local community. Parents also suggested that they would like a small pool for hydrotherapy in the new building.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 HM Inspectors believe that the proposed new building could bring considerable educational benefits for all current and future children and young people at St Clement's School. We agree that the new building should be of a quality that supports and improves outcomes for learners placed at the school. The current poor quality accommodation at St Clement's can pose issues for the dignity of children and young people, as well as accessibility issues.

3.2 Purpose-built classrooms and flexible teaching spaces could enhance considerably the learning environment of the school. The movement of children and young people in wheelchairs is currently restricted due to the existing layout and design of St Clement's. Having more space and touch-pad doors would provide more equitable access for all learners to move throughout the school. Improved acoustics could support the dignity of individuals and help children and young people to maintain focus on their learning. Sensory rooms, improved medical and toilet facilities, and outdoor learning spaces will also be beneficial and support children's and young people's learning. Learners and staff highlighted the need for outdoor shelters, so that everyone can have a full experience of outdoor learning.

3.3 There is potential to enhance the curriculum and enrich children's and young people's learning experiences in a new school building. All learners, staff and parents who met with HM Inspectors welcome the improved facilities that the proposed new school might offer. Children and young people look forward to opportunities to access better sports facilities and specialist areas for art and music. HM Inspectors agree with stakeholders who feel strongly that the inclusion of areas to support the development of lifeskills should be considered in the design of the new building.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors believe there are considerable educational benefits in the proposal to replace and relocate St Clement's School. All stakeholders that HM Inspectors met support the proposal. A purpose-built school would provide significantly improved facilities to support learners with complex additional support needs. Good access to the outdoors and improved teaching spaces could improve the learning experiences for all the learners who attend St Clement's.

Whilst there have been some improvement works carried out, the current facilities are in poor condition. The new building would be fully disability compliant and there would be better heating and lighting. Current maintenance costs could reduce. A more spacious, comfortable environment would better support the wellbeing of children, young people and staff.

HM Inspectors agree with the council's desire to place the needs of every child and young person at the centre of the design of the new school. This should include consideration of facilities to support the development of lifeskills. It will be important to ensure that the capacity and design of the new school meets possible future needs of learners. Should the proposal go forward, the council should continue to work with stakeholders to address concerns about the location of the new school on the edge of town. Stakeholders would welcome more detail about how children and young people will be able to access community facilities in Dingwall.

Well-considered transition planning, involving all stakeholders, will be an important consideration in taking the proposal forward.

HM Inspectors
May 2022

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The proposal is to relocate St. Clement's School, Dingwall, to allow the creation of new accommodation

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

THIS IS A PROPOSAL PAPER PREPARED IN TERMS OF THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY'S AGREED PROCEDURE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

INTRODUCTION

The Highland Council is proposing, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process:

- To replace the current St. Clement's School building with a new school building located on a site off Dochcarty Brae, Dingwall. Relocating the school would allow the construction of considerably improved accommodation.

The proposed changes, if approved, will be implemented when the new accommodation has been completed.

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Proposal Paper Published

The proposal paper will be available for inspection, free of charge, at:

- St. Clement's School
- Dingwall Public Library

and published on the Highland Council website:

www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

Copies of this Proposal Paper are also available on request from:

Copies of this Proposal Paper are also available on request from:
Business Support Team
Education Service
County Buildings
High Street
Dingwall
IV159QN

E-mail: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, audio formats, or suitable language, please also contact the Copies of this Proposal Paper are also available on request from the Business Support Team, Education Service, County Buildings, High Street, Dingwall, IV159QN

E-mail: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

Formal notice of the Proposal and relevant information will be given and be made available, free of charge, to the consultees listed as follows:

- (i) Parents of pupils attending St. Clement's School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (ii) The Parent Council of St. Clement's School;
- (iii) All staff of the school.
- (iv) Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
- (v) Trade union representatives;
- (vi) All Community Councils for the Highland Council wards of Dingwall and Seaforth; Black Isle; and Cromarty Firth; as well as Strathpeffer Community Council
- (vii) Education Scotland;

Advertisement in Local Media

A notice announcing the public meeting will be placed in the *Ross-shire Journal* and on the Highland Council's Facebook page.

Consultation Period

The consultation for this Proposal will run from 2 March 2022 and will end on 29 April 2022. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

Public Meeting

A public meeting will be held, the details of which are set out below:

10 March 2022 at 6.30pm, location to be advised.

Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council, will be chaired by a senior elected councillor, and will be addressed by officers of the Education Service. Electronic invitations will be sent to all statutory consultees and the link for the meeting will be made available to others.

The meeting will be an opportunity for the public to hear more about the proposal; to ask questions about the proposal; and to have the views of all stakeholders recorded so that they can be taken into account. A note will be taken at the meeting of questions asked and views expressed. This note will be published on the Council website. The meeting will also be recorded.

The note will be forwarded to Education Scotland, along with other submissions and comments received by the Council during the consultation process.

Responses to the Proposals

Interested parties are invited to respond to the Proposals by making written or electronic submissions on the Proposals to:

Ian Jackson
Education Officer (Resources)
Camaghael Hostel
Fort William
PH33 7NE
Email: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

Or via an online form, a link to which can be found on

www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

When responding, you are invited to state your relationship with the school – for example, “pupil”, “parent”, “carer”, “relative”, “former pupil”, “teacher in school”, “member of the community” etc. However it is not compulsory to do so.

Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically should know that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be made publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: "I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Councillors and Council Officers of Highland Council". Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available. All written responses must be received by the last day of the consultation period, 29 April 2022 at 5.00pm.

Involvement of Education Scotland

When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland by the Council. Education Scotland will also be sent, by 9 May 2022, a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period. Education Scotland will also receive the summary note of the public meeting that and so far as is practicable a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 27 May 2022. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may visit the affected schools and make such enquiries of people there as they consider appropriate.

Review of Consultation Exercise

Highland Council will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland Report, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made at the public meeting. It will then prepare a Consultation Report. This Report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be sent to anyone who submitted a written representation during consultation. It will be available on the Council website as well as at the affected school and local library, free of charge. The Report will include a summary of the written and oral representations made during consultation and a copy of the Education Scotland Report, together with the Council's considered response to the issues raised. The Report will include details of any alleged inaccuracies and/or omissions and how these have been handled. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to being submitted to the Council's Education Committee, who will make a recommendation to the full Highland Council.

In publishing the report the Council will invite any person or party to make further representations to the Committee prior to its meeting. A notice to this effect will also be published on the Highland Council website.

At the present time the Council intends to publish its Report in October 2022, prior to submission to the Council's Education Committee in December 2022. However, this timescale may change depending on the nature of issues raised during consultation, and the need to give full consideration to those issues. In the latter event, the Report may not be submitted until a later Committee meeting.

Any proposal approved by the Education Committee would require to be confirmed by a subsequent meeting of the full Highland Council.

Note on Corrections

If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this Proposal paper, either by the Council or any other person, the Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or, if the paper contains an inaccuracy. The Council will then take appropriate action, which may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of the Proposal or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period, if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and HMI will be advised.

PROPOSAL

Legislative Background

- 1.1 The proposal is advanced within the context of all applicable legislation. Amongst other duties, education authorities are required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (S.1 of the Education Act 1980); and to publish or otherwise make available information as to their arrangements for the placing of children in schools under their management (S.28 of the 1980 Act)
- 1.2 In common with all public bodies in Scotland, the Highland Council also has a duty to provide Best Value. This includes making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost; and, in making those arrangements and securing that balance, to have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities requirements and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Reason for the Proposal

- 2.1 This proposal is being advanced because St. Clement's school currently suffers from poor quality accommodation. Relocating the school would permit the construction of a new build school.
- 2.2 St. Clement's School provides for some of the most vulnerable young people in Highland, and the Council has had a long-standing commitment to replace the school.
- 2.3 In 2014, following inspection, HMIE noted:

"The buildings do not provide a satisfactory range or quality of facilities. Corridors and doors are narrow and challenge pupils with limited mobility. One classroom can only be accessed through the staffroom and there is a lack of space and specialist facilities."

Whilst there have been some improvement works since, the current school is not suitable in its condition or layout as a special needs school.
- 2.4 A new build school offers the opportunity to address this long-standing issue and to provide appropriate accommodation for the young people attending St. Clement's.

Informal Consultation

- 3.1 Extensive informal discussions have been held with local elected councillors of Highland Council, with the Head Teacher of St. Clement's and with members of the parent body. Discussions with local elected members began in February 2019 and with parents in July 2019, and have continued since. The identification of suitable site options and the provision of funding have been key

factors in the time taken to arrive at the position set out in this Paper, and the length of the informal dialogue that has taken place. The informal discussions suggest that the parent body are overwhelmingly in favour of a new building for St. Clement's School.

- 3.2 Because the school takes in children from a wide area of Easter Ross and even beyond (see paragraph 4.1 below) one of the issues discussed with parents was the possibility of locating St. Clement's School away from the town of Dingwall. The Parent Council representatives favoured the school being located within Dingwall itself, due to the historic association between the school and the town, the transport links from Dingwall to other areas, and the nearby location of facilities such as the Dingwall Puffin Pool. For this reason, the examination of possible sites has been restricted to those in and around Dingwall itself.

St. Clement's School – Description

- 4.1 St. Clement's is one of 3 special schools run by Highland Council, and provides education to children in the 3-18 age group. It is located in the centre of Dingwall and admits pupils from a wide area of Easter Ross, with a few pupils attending from further afield. The number attending the school fluctuates and some attend on a part-time basis, but generally there are between 48-50 pupils. The school itself dates to the early years of the 20th century although there have been many building modifications down the years. The current school accommodation comprises the original main building, a modular annexe building that was installed in 2015 and an older modular unit. Overall the accommodation is currently rated "C – (Poor)" for both Condition and Suitability, mainly due to the state of the main building, having three separate buildings on the campus, and the limitations of some of the facilities, such as external areas. There is general agreement that the accommodation does not adequately support the delivery of education for some of our most vulnerable pupils, who are unable to attend a mainstream school. The proposed new build will significantly improve the learning environment for pupils. Further details on this are provided in Section 5 below.
- 4.2 There is general agreement that the school should be relocated to provide a better environment for learning. Highland Council
- 4.3 The proposed new school site is located off Dochcarty Brae, Dingwall. A drawing showing the approximate extent of the new site is at Appendix B, and a location drawing is at Appendix C. If agreed at the conclusion of the current consultation exercise, the building of the new school would be subject to planning permission.
- 4.4 This area of land would have to be purchased, and negotiations on this are progressing, subject to the successful conclusion of the statutory consultation exercise. It is currently designated as Housing Development, but it is intended to change this to Community Use in the revised Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan. The suggested layout is to suit the flood risk and tree protection zone.

4.5 Prior to proposing the site off Dochcarty Brae, the Council looked at a variety of other sites in the area:

i. Land at Ferry Road, Dingwall – This was an area in the ownership of Dingwall and Highland Marts. Issues identified were a high risk of flooding, where a proposed flood protection scheme would not protect the field. The site is unlikely to ever be suitable for a school development and is not considered a viable option.

ii. Dingwall Primary School – An area within an existing school site, with the associated issues of disruption from a new build on a live school site. The area is in any case too small, and would incur too great a loss of school space. The access is via a restricted narrow road with pre-existing issues, and there is a flooding risk across the site.

iii. Dingwall Academy – an area within an existing school site, with the associated issues of disruption from a new build on a live school site. The area is in any case too small, and would incur too great a loss of school space. The area is also currently part of a Public Private Partnership (PPP) contract.

iv. Land at Old River Road – an area in the ownership of Dingwall and Highland Marts. The site requires Flood Risk Assessment which may affect the developable area of the site; Contamination Assessment; a Recreational Access Management Plan to avoid any adverse effects on the integrity of the Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar; and a Transport Assessment. The developable area is likely to be too small.

v. Former Depot Craig Road – an area of in the ownership of Highland Council. The site requires Flood Risk Assessment which may affect the developable area of the site; Contamination Assessment; a Recreational Access Management Plan to avoid any adverse effects on the integrity of the Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar; and a Transport Assessment. The developable area is in any case too small.

vi. St Clement's School Site (Plus Church Site) – this is the site of the existing school, owned partly by Highland Council and partly by the Church of Scotland. The site requires Flood Risk Assessment which may affect the developable area of the site; Contamination Assessment; a Recreational Access Management Plan to avoid any adverse effects on the integrity of the Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar; and a Transport Assessment. It's an existing school site, with the associated issues of disruption from a new build on a live school site. Existing buildings would require demolition and the current school would need relocation. The Council would need to purchase the church, and the area available is too small.

vii. Land at Gallows Hill – An area of in the ownership of Highland Council. This is a sloping site with a narrow access from Blackwells Street only, for these reasons is not considered a viable option.

- 4.6 The examination of other sites has led to the conclusion that the site off Dochcarty Brae is the only suitable one within Dingwall. As mentioned at paragraph 3.1 above, the informal consultation exercise has identified strong support for the building of the new school, and thereby for the site proposed.

Educational Benefits

- 5.1 Highland Council is of the view that the school environment should be of a quality that sustains and improves education provision, pupil performance and outcomes for the young people of Highland.
- 5.2 With the above aim in mind, Highland Council has publicly stated that pupils should be educated in facilities which are rated at least category B for each of Condition and Suitability.
- 5.3 It is generally recognised that poor quality school accommodation can be dispiriting for pupils, staff and parents, can limit the effectiveness of teaching (for example when a disproportionate amount of staff time is spent on building issues) and can pose issues for the safety and security of children.
- 5.4 At St. Clement's, the needs of every child must be placed at the centre of developing the new design. The new school would offer good quality accommodation that provides a safe, healthy and visually stimulating environment, flexible teaching spaces, better facilities for visiting specialists, and a healthier, less stressful environment. Pupils should also have the opportunity to engage in the widest possible range of activities beyond the core curriculum.
- 5.5 The new school would be of modern design, environmentally efficient, and allowing pupils the opportunity to enjoy a comfortable, naturally lit and well ventilated environment designed to meet the needs of the learners and their teachers; meeting the requirements for "A" assessments for both Suitability and Condition.
- 5.6 It would be important to include a degree of flexibility and adaptability within the design in order to provide options to alter spaces in the future in response to the changing needs of the school. This approach is likely to optimise the use of available space. Extensive engagement would take place with parents and other stakeholders about the detailed design of the school, following a decision to relocate the school after completion of the current consultation exercise.
- 5.7 Elements of the design might include, but are not limited to:
- Purpose built classrooms
 - Flexible learning and teaching spaces for pupils, including quiet rooms and activity/retreat rooms, which would maximise the use of space inside the building

- Multi-use games hall
 - Sensory and soft play rooms
 - HT office, reception/admin office, staff room, meeting room/staff base and FM/controls room
 - Storage, plant and medical room. Appropriate toilet provision including assisted toilets and showers.
 - Kitchen with dining area.
 - Design which will maximise the use of natural daylight and natural ventilation, together with heating, ventilation and electrical systems which provide modern requirements in an energy efficient and sustainable manner.
 - Security design features incorporated inside and outside the building to support and facilitate the safe management of all users of the building, with external public areas of the site being separated from the private secure pupil play areas
 - The landscaping around the school will be designed in conjunction with the school users to ensure that there is an interesting “play and learning” environment.
 - Safe access to the school with the appropriate arrangements for those arriving/departing on foot, by bicycle, by bus or by car.
- 5.8 The above overview provides an outline of the design opportunities that exist. These opportunities will be developed in conjunction with the school communities to ensure that the new school design takes account of the aspirations of future users of the facility.
- 5.9 In summary, the new school offers the prospect of strong educational benefit arising from improved accommodation.

Effects on School Transport

- 6.1 As the new school will be located less than a mile from the current site, there is not expected to be any significant effect on school transport arrangements.

Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements

- 7.1 The relocation will have no impact on school management or staffing arrangements.

Effect on the Local Community

- 8.1 The proposal is not expected to have any negative impact on the wider local community. It will retain the traditional link between St. Clement’s School and

the town of Dingwall, and the informal consultation exercise suggests there is wide community support for retaining that link.

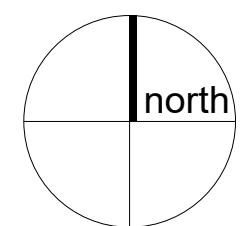
Equalities Assessment

- 9.1 The Proposal will improve educational provision for disabled children, and as such will have a positive Equalities impact.
- 9.2 The proposal has been assessed as having no impact on the following Equality areas:
- Gender
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy or Maternity
 - Marriage/Civil Partnership
 - Race
 - Religion or Belief
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Looked After Children
 - Young Carers
 - Children and Young People Living in Deprivation
- 9.3 In respect of age equality, the proposal relates to a school and therefore affects children in the 3-18 age group, and their parents. The proposal is advanced on the basis of educational benefit to the children in the area concerned. No negative age-related effects arise. Age is not a protected characteristic for the purposes of school provision.

Recommendation

- 10.1 Taking the above into account Highland Council recommends that St. Clement's School is relocated from its current site to a new site off Dochcarty Brae to allow for the construction of a new building.
- 10.2 This consultation paper is issued in terms of the authority's procedures to meet the relevant statutory requirements. Following the consultation period, a report and submissions received will be presented to the Education Committee of the Highland Council.

END OF PROPOSAL PAPER



Pro Section 3
FL_60_80_0003

Pro Section 4
FL_60_80_0003

FL_60_80_0003
Pro Section 2

Pro Section 1
FL_60_80_0003

Proposed Site Red
Line Boundary
19,031m²

Access junction /
road layout to
school site to be
designed


25 m


30

30

Appendix B.

Proposed School Site Area = 19,031m² / 1.90ha

Proposed School
1782m² 

Potential Flood Risk
Zone 

Overhead Lines 

Red Line Boundary 

Blue Line Boundary 

Rev.	Description	By	Date

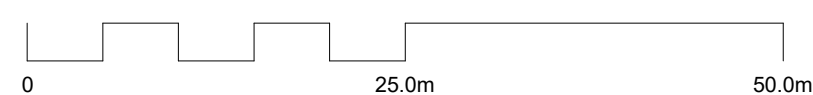
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HOUSING AND
PROPERTY SERVICE

CLIENT	The Highland Council	SCALE	1 : 500
PROJECT	St. Clement's School	DATE	17/05/2021
CONTACT	Sarah Johnston	DRAWN BY	MB
DRAWING TITLE	Proposed Site Plan - Option 4	CHECKED BY	SF
PURPOSE OF ISSUE	Information	PAPER SIZE	A1

Scale: 1 to 500



Proposed Site Option 4

1 : 500

PROJECT NUMBER	ORIGINATOR	VOLUME OR SYSTEM	LEVELS AND LOCATIONS	TYPE	ROLE	CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER	REV
CALF14008	THC	-	-	-	A	FL_60_80	0008	-



Tulloch Castle

Lewis Williamson

R Crombie & Son

Black Isle View Highlands

Munro Sawmills

kstm:embroidery

Co-op Food - Dingwall

Dingwall Recycling Centre

Howdens - Dingwall

Halfords McConechys Dingwall Autocentre

Wester Ross Fisheries

Dingwall Academy

Dingwall Leisure Centre

West End Filling Station

Gillies Dingwall Clearance Outlet...

Munro John M

George Cockburn & Son

Pefferside Park

Tesco Superstore

Dingwall Camping and Caravanning Club Site

Ross County Football Club

Highland Smart Wifi Dingwall

Dingwall Fire station

Dingwall