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| **Barra & Vatersay Community Campus (BVCC)** **Project Update Note Dated 27 April 2021**  |

**Introduction**

Welcome to the latest community update on the progress of the Barra & Vatersay Community Campusproject.

Further information will continue to be available through updates of the Frequently-Asked -Questions paper on the project website <https://bvcc.scot/>, the NHS Western Isles website <https://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/get-involved/current-consultation-engagement/barra-and-vatersay-community-hub/> or by contacting the Comhairle Investment Delivery team on investmentdelivery@cne-siar.gov.uk.

**Updated FAQs document**

An updated version of the Frequently Asked Questions document is now available on the project website <https://bvcc.scot/> and on the other links set out above.

As always questions from the community and individuals are welcomed and can be raised at any time by using one of the links above. Questions will be responded to as quickly as possible and all questions and their responses will be included in future editions of the FAQs, which will be updated on a quarterly basis.

**Community Stakeholder Advisory Group**

The Community Stakeholder Advisory Group (CSAG) had its first meeting on 26th April with a very high attendance of representatives from community, third sector and business organisations as well as public sector partners including Hebridean Housing Partnership and Police Scotland, along with health, social care, and education staff. The meeting was chaired by Malcolm Burr.

Matters discussed included several of the points raised by a Barra resident in a recent edition of the Guth, the full response to which is included in this week’s update, below. Other items discussed included the issue of the revised FAQs, education facilities and timetabling during the schools decant period, the building design process and how it will respond to such issues such as infection prevention and control and the risk of terrorist attack.

CSAG will meet on a quarterly basis and matters arising from these meetings will be considered at meetings of the BVCC Project Executive Board.

**Response to issued raised**

Following the issues raised by a resident in a recent edition of the Guth, the project team can provide these responses:

***Why was this not campus not based on a completely new site?***

A masterplanning study undertaken on behalf of the Comhairle and the Scottish Futures Trust concluded that an integrated approach to the replacement of the St Brendan’s Hospital and Care Home and the Castlebay Community School would realise significant benefits for service users, staff, and the public.

The subsequent feasibility study undertaken by hub North Scotland on behalf of the Comhairle and NHSWI identified the provision of an integrated community campus on the site of, and adjacent to, the existing Castlebay Community School as the preferred option. This recommendation was endorsed by the Comhairle and NHSWI at the end of 2019.

The site of the existing Community School was chosen as the site of the proposed community campus primarily for three reasons.

It was determined that developing the existing site would enable the campus to be built in Castlebay, the main township on Barra, on land which was already in Comhairle ownership and allow the replacement of a series of existing buildings which are no longer fit for purpose with a new, high performance campus capable of delivering 21st century learning and health and social care. The availability of existing services infrastructure to the site is also advantageous. The site also has very good adjacency to the primary areas of housing in Castlebay, allowing the campus to act as a community focal point by providing better access to a wider range of services.

Secondly, the re-use of the existing site, referred to as a “brownfield” site, will make a greater contribution to the longer-term sustainability of the public sector estate and is a positive use of land in Castlebay for long term development. The new campus will provide a wide range of services for the community, staff, and visitors, so it is important that these are in a central position to encourage use. It also avoids the risk of the site remaining undeveloped for a long period in what is a key location for the island.

The site of the existing St Brendan’s Hospital and Care Home will be surplus to requirements on completion of the campus project; the demolition of the existing property and the re-purposing of this as an extremely attractive brownfield site will enhance the wider sustainability of the project.

Thirdly, it was not possible to identify another site within the Castlebay area which would be feasibly capable of accommodating all the areas of the campus. Areas of land to the south-west of Horve were tested for capacity as part of the selection process and found to be too small, even if existing properties located in the central area of this site were removed. This site also suffers from area subject to coastal flooding which further limits developable area.

***We have children being decanted to temporary accommodation for a period more than 2 years possibly nearer to three years. We have no guarantee that the classrooms being provided for the decant will be suitable for the specialist subjects e.g., Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Technical, Home Economics, Art, Music.***

The decant strategy continues to be developed with the Comhairle’s Education, Skills and Children’s Services department and management and staff from the school and the Barra Children’s Centre in developing and evaluating several options associated with accommodation, layouts, and locations.

The decant costs are included in the overall project costs. All operational impact costs will be met within existing resource budgets.

It is currently envisaged that the decant facilities will be in place for the period Spring 2022 to Summer 2024.The detail of the decant arrangements is being discussed and agreed with the Education Team to ensure continuity of service.

At present 20 Classrooms will be provided across the Children’s Centre, Early Years, Primary and Secondary. Science and Technology Specialist Units will also be provided.

***What size are the classrooms in the new campus? Are there specialist classrooms? Will there be a full curriculum?***

The space budget for the new school has been developed by the education consultant, Space Strategies, based on projected pupil rolls provided by CnES, and incorporates provision for a future increase in pupil numbers.

The space budget sets classroom sizes, and the type and number of classrooms has been developed by Space Strategies, a specialist educational consultant in conjunction with CnES. Scottish Government metrics give set areas per learner which dictates class size, and new models of teaching have moved away from single use classrooms to avoid spaces being underused. The campus design is based on this space budget.

The space budget allows for a series of internal breakout spaces and the use of the dining/ informal assembly area as places which can be used by learners for socialising. It is also proposed that older learners can make use of the community café.

***Do we need a police office and a police cell in the middle of a school?***

Options associated with the accommodation to be provided for Police Scotland remain under consideration with the relevant senior officers within the force. The finalised arrangements for accommodation being provided at the Campus will be confirmed to the community as soon as possible. We can confirm that the location of any Police Scotland facilities will be located so that they are not within, and do not impact on the operation of core learning and health spaces.

***Why is the communal space in the housing with extra care been cut? The quiet room recommended where there are patients with Dementia has disappeared from the plans.***

Communal space is included in the extra care housing to allow residents to enjoy social interaction when they wish. There is no reduction in the specification from the plans for the St Brendan’s replacement project. The individual flats are however now larger than those previously included in that project.

***It is obvious that by siting the campus on the existing school site has caused considerably difficulties regarding space, for all the services proposed to be sited there. Cuts to classroom numbers and sizes, cuts to Care and Health services etc.***

As stated above he space budget developed for the project sets classroom sizes. The type and number of classrooms has been developed based on Scottish Government metrics which give set areas per learner. It is this, along with new models of teaching which have moved away from single use classrooms, that has informed the size, number of types of classroom in the new campus, rather than the size of the site. At the time of developing the educational brief, it was not confirmed where the site for the new campus would be, so site capacity was not a factor.

Also as stated above there is no reduction in the specification from the plans for the previous St Brenden’s replacement project which included housing with extra care flats. The individual flats are now larger than was originally proposed.