

## NOTE OF PUBLIC MEETING IN SHAWBOST SCHOOL –MONDAY 14 JUNE 2010

Catriona Stewart Feasgar math. SPEAKING GAELIC. Good evening everybody and welcome to tonight's meeting. My name is Catriona Stewart I am Vice-Chair of Education and Children's Services and I will introduce the rest of the party this evening. To my left I have Mr Robert Emmott, Director of Finance, next is Mrs Morag Munro Chair of Education and Children's Services. To my right we have Ms Joan Mackinnon, Director of Education and Children's Services, Mr Bernard Chisholm Head of Resources and Mr Derek Mackay who is Head of Democratic Services.

Could I ask that everybody switch their mobile phones off please because it interferes with the recording which is being taken off tonight's meeting. Not simply on silent or meeting but to switch them off and I have switched mine off.

At the back of the hall somewhere we have Mr John Brown from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education who will be listening carefully to this evening's meeting. I will just wait for them all to switch off.

Joan Mackinnon The Chair was the only person who hadn't switched hers off the other night.

Catriona Stewart That's why I have said I have definitely switched mine off.

In August 2007 the Comhairle decided to undertake a review of educational provision through the Western Isles. Since that time a number of informal conversations have been held in various communities. As a result the Comhairle agreed to go to statutory consultation on the proposed amalgamation of a number of schools and the discontinuation of S1/S2 stage of education. This meeting is part of the formal consultation process for the S1/S2 stage in Shawbost School. The purpose of this evening's meeting is to give you an opportunity to more about the proposal, to ask questions and you to give your views. The aim of the authority is to provide our children with the best educational experiences and outcomes in modern learning environments suitable for 21<sup>st</sup> century needs within the resources available to us. The Comhairle are facing serious challenges, schools rolls have fallen to 3681 from 6246 in 30 years and in the last 5 years alone the pupil roll has fallen by over 300. As education is resourced according to pupil numbers funding has decreased. We have 38 buildings, 18 of which are in poor condition. We also face generally tightening financial constraints in common with the public sector. There is pressure on other Comhairle services such as community care, roads and transport and waste services are very important as well and from August of this year we also have the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence. We are in the process of building 6 new schools which will mean that 44% of our pupils will be educated in new, efficient learning environments which will deliver the new curriculum. Our aim, in line with the Scottish Government's Schools Estate Strategy, is for all our pupils to be educated in new or refurbished buildings by 2018. In order to achieve this we have to reduce the spare capacity in our school estate. I will now pass over to Mr Derek Mackay who will go over procedure after that I will call on the Director of Education will speak to the proposal document. Thank you.

Derek Mackay

Thank you Chair.

By now everyone should have received a copy of the Proposal Document, but we have some copies available tonight so let me know if you require a copy. I would refer everyone to the Sections 2 and 3 of this Proposal Document which are found on pages 3, 4 & 5 and these sections outline the procedure which has been followed. I would also refer everyone to page 10 at paragraph 10.1 and just to clarify that the classification of Shawbost School in terms of Section 12 of the Schools Consultations (Scotland) 2010 is as a very remote rural school.

The Proposal Document was produced following a decision of the Comhairle and has been issued to seek the views of the community in relation to the proposals for Shawbost School S1/S2 provision. This meeting is part of the initial consultation period which is due to end at 5.00pm on 30 June 2010.

You can respond to that consultation directly to the Chief Executive in writing and there is also an area on the Council's website which is set out to receive email responses, so you can respond in writing or by email. In relation to the responses when you send in a response either written or by email we will aim to acknowledge that within three working days but if you have not received an acknowledgement within say a week of submitting the response you should contact the Chief Executive's Department directly and we will then confirm receipt of your response.

The Chair has made reference tonight to a note that is being taken of this meeting. We are going to produce a transcript of the meeting and that is why everything is being recorded and it will be important to speak clearly at the mic when you are asking any questions. It will be helpful if you could indicate your name before you speak as that will help when we produce a transcript of the Meeting.

My main purpose here tonight is to take a note of the questions and the responses and be a back up to that transcript and particularly to take a note of questions that we are unable to answer tonight. If there are any questions that we are unable to answer I will take a note of these and summarise at the end of the meeting and you may also wish to indicate what is the most appropriate avenue to make a response, whether its directly to individuals or maybe through the parent Council.

Copies of the transcript will also be available for anyone who wishes a copy. It will take us a few days to produce it following tonight's meeting but we can make that available to everyone who requests a copy. You can obtain a copy by contacting the Chief Executive, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Sandwich Road, Stornoway.

The procedure to be followed as part of the proposal document is as follows. Once the comments to that Proposal Document have been received, the proposal documents together with any written representations that are received by the Comhairle will be forwarded to HMle who will then have until 20 August to prepare their own report in relation to the proposals. Officers of the Comhairle then have the opportunity to review the HMle's report and prepare what is called the Consultation Report. This Report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Comhairle website and from the Comhairle headquarters as well all affected schools, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the Report. This Report will be considered by Education and Children's Services Committee in October this year before going to the full Council in November and it is at that stage the Comhairle will make its decision on whether or not it is to discontinue S1/S2 provision at Shawbost School.

From that date Scottish Ministers have six weeks in which to call in the proposal if they have any concerns about any aspects of the proposal. The Comhairle will not move to implement any proposals within that six week period but the estimated date of implementation of any closure is, in respect of Shawbost S1/S2 provision is June 2012. In producing, the Consultation Report the Comhairle is required to take into account all of the consultation responses together with any comments made by HMle and that is obviously quite a detailed process. There is also legal requirement that the Comhairle carry out an Equalities Impact Assessment in relation to the proposals and again anything that comes out of this evening will contribute to preparing that assessment.

I am happy to take any questions about the procedure at this stage.

Catriona Stewart Thank you Mr Mackay. If there are no questions on procedure I will now ask the Director of Education and Children's Services to speak to the proposal document.

Joan Mackinnon Thank you very much Chair.

Good evening everybody. We are here tonight because as Councillor Stewart has outlined the context within the which we are discussing the proposal tonight is that we as officers of the Comhairle recognise that we have falling rolls, more schools that we require for the number of pupils we have got and we have got an aspiration to have the optimum number of schools which are the best condition possible to provide our young people with the best environments in which to learn. This at a time when are moving to the full implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, it is actually a very exciting time in terms of Scottish education. I believe that August will see the full implementation of Curriculum for Excellence and to just give it a bit of context, we have been engaged since the late 80's in a programme which we all know as the 5-14 programme. This was introduced in order to give better definition of the Curriculum, better assessment and recording procedures and to give better information to parents and 5-14 did all these things. With its inception came the common course for S1/S2 so that wherever really you were in Scotland pupils at S1 and S2 had similar experiences in terms of their learning and the courses that were on offer in schools. Now I know that parents here, and your presence here tonight reflects it, have been very satisfied with the S1/S2 course that has been delivered at Shawbost but, however, no matter how happy we may have been with that there has been a recognition nationally that S1/S2 has been problematic. HMle wrote a report in 2001 on Standards and Quality in education and they say in that report that S1/S2 remains a problem, of long standing which HMI have raised consistently in reports over the last 15 years. Schools must ask themselves why it is that many pupils who perform well in P7 mark time or even regress in S1 and S1, now that has been the issue with S1/S1 provision across Scotland. At the Nicolson Institute guidance staff for the past number of years have been asking their sixth years pupils before they leave about their experiences in school and using that feedback, if you like in order to improve the experience of other pupils, and when they are asked about their S1/S2 experience and mark they include pupils from all the outlying schools as well, not just pupils who have been educated from S1 to S6 in the Nicolson, they say yeh S1/S2 it was ok but we didn't need 2 years of it. Another prevalent view is that S1 was much too much like a repeat of P7. Now that is what pupils have experienced, that is not the teachers fault it was the fault of the course really, fundamentally there was an issue with them. That is what all the Reports have been pointing up. Now that is really why in a way the Government, not just the current one but the previous one as well, recognised that there were issues to do with the curriculum in Scotland and that is why we have got this new Curriculum for Excellence which is being implemented fully from August. Another message coming out from pupils

was that the fifth year if too pressured, they did S1/S2, whether they did it in the Nicolson or in the outlying schools went into third in the Nicolson, had two years to prepare for Standard Grades and then went back to school in August and basically had nine months in which to prepare for the Higher and there has been a recognition by pupils, and by staff for a long time that probably there is far too much pressure on fifth year, a race to Higher as they say, whereas there was two years for preparation for Standard Grades and maybe certainly not all pupils needed two years to prepare for Standard Grade. We are looking forward to the new senior phase where pupils will experience their curriculum in accordance with the courses that they follow rather than somebody being on fourth, fifth or sixth year that it will be really more align to I am taking this course that will lead to Intermediate 2 or to Higher or to Advanced Higher and that pupils may be doing these at different times during the senior phase, which is why the Nicolson are looking at probably introducing the beginning of the third year course after April of Second year from next year, that is part of the plan that they have. So therefore there is really a pressure on us to look at the kind of education that we are offering to our pupils between S1 and S3. Now here at Sgoil Shiabost as in all schools the staff have been engaging with the outcomes and experiences as set out in the Curriculum for Excellence documents and the Headteacher, like other Headteachers has adjusted his timetable to enable the pupils to engage with what we are calling Rich Tasks. If you want an explanation of what a Rich Task is it is where students are able to use their learning, their understanding, their knowledge and skills in an interdisciplinary project of activities and so that they can make connections with their learning. This interdisciplinary learning is, if you like, one of the foundations of what Curriculum for Excellence is actually pushing. My own feeling is that Curriculum for Excellence is much more about how pupils learn rather than what it is that the course content will be. It will be about their learning experiences, the way in which they learn, not so much in the boxes that previous they have. Interdisciplinary learning helps to make pupils to make links across learning and therefore makes the learning experience deeper. However the fact that the school here has to be staffed by a number of itinerant staff creates an inflexibility for the Headteacher that limits the timetabling options available to them. Now it is simply that we cannot get away from the fact that in order to staff S1 and S2 schools we have to make use of itinerant staff i.e. staff that are shared between here and Lionel for example and other schools and therefore you have to timetable for the days that you have these subjects on these particular days. So when you come to looking at blocking times for pupils to be engaged in Rich Tasks there is a limit within the flexibility that you have in a school like this. Recently the Times Educational Supplement had a very interesting article on the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence, it was written by a very experienced Headteacher who had been the head of a very successful in Kirkintulloch and he now has moved on and works as a consultant and he was warning school timetablers that HMI would be looking for evidence that pupils were making better progress in S1 and S2 and that they were being offered personalisation and choices under CfE. He said that the best way to this was by timetabling S1 to S3 classes in blocks for subjects which would make it easier to group pupils by ability and allow them to work at an appropriate level. You may or may not agree with that I am just telling you, the article was really interesting. However one thing he did say that any Headteacher who works with part time staff and itinerant staff, by virtue of the fact that they are not in the school all the time are part time staff, present a challenge. This is a challenge when you try to construct a timetable which will allow you to teach in blocks when you share teachers between schools. So there is a challenge for a school like Shawbost to provide personalisation and choice within the constraints of a small staff and a small staff that includes itinerant staff.

So that is why we are here. Because we believe that the best educational experience for young people will be to move to a place where they can have their education S1-S3 without a transition point. So I would like to draw your attention now to the proposal document and I will take you straight to the Section 9 because the sections up to section 9 are really the background, the context, the Council's aspirations for where we are tonight. Section 9 is the educational benefit statement which is part of this document which is set down in law and before anything else is said I would like to point out that this is not about Shawbost school providing educational benefits for pupils, this is about our proposal where we are saying, if pupils from Shawbost move to the Nicolson which is what the proposal is about that is what we, my colleague here and myself, the officers of the Comhairle are proposing, this is setting out that we think that are benefits for pupils in our proposal and so it looks at things like the Curriculum and there it is outlining, not fully but to some degree the fact that the Nicolson can offer more choice. Now actually it is quite simply obvious because if you have more staff and more pupils obviously you have got more flexibility to offer more choice. It is as simple as that, it is not that Shawbost would be unwilling or unable but you haven't got the critical mass of pupils and you haven't got the critical mass of staff to enable you to offer the choice that you can offer if you have a requisite number. For example if you have got a class of 20 here and you are offering options, which I know that Shawbost do, in order to make a viable class group you cannot, say if you were giving a choice of 6 things, you may only be able to run with 2 of them maybe because the number of pupils you have got are small and the number of staff you have is smaller. In the Nicolson you may have 136 pupils with a choice of 9 or 10 things and a lot more staff so therefore obviously you have got more flexibility. It looks through other things like learning environment, capacity, extra curricular activities, travel. I would just want to say that we fully recognise that travel is an issue, travel is an issue, we cannot bring Stornoway closer to Shawbost and its catchment area. We cannot bring the Nicolson nearer to here so we know that the distance between your homes and the Nicolson is fixed and we recognise that, that is an issue however we do feel that we can look at that will minimise the time that pupils will spend on the road.

Just to summarise in 9.11 there, is what we believe really at the end of the day will be the benefits. It will be the greater opportunity, increased opportunities for pupils, much greater flexibility in grouping children for learning and teaching, greater flexibility in the deployment of staff because you have got more staff. Larger staff will offer a wider range of expertise and you will only have one transition stage from P7 to secondary. I know that if you live in Shawbost and your children come to Shawbost for primary for education they have only one transition point as well at the moment. However pupils come here from Carloway and from Bragar and these pupils have a transition stage at the end of primary 7 and another two years later they have another transition. While transitions that are managed well, are fine and there have to be transitions, there are transitions from pre school into school and transitions from primary into secondary that we would endeavour to minimise the number of transitions that children have.

Can I just again re-iterate what Mr MacKay said the considerations here of factors affecting rural schools, just to point out to the error in the document where we have labelled Shawbost school as an accessible rural school it is actually a very remote rural school as all our schools are, including the Nicolson Institute, all our schools are classified as very remote and rural. It is actually to do with the distance a school is from a population centre of 10,000. Now Stornoway has a population of around about 8,000 so we are nowhere near a centre of population that has 10,000, very possibly Inverness, maybe the nearest centre of population that we have with that number of people in it. So that is why it is designed as very remote and rural

and it actually doesn't affect the way you deal with the proposal in anyway. We have looked at viable alternatives to closure where we have looked at maintaining the status quo, extending the provision from S1 to S3 or extending the provision to S1 to S6. In our view these, although we have looked at them we do not consider them to viable but these were the options that we did look at. I don't think I want to say anymore just now, this is really about you having your say, us listening to you. AS its been said, its being recorded, there will be a verbatim report of it. We will endeavour to answer any question that you may have now, if we are not able to we will get back to you but also we will just note your comments if you have strong views you to be taken into account. And can I just emphasise this is a consultation, we had a conversation, it didn't form any formal part of this process but it was part of a process that the Comhairle was going through. Now we will tonight take anything that you say on board and it will be considered in a Report that I will present to Comhairle in October so please don't feel that anything you have said before hasn't been listened to, it has! But that will be listened to along with anything else that you say tonight. Thank you for listening.

Catriona Stewart Thank you. Before I open the floor for questions could I just say to the people who came after the meeting started could you please switch off your mobile phones. It is very important because it does interfere with the recording.

When you wish to ask a question would you please wait for the microphone to come to you and if you give your name before you either ask a question or give a view, it will make it easier for those who are actually typing up. So I will now open the floor questions.

Christina Macinnes It is argued that the Nicolson will be able to offer a larger number of courses but the number of courses offered has little bearing on pupils success, the quality of teaching and the wellbeing of pupils are far more important. The smaller size of Shawbost school in comparison to the Nicolson shouldn't just be viewed by trying to find all the negatives as I feel has been done in the review. There are an abundance of positives. The fact that each child is visible and well known to the adults that teach them means that teachers can be more responsive to their learning styles. The school has a very positive ethos, the standard of behaviour is good and crucially in my opinion the school has very close links with parents and the wider community. I wonder what proportion of parents from the Westside who have been involved with their children schooling up to S2 go onto become involved once that schooling is on the other side of the island. From a teachers point of view I would say the benefits of working in a smaller school outlay the downsides, it is not just pupils who have a greater voice in a small school but each staff member. The anonymity of a large school can be a barrier to the professional development of a teacher, just as it can be for the academic and personal development of a lonely frightened pupil and in regard to pupils results slipping in the first two years of secondary school, one of my theories in this and it is just my own theory, is that of fear, well this isn't my own theory this is fact. Fear is one of the greatest barriers to learning and perhaps a big part of the reason that statistically so many children do appear to slip academically in their first two years of secondary school. One other point I would just say is that Slovenia I think the smallest nation ever to qualify for the World Cup, I saw a good banner at their match in South Africa saying "never judge greatness by size". Just quickly another point would just be that you are going to have these challenges regarding the small schools regardless because Barra, Castlebay School in Barra their first S1 and S2 pupil figures are 12 and 13. Sgoil Lionacleit's are 32 and 36. Sir E Scott are 21 and 20. Comparable figures, some lower some higher but perhaps given that we have these schools we should just rise to the challenge.

- Catriona Stewart Thank you.
- Kareen Macleod My sons both attended Shawbost school in first and second year before the transferred to the Nicolson. My son is currently on 3<sup>rd</sup> year doing Int2 Physics and has been told from the beginning of his course that it was designed for a 5<sup>th</sup> year class and it was far too difficult for them anyway. So my son has basically given up on his physics which he is more than capable of doing as the teachers in Shawbost would tell you, and has more or less given up on school in the Nicolson. Where he was thriving at the Shawbost school in the smaller class size, the teachers knew him, knew how to engage him in his learning which I think has been lost in the Nicolson.
- April Maclean I myself am a product of both Shawbost secondary and the Nicolson, and bear with me I am reading, I can't read my own writing. I don't agree with the Council's claims because although they are suggesting the Nicolson, is thriving it's great there are no problems there, it is not comparable at all. Well in my own opinion what I saw there was bullying, substance abuse in crazy amounts, the behaviour in general just going, everything is acceptable. I mean it's inevitable that you are going to go to that age, you are going to go to third year and things do change and they are going to grow up but there is an air of innocence over in the rural communities, there is an air of innocence and there is so many points to such as the Barvas moor. I know some people might think, oh not this again, but that is going to be in your heads that your kids are going over there twice a day. If they are going over at 11, some 11/12, well they are going over there very early impressionable stage and then you are putting them in there, going from primary 7 and I know there are people over in Stornoway that are going straight into 1<sup>st</sup> year in the Nicolson as well but they have been acclimatised, you know they have been in, they are townies. Now I am not being derogative there, that is not what I am saying, they have been in that environment. You are throwing kids over there that have been used to a total different way of life but they are going to have to go over there but, this is very subjective but in my own opinion the Nicolson was not what it is being made out to be. I personally was a very confident individual so it wasn't the same effect on myself but I know so many people, bullying was one thing, it was just so easy to get lost in the crowd, not for myself but I have seen it. I have seen the hurt in people who it was affecting. It is such a dangerous place especially at the age of 11 and you are throwing the kids over there, they don't know anyone because the people in town they have a bit of advantage being they are used to the people, they are used to the way of life, they are streetwise. I know they are going to have to go over at some point but I don't see why it has to be now, if we have an option.
- Joan Mackinnon I take your point and I know that's what you think but just to remind you that the Nicolson's catchment area includes, Uig and Pairc and if I can be anecdotal I was at a parent evening in the Nicolson this year where there were parents of children who had come through Gaelic medium and that was the purpose, it was a Gaelic medium evening for parents. I spoke to this lady whom I know because she is a friend of my sisters and she lives in Marvig and her daughter was the only girl in primary school, in Pairc school since she went to school in primary 1 since she left in primary 7 she was the only girl in her class of a class of 3 and she went to the Nicolson and her mum said, "of course I was worried about it but it has been the best year of her school life yet, she is just having a ball. She has got friends for the first time" I know that this might not be repeated, I am just saying it in balance to what you were saying. You are talking about throwing children over there, some people go and have a very positive experience although I take your point.

April Maclean In that case that is them coming from small classes sizes, that is a very

Joan Mackinnon I thought that was your point.

April Maclean That wasn't, they didn't have a choice, whereas we do have a choice but you are fighting against us, the choice been taking away from us.

Joan Mackinnon It is not about that mum but she did have a choice, she could have made a placing request into Sgoil nan Loch, she chose not too.

April Maclean It could have been just as good a year, I know that in that case she maybe did thrive in that 1<sup>st</sup> year.

Joan Mackinnon I wasn't fishing for that comment from the mum either, can I just say.

April Maclean Sorry I thought you were calling me the mother there, I am the older the sister.

Iain Hunter Good evening, my name is Iain Hunter. I am enquiring about the Nicolson being a state of the art school. I find it very strange that every other school in Scotland that has produced a new secondary school has its own sports facility and we have to deal with a second hand sports facility which is for the public and it is open to the public. Now a couple of year ago they lost the lassie, she disappeared off to Pakistan before the Nicolson knew where she was, what is going to happen to our children and another thing-self assessment. You talk about kids being asked about assessing what they are doing at school or what they have done at school. Self assessment doesn't work, I find it very strange that the Council are using that information. Kids of that age even though they have left school don't know a lot about life, a lot about what is happening.

Catriona Stewart You are quite right to say that there will be a new state of the art school in Stornoway in 2012 and incorporated into the school will be brand new sporting facilities so it is not just the sports centre, which is in itself relatively new, that will be used by pupils but there will be brand new facilities within the actual building and there will be new pitches to the back of the school as well.

Iain Hunter Well if you have a look at this school here and every other primary school or secondary or S1/S2 there is a fence, the public are kept away from the kids which a really nice. When you go to the Nicolson you see the sports centre there is a lot of public around it is open to the public. This shouldn't happen and I have said before there is a lassie that disappeared of to Pakistan and nobody knew anything about her until she was there, what is going to happen if one of our children disappears from the Nicolson or from the sports centre? I mean you have a barbed wire, almost, round these schools. It is nice to have them nice and secure. When they go to the secondary in Stornoway there is nothing there, you don't even look after them when they go out to meet the buses. When are they going to get run over there?

Catriona Stewart I am sure you are aware there have been new security arrangements put into the Nicolson since that incident. The new Nicolson campus will also be fully secure, the bus park will be within the new campus as well.

Iain Hunter Well it is still unsafe as it is just now and you are talking about the Nicolson campus, fair enough, but what about the sports facility. The public facility that you are using so you have cameras in there to watch them every time they are in there.

- Bernard Chisholm All of our school facilities are subject to risk assessments for any activity we either do with the children or any construction we have. The security round the small S1/2's and the Nicolson are proportionate, I think young people here, the difference is in size of school. Individual cases, I certainly would be cautious commenting about but I can always say to you that there have been expectations in all schools of all sizes but we learn lessons from situations and we apply them. I certainly wouldn't go into any individual one. The third comment just in case I am picking you right, about self assessment, I think the comment you made about self assessment. I think it is true to say for your schools in the Western Isles, which Shawbost and all of our schools we are proud of their attainment and I don't think there is any debate with any of us here about that. I think self assessment both at the level of the school and the students engagement with their own learning has significantly contributed to that and will continue. So in terms of the sports facilities this building and others like have community facilities, I think we take and compliant with all the appropriate risk assessments in that and I have no anxieties in relation for what we plan for the Nicolson or current in place with the Sports Centre.
- Gordon Mackay Hello my name is Gordon Mackay from North Shawbost. We are just hearing there about a school of excellence, well we have a school of excellence here right in Shawbost so why are planning taking that away? I have two daughters in education in the Nicolson, one this year has been taking Highers which you people have failed in education standards. Biology teacher was taken on at the beginning of the school term, she was later told to look for another job, then you took part time teachers on there, taken two part time teachers on to teach biology. One could only teach one level. That children doing our Highers. All you people here that's from this island all had good educations, you are actually stripping this away you are taking the school away from S1/S2 which does have a high standard I can assure you of that. It is just not acceptable that you are willing to take this away because of bad housekeeping my Council, yourselves. It is just not on, you are asking children to take a long hike everyday, 5 days a week, by Thursday or Friday they are just going to lose interest in education. A lot will lose interest and be hiking it away into the town. What precautions are you going to put in place to stop that? As this gentleman said about risk assessment, well we hear a lot about risks assessments, we are hearing about children getting murdered where risk assessments were done and it has never worked, I can assure you.
- Joan Mackinnon Thank you for that.
- Calum Morrison A couple of questions, give you a chance to give us a few answers. A large number of the secondary teachers are retiring at the end of this term and voluntary early retirement scheme, can you tell us of all these rural secondary schools, the full time teachers, who many of them are going to be replaced with full time staff based in these schools? Are they all going to be replaced like for like?
- Joan Mackinnon The staffing arrangements for our authority are done globally so we will be looking at what we require in order to deliver the education that we are currently expected to do and the school will get its staffing entitlement in order to deliver the Curriculum that it delivers.
- Calum Morrison So you are not guaranteeing full time staff back to replace full staff that are based in the school?
- Joan Mackinnon I think that is probably accurate.

- Calum Morrison Right so basically what you are saying then is the likes of this school will be losing a maths teacher so we will now have possibly an itinerant maths teacher?
- Joan Mackinnon The school will have maths delivered, the requisite number of periods that it requires for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year, there will be teachers to teach the classes that will be here. That person might not be here permanently that is right, they might be shared with another school because we do not possibly require a full time maths teacher to be here all week.
- Calum Morrison So you are saying that you don't want itinerants coming in here to do small subjects but it will be ideal for our kids to have maths or English or something like that taught by itinerants. If that is the case why cant we have biology, chemistry all these other subjects that you say you can teach in the Nicolson, why cant they be taught by itinerants coming out here and to Lionel as wee satellite schools rather than making the many 160 kid travel in to Stornoway why not make three or four teachers travel out to the schools.
- Joan MacKinnon I think I tried to explain at the beginning that having itinerant staff is not the ideal.
- Calum Morrison It might not be ideal but at least they would be getting a good quality of education locally.
- Can I bring you back to one other point as well regarding the pupils transferring in at S1 as you have in your document. If, and I mean IF you get your way and this school is closed then you are going to guarantee all the S1 pupils the access to all other course, computing, modern studies all these other items should the school close and they go straight from P7. What opportunities are given to the pupils who will be starting off here in S1 and would be transferring at S2 when the schools close midway through their time here, are they going to have access to any of these courses?
- Joan Mackinnon Do you mean while they are doing S1 here?
- Calum Morrison Yes
- Joan Mackinnon Possibly not but we will look at that
- Calum Morrison So basically they are going to be disadvantaged as well. The only reason I ask as my daughter will be one of the first ones that will leave half way through this term, through the closure period. So you are basically saying you don't know whether she is going to have access to these classes or not.
- Joan Mackinnon If the proposal reaches, if the consultation concludes with a decision to close or to discontinue the S1/S2 provision here, we would then look at the experience of the S1 pupils and would definitely try and minimise any disadvantage that might be built into the move. We would not be looking at that just now because we do not know if that will be the outcome.
- Malcolm Macarthur I am just wondering what was the point in the conversations we had at the beginning, what was the point of the conversation? We were told at the conversations that we would give you questions that you answer, you would give us the answers but like Carloway, like Bragar, you have already told us it is part of the consultation but by holding back the information that you promised us, is it us to stop us funding out some of the figures, some of the information we were looking for, we were looking for this, for tonight to argue points against you. You have deliberately held all this information away from us.

Joan Mackinnon Well Mr Macarthur I can absolutely assure you that there is no intention on our part to keep any information from you at all and I think that Kirsteen, whoever she is, has been emailing us in advance of this meeting, we have tried to send every bit of information that we could that was asked for to her so that you had it in time for this meeting and anything else that you require after this meeting Derek Mackay has, not agreed but promised to send that information back to you. So whatever you think I absolutely refute that there was any intention whatsoever on our part to keep any information from you, that has never been. We may, we may not have sent you exactly what you were looking for, that could be a misunderstanding on our part as to what you were asking for or whatever but there is no intention to hide information, why would we? You could have it under FOI anyway.

Malcolm Macarthur You asked us to make a list of questions and we asked for the answers up till last week and we haven't received. We received the questions that we originally asked for but we didn't receive one answer to any of the questions that we asked for.

Joan Mackinnon Are you referring to the Carloway conversation?

Malcolm Macarthur No I am talking about the Shawbost conversation. The Carloway conversation you didn't answer any of them either but I am talking about the Shawbost ones.

Joan Mackinnon Well can I just correct. We didn't ask you to give us a whole lot questions, that was something we didn't ask but we said if you had a question we would try and answer it and to my knowledge we have answered the questions that were asked for in Carloway. And we have answered

Malcolm Macarthur I am not talking about Carloway

Joan Mackinnon Shawbost, sorry. To my knowledge we have answered them in both places.

Malcolm Macarthur We have the paperwork right here of what we were sent and there is not one answer to any of the questions that you forward on to us. So would it be possible at the end of this to get these answers to these questions so we can use that information in our submission later on.

Joan Mackinnon Absolutely if there is any outstanding questions.

Malcolm Macarthur That's fine, thank you very much

Morag Munro That paper that you were, is that what appeared on the Report that went to Education and Children's Services? The list. Because on that list I only see one question and that is "Are canteen facilities at the Nicolson Institute adequate for demand?" and I think we told you that the answer was yes at the time. I see no other questions on here, I see issues that you have raised but no questions.

Malcolm Macarthur I have a list of maybe 30 questions on this that you actually sent back to us but

Morag Munro There are no questions except the one that I mentioned on that list.

Malcolm Macarthur Would it be possible

Morag Munro Would you read to me any one of the questions? Would you read to me a question on that? These are suggestions, for example have a Westside S1/S6 Gaelic school at the new Westside site. Make Shawbost a Gaelic secondary, more subjects in secondary through the medium of Gaelic. These are suggestions as far as I can make out, not questions.

Christine Maclean Hello Christine Maclean here. If you carry on Morag you will find that there are questions "who takes responsibility for the children from the time they leave home to their return at night, inclusive of all lunch time?"

Morag Munro Where is that question?

Christine Maclean There are not actually on the summary Morag, there are actually on the comments pages that we wrote in on.

Joan Mackinnon I think these were dealt with at the plenary session at the end of that meeting because these were the things that came back in the plenary.

Christine Maclean I don't think so Joan.

Bernard Chisholm Certainly any questions that remain as we said, if they come after tonight, either you give them to us now or after the meeting or send them you will have the information necessary for your report.

Calum Morrison Seeing as we are still on that, one point, can we ask that all the information from these pages, from the conversations, can that be submitted as part of the official consultation response from this community? From all the pages that were filled that night plus the summary and everything, all that goes to HMle as well please

Catriona Stewart Not a problem.

Bernard Chisholm Infact we kept copies of all of that and that will form part of all the documentations that we submit.

Marlene Macleod You sent out the WISP newsletter and in the second page of the newsletter it states here that the external works will be completed in December 2012, does that mean our children are going to the Nicolson while works are still happening in August 2012 or is Shawbost going to stay open until the works are complete? In you document you have stated that we will not close your school until the works are completed.

Catriona Stewart The school will be fully operational from August. What they refer to there

Marlene Macleod You can guarantee that to us?

Catriona Stewart Yes it is landscaping works they are talking about that will be completed by the end of the year. The school, I think if you read further on in there it tells you when it will be handed over to the authority and it will be ready for pupils in August 2012.

Joan Mackinnon Also if there were any significant delay obviously we have said that pupils will not move until the school is in operation, so that is a guarantee. But we are confident that the build will be on schedule.

Gemma MacLennan Being a frequent user of the sports centre there is very often children in the changing rooms, now myself and colleagues who use the facility are quite often complaining about this and what we are told is that the children's changing rooms are kept locked, they are always locked, only a teacher can open them with swipe card. Now what is the point if you cant control the kids just now. The reason being that their changing rooms are open so that incase anybody was to go in lurk in there but just now the children are actually going in to adults changing and staying there. So what is to stop any person from being in the changing rooms at that time?

Joan Mackinnon We can take that issue back to Sport and Health

Gemma MacLennan I have spoken to Tony Wade at the Sports Centre and his reason behind it saying was that they don't have staff and that when the kids are there, they have got no power to monitor the kids and they don't have enough staff to be going in and out of changing rooms to be keeping children out of the adult changing rooms.

Joan Mackinnon We will take that as a question and we will discuss that with Sport and Health and with the school

Gemma MacLennan You are just now saying that you will be able to look after children, you cant look after the children that are in the Nicolson just now how are you going to cope when the outlying schools come in as well, especially if you are going got be using the Nicolson Sports Centre.

Joan MacKinnon We will look into that because there should not be a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year class in the Sports Centre without a teacher for a start, so we will just check this through. At lunch time they should not be in the changing rooms anyway.

Malcolm Macarthur Transport from Carloway, we spoke about it at the conversations and just wondering if you had any more thoughts on how we can transport our children, safely, from Carloway to Stornoway and back again.

Joan Mackinnon Are they not transported safely at the moment from Carloway to Stornoway and back?

Malcolm Macarthur No I don't think so. The service run, we operate on a service run now we have alcoholics continuously on that service run. We cant do milk and toast in Carloway school without a disclosure. We have mentioned this before, you are not taking anything on board. Our kids, it is fine for some, some buses, Breasclete down the road have a bus designated for the school. They are at home 20 to 30 minutes before the first Carloway pupil returns home. Not only that we have along with the drunks that are on the bus, we want out children to be safe. Anybody, any girl and young boy that goes onto that bus is educated to a standard that they shouldn't be with the language and taunting that they get off some of these passengers. Now do you think it is safe?

Joan Mackinnon Now we have already said that under the review that we are undertaking just now that we are going to review the whole school transport arrangements, we do have an integrated service, it does mean that some your villages have a better service than they would have if we haven't got this integrated service. We have undertaken that there will be a full review of school transport in light of all the arrangements that we are currently looking at. So we can guarantee you there will be a full review.

Malcolm Macarthur Would that mean that there is a chance of getting a designated school run for all the pupils who deserve a designated school run?

Joan Mackinnon We are looking at all aspects of the school transport service.

- David Carmichael Good evening, David Carmichael, Carloway resident. You mention about itinerant teachers and how it is basically affecting pupils at S1/S2 level in rural schools. Can you possibly explain why the attainment level is far higher here than it is in the Nicolson?
- Joan Mackinnon I don't think you can say that it is far higher than it is in the Nicolson. I know that attainment is very good here but we are also confident that it is good at the Nicolson and there HMI Report although it is some years back now has said clearly attainment at S1 and S2 is good.
- David Carmichael But I presume if you have an integrated Nicolson, the class sizes will increase so you are actually going to put more pupils into a class with the same number of teachers, one teacher to a higher number of pupils. How is that going to be beneficial to the education of the pupils? It just doesn't seem to work
- Joan Mackinnon One thing we know is that attainment when it comes to external examination in the Nicolson and you will have pupils, you yourselves will have children who have been through S4 to S6 and the SQA examinations and they do well. They out-perform the national average and our comparator authority averages on all the measures that we look at but having said that to get back to your class sizes. There are actually limits on class sizes and although the pupils are going together it will just mean that there will be sections on 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup>, whatever, if the 1<sup>st</sup> year is bigger. They are actually over time because the rolls are falling the S1 intake will not be much more than it currently is.
- David Carmichael Ok from a personal point of view I have got a child who will be going into the Nicolson next year, he is being given obviously choices to choose. One of the choices he went for as an alternative after getting the first one refused because it was too much of a similar thing he cannot get into because the class is already full. So your restrictions are actually there, you cant actually offer, three subjects my wife is now telling me. You are restricting what they actually do, the Nicolson is not offering the be all and end all of an educational system but you are trying to sell that it is. You are going to have more pupils going into that school and you are going to have less choices available to them because when the class is full you will put them in something else and that does happen.
- Joan Mackinnon Thank you very much for that.
- Iain Hunter You are talking about transport. Now I have been driving the buses around here for 17 years and so far the Council hasn't got the buses correct for the school kids. One time driving from Carloway to Stornoway 68 passengers on a service bus which only had 57 seats. The Transport Department of the Council said that 20% of the school kids would be missing for the first day now on top of that I had to put in 15 passengers, they are paying passengers. Now the Council doesn't seem to know that they are doing with these kids. Now to make things worse when the buses get round to Leurbost there is usually Council operatives there trying shuffle kids onto buses because they don't know what amount of kids they are dealing with and then when the get to the Nicolson there are other representatives there trying to see what bus has got spare spaces for kids. Now in some cases kids have been put onto buses that aren't coming back at night. This is supposed to be the Council that is caring for the children and yet they don't seem to give anything, they don't care about these kids. They just throw them on buses and don't care where they go or how they get there. This is supposed to be Council that is supposed to be caring

- Joan Mackinnon Well can I just say that we do care about the pupils in our schools and if any parent has got any concerns about the transport they should really get in touch with us because we don't have any letters complaining about the transport.
- Iain Hunter Well this has been happening for 17 years and it will happen again this year. The bus operators and the bus drivers that have to haul everything out of the mire.
- Joan Mackinnon Have you reported it?
- Iain Hunter There was a minibus put out from the Council themselves to pick up some kids from Harris, well not Harris but Lochs. So they had put them onto another bus which it was just part of the bus operators that took them. Now you are supposed to say that you have got everything sussed and at the moment I don't think you have anything sussed you are just hoping everything will go perfect, well it wont. You have got a lot of problems, you have got them now and not willing to look at them or solve them. Right here and now you can actually say if you are proper people in the job that you can get 95% of kids on buses and 5% may be new kids coming in or kids going away but you wont get it right this year either. The bus passes will be late going out and this is a caring Council for our kids.
- Catriona Stewart Thank you Mr Hunter I presume you have reported these to the Council, if not we shall certainly detail them to the Transport Manager.
- Iain Hunter Well you just have to go and have a look at the Nicolson and the buses come for the first day and you are just opposite the place where the kids come in. for years that place has been open for kids to run around, you haven't made any effort whatsoever to put any barriers up or try and stop the kids from running out in front of buses. There are kids that stand there look the opposite way when a bus comes in and its coming in at 5 mph and if that kid is in the wrong place at the wrong time it is under the front wheel and the driver cant do a damn thing about it.
- Catriona Stewart Thank you Mr Hunter.
- You are very quiet on this side of the room, poor Donald is over there all the time.
- David Carmichael We are going to be sticking on transport by the looks of at least one more question. You are excelling the virtues of the Nicolson because it offers far better lunch time and after school activities. Now if you are living in this part of the world and as it has been reported in a few other questions maybe and just may be you will get it right for the regular school run if people leave directly after school. I don't see any accommodation for people who do want to take after school activities, how are they going to get home? Are they going to walk down to town, or will a bus be provided in a secure permitted bus park? Could you please explain that one?
- Joan Mackinnon Currently what happens is, any pupils from any school who wish to remain behind for after school activities and are involved in transport get a bus pass.

- David Carmichael I am sorry Joan but you are actually not answering my question the way I want it answered. If it was actually down here which is your location there maybe a bus laid on but more parents will be able to pick their kids from a general locality. If you are actually 20 miles away, in town, and you want kids to flourish by afterschool activities does development, you are then relying on them making their own way down to town unless you are telling me otherwise. There is no point in saying there is a bus pass on you go. You are taking no responsibility for them, I don't think there will be any risk assessment that will cover this eventuality. We have already gone over the point of view they are accessible to anybody on this bus because in most services it becomes a regular service. I would like maybe you to take the occasion and travel on these buses and witness it for yourself, I don't think you would appreciate what you see.
- Charlie Stewart Can I refer to the proposal document please, a few items on it? The first one is 9.4 ICT which states the pupils of Shawbost school would have access to an extensive range of ICT resources in the proposed move to the Nicolson Institute as there would be wireless internet access throughout the school and all classrooms will be equipped with interactive smart boards. That is already the case in Shawbost, that statement implies that it isn't.
- Joan Mackinnon We are not saying that pupils do not have access to very good ICT equipment in Shawbost, we know that they do but you yourself know that ICT equipment becomes obsolete very quickly and what we are saying is that the new Nicolson will have state of the art ICT facilities, that is what we are saying and that just includes things like teaching walls which aren't in the schools we currently have. It is just that it will be the very best that is available at that time, not to say that Shawbost doesn't have good ICT.
- Charlie Stewart Can I refer you to 9.8 as well please? Which is, it is believed that the proposal will have no impact on local, social or economic activities, believed by whom? It isn't enough to say in a proposal document that it is believed my council tax is too high for the services I get but I still have to pay my council tax. On a proposal like this you can't put "it is believed".
- Joan Mackinnon Well maybe I should have said that the officials at the Education Department believe, because that's what we believe,
- Charlie Stewart Based on what though?
- Joan Mackinnon The fact that the school isn't closing
- Charlie Stewart Is there research to back up beliefs?
- Joan Mackinnon I haven't done any research
- Charlie Stewart That's opinion rather than.
- Joan Mackinnon Actually can I just correct, although I said that flippantly, we did look at the migration study, the Outer Hebrides Migration Study that was done by the Development Department at the Council and I have also spoken to my colleagues there. So in coming to writing that statement we actually spoke to people like that, we looked at the use of the school and then we wrote that statement. Basically the fact that the school is still open it will be as available to the community as it is currently.
- Charlie Stewart Ok 9.13. There is only one more after this. The proposals result in S1/S2 pupils from Shawbost school experiencing a more stimulating learning environment by attending a school which has been purposely built again is there any research or facts to base that?

- Joan Mackinnon If you visited one of these new schools you will see that they are quite inspiring.
- Charlie Stewart Well I have had three children come to this school and have been quite inspired by this school.
- One more, 10.5. It is not believed that it is the discontinuation of the S1/S2 provision at Shawbost school would significantly impact on the identified key factors for sustainable communities, again it is not enough what is to back that statement up?
- Bernard Chisholm I think the migration study talks about employment, economic, housing. The evidence that we got is that schools themselves do not necessary produce the work or employment in the local or the stimulus for the economy. Our biggest challenge in schools is pupil population, that's the big challenge facing us there and in terms of those factors then we are quite confident. In terms of the social ones that you mention with the school remaining then the community still has access, the community still involve themselves with the education of all the children whether they are transferring to the Nicolson in S1 or S3.
- Catriona Stewart Donald, before we take anymore questions can you see if you can open the door and let some fresh air in because it is getting very warm and some people would like a comfort break I believe. We will shut the door if it interferes with the recording.
- Joan Mackinnon I hope this isn't because there is a lot of hot air.
- Calum Morrison Can I take you back to 10.2? The viable alternatives to closure. Just the first point, can you give us a clear explanation as to why the class sizes here are not educationally beneficial based on the really attainment results that this school is achieving and the staff here are fantastic. I just want to know how you can turn round and say that's it not educationally beneficial for our kids to be in this school.
- Joan Mackinnon Well that is based around the fact that if you are offering choices and you don't have a critical mass it is very difficult to offer choice.
- Calum Morrison But if the pupils are happy enough to come here the parents are happy to here whether they have the wide choice you are offering, not everybody that goes to the Nicolson takes up the wide choices that are there either. We want our children educated in the main subjects, to a very high standard and they get that here. So why change it, if it isn't broke.
- Joan Mackinnon Ok just for the record can we just ascertain that you are quite happy with the provision that you have here with the choice that you have here and that you don't really need to have wider choice, is that what you are saying? For the record.
- Calum Morrison Well at the moment that is fine because you are denying us the opportunity for itinerant teachers to give us the other subjects. You are also saying in the document that the flexibility for the deployment of staff is good, well give us that flexibility, deploy the staff here as well. They said it easier to take the teachers to the pupils than it is to send all these kids back into the Nicolson.
- One other point on that as well, there is no sort of other option given except to close at this moment in time. As far as we are aware and in the documents you have already produced yourselves on numbers this school is viable for many years to come, what is the rush to close?

- Joan Mackinnon Well we believe that with the introduction of the new Curriculum that this an opportune time to move pupils so that they maximise what the curriculum can offer them.
- Calum Morrison But surely if any parents feel that their children are being disadvantaged here they have the option to make a placement request to the Nicolson themselves. Why move all the kids, for the sake of may be one or two children who may be ahead of the grade, shall we say. Why move all the children when you could actually just offer the opportunity for the once who are well advanced to make a direct transfer to the Nicolson, why was that not considered?
- Joan Mackinnon Well I have to say that there are some limitations on what could be offered here for pupils who will be moving into level 4 of Curriculum for Excellence while it would be able to deliver it to a degree, there is a limitation there and therefore that's why we are proposing the good of all that S1 to S3 be a block and that best be delivered in the Nicolson.
- Calum Morrison I am not sure it is going to be good for all, it will be good for one or two who are at the top end of it. It might not be so good for everybody.
- Joan Mackinnon Thank you for your point.
- Christine Maclean I am still going to speak to 10.2 and viable alternatives to closure. I notice there you have got three that you are considering are not viable but I notice that there is one that was mentioned at the conversation that is not mentioned here at all and that is to have a Gaelic secondary over here.
- Bernard Chisholm There was a discussion and historically we have had consideration of Gaelic schools and we have been out to consult on that in various places in relation to the primary which is the body necessary in order to feed such a situation. Either in Uist or in Lewis where we have had significant proportion of young people enrolled in school in Gaelic we have not had the support for that. So that is a situation separate from this consultation in relation to the development of a Gaelic school. Certainly it has come up in other settings as well but it is not one that we have seen the demand or the opportunity on the Westside or we are even at the moment not sure we have that demand in the Stornoway area where we potentially could see the largest number combined for that.
- Christine Maclean Can you actually tell me how many children are going through Gaelic medium education at the moment?
- Joan Mackinnon In the Western Isles?
- Christine Maclean In Lewis
- Joan Mackinnon In Lewis, I wouldn't want to say the number as it might be wrong but that is something we can give tomorrow morning. Can I just say that the numbers here aren't very high, that is a challenge and even putting the numbers in Carloway and Shawbost together that still wouldn't give a very critical mass if you think of moving into secondary. However we are open to looking at that on a continual basis.
- Christine Maclean Ok so that brings me ok to class sizes Joan. What are the class size limits in the Nicolson?

Joan Mackinnon Class size limits as in? There are set class limits for practical classes and for English and maths in S1 and S2 but beyond that it is room capacity would be an issue I suppose. I think that there are no classes that are bigger than 30.

Christine Maclean So you are thinking of sending our kids who are getting a very good education here into class sizes of maybe 30 into the Nicolson where the high flyers will thrive the ones who are not so bright will be left behind on the middle of the road, they will be left to sink or swim.

Joan Mackinnon Well rather than pretend that I know what I am talking about with regard to the class sizes in the Nicolson I will do some research and get back to you on the class sizes for S1 and S2 so that you will see the reality.

Christine Maclean Thank you.

Malcolm Macarthur I am on about this travel time. Travel time in Carloway just now, it might not be as big an issue from Shawbost to Stornoway but from Carloway just now our pupils they leave the house at about 7.30am and they don't get back home till about 5.15pm. Now what is your opinion on that kind of travel time and what is options available for sorting this problem out?

Joan Mackinnon Like I said the Council has a policy which says that pupils shouldn't have to travel more than an hour and we have acknowledged that travel is an issue for us, we have said we cannot bring your homes nearer to the Nicolson that they currently are so therefore our solution would be to look, as I said before, reviewing the transport arrangements seeing if there are ways of avoiding buses taking a very torturous route and the most direct route possible for pupils from home to school is what we would be looking at, whether that meant side roads having their own links with the main transport or whatever but we are committed to reviewing it.

Malcolm Macarthur You commented at the conversations that lodgings might be an alternative

Joan Mackinnon That is the Council policy, if any pupil is travelling more than an hour, parents may request lodgings if they so wish.

Malcolm Macarthur So you would be quite happy to but an 11 year old in lodgings for a week.

Joan Mackinnon Not unless the parents wanted it of course, that is what I am saying. If parents requested it only. Only if parents wanted it would we look at it.

Malcolm Macarthur And who would be responsible while they are in lodgings, the parents who are 20 miles away same as when they are down town?

Joan Mackinnon No the Care Commission Standard would apply to any lodgings, landlady's or landlords. Can I just say, I mean I don't know whether any of you were ever in lodgings in Stornoway but I certainly have brothers and sisters who were because they lived in Tarbert and we didn't have a 6<sup>th</sup> year school and there landlady's were very, very good to them. I unfortunately had to be in a hostel in Inverness.

- Malcolm Macarthur Well some people have good experiences, some people have bad experiences but there is also an issue of down town. Some of these pupils who go down at dinner time and they are having their dinner in a pub. Now how do you think that is right? These kids shouldn't be allowed in a pub and ok the parents, the usual story, the parents are responsible while they are down town but the school has a responsibility for these pupils. We have to make sure that our children are, excuse me are you listening?
- Joan Mackinnon & Morag Munro Yes absolutely!
- Malcolm Macarthur We have to be sure that our children are safe when they go to the Nicolson at 11 years old.
- Morag Munro This is an issue that has come up and its an issue that we actually looked into, I think in past meetings we discussed whether in fact pupils should be kept in the school and not allowed down town. Actually what we understand is that, that would be an infringement on their human rights regardless whether you agree with that or not. So our line on this is, that if any parent wishes their child to remain in school during lunch hour that they write a letter to the Headteacher and the Headteacher is then authorised to keep that child within the school during lunch time.
- Bernard Chisholm Can I say in relation to the travel as well, the issue of the one hour that we look at. It is partly something that has been agreed over time and history to allow a situation to develop where what the routes we have currently got and the integrated transport we get children to school and back from rural areas without lodgings in a situation that is deemed reasonable and that being the guidance. I think we have said at previous meetings that clearly transport will be an increased cost in this type of proposal and one of the issues there in this very hall when we had some of the young people, they even had suggestions about ways to reduce some of the routes for themselves or the support that could be given. I think there is a genuine sympathy with the concern you had about the debate between the integrated and the dedicated and whether some routes need support and I think we are sympathetic to that and need to have a look at the implications of it. In relation to any facilities that young people use down the town, first of all there is a personal choice there that children exercise and parents are aware off. There is a situation in which there is a provision that has been created in an area that has a public licence but it doesn't operate on that basis. No adults have access, the bar isn't available or nothing like that. It is properly been considered as a provision and our evidence to date is that it is well supervised, it doesn't produce any of difficulties and certainly those who own it monitor the young people very well.
- Angela Macleod It seems that a lot of answers come back to the parents if the parents want. What about if we don't want our children to go to the Nicolson and we want them to stay here?
- Joan Mackinnon We understand that and that is why we are having this consultation meeting and recording your views.
- Bernard Chisholm I think as we said at the beginning HMI will have an opportunity to have a look at that Council and others, so it is part of quite an extensive progress that will proceed up until October.

- David Carmichael Sorry, and I will direct this one back at you and I really concerned that one of things you are selling is the benefits of the Nicolson's afterschool activities but yet again we still don't seem to have any response or any sensible answer coming about what happens to the kids after they leave the afterschool activity? Now can you quantify how many pupils from other rural areas you see, there are other schools that do it, actually attend afterschool activities or they are duty bound to get the first bus back home because it is the only way and safe way to get them home.
- Joan Mackinnon Lots of pupils access afterschool activities that involve them in getting a bus pass and making their way to the bus service and getting, that is true and that is what is currently happening.
- David Carmichael Is that including S1/S2 kids in very rural locations, that is what we are asking? We have no problem when kids get to approximately S3 age, they are wee bit more mature. The ones that may be less mature you just say look you cant go to it but are you saying 11 year old are suitably mature and risk assessments have been done and if they want to go to afterschool clubs you are quite happy to give them a bus pass and send them on their way.
- Joan Mackinnon That is right because if their parents are happy for them to stay at the afterschool club we will give them a bus pass to get them home, I cannot, David, say whether any of the S1/S2 pupils who take transport are currently doing it. I suspect they are most certainly.
- David Carmichael I would like to comment that Shawbost offers excellent afterschool activities, you actually highlight that in the closure documentation for both Carloway and Bragar, come to Shawbost because they have great afterschool activities. I think I can see on mass most parents here have experienced S1/S2 and allow their kids to go it because they feel safe and secure , they are on their general location where the bus is acceptable or picking up themselves, I do not feel confident if I had a kid going into S1/S2 going to the Nicolson, leaving them on their own and I think I am not the only one who is suggesting that.
- Joan Mackinnon I understand that however they may be other parents in other places who are.
- David Carmichael Does your responsibility as Education Department, if you are selling the benefits of the Nicolson and excelling the avenues that afterschool activities is better there than it is here, you have to sell the full package and you are selling it short.
- Bernard Chisholm Nobody is suggesting that those afterschool activities that take place here aren't of good quality, we are saying in the Nicolson there is a wide range of over, I suppose in excess of 20 or so, covering a broad range of interests for children. A part of that is due just to the fact that staff working there are so many more. In relation to travel a wide range of children from S1 to S6 make use of that, we can certainly try to break that down in terms of the travel but we certainly do have that. In terms of the conversation one of the issues that has got raised here in Shawbost was raised in others that we had, was that if this were to come to fruition the recommendation then we should give some consideration to working with community learning and development, sport and health and others to try and ensure that we enhance the afterschool and out of school activities in local areas. So I think there is a combination there and also to schools have made and as have some of the clubs, various provision to get young people back. I think it is something we can back to you with more on the break down of the S1/S2 stages and those in the rural areas and how they are getting back. It is also a question about us trying to support and continue to work with others, to develop what goes on out of school here in Shawbost and other rural areas.

Calum Morrison Before I go onto the point I was going to ask, there might be a lot of afterschool activities provided into the Nicolson but I am pretty sure that the uptake from kids in the rural districts is quite low compared to those within the Stornoway area because of the travel issues and the restriction that places on them.

Bernard Chisholm Currently and we can do some investigation for you on that, but currently it isn't a factor that we think at the moment, limited participation in a range of it but happy to look at that further.

Calum Morrison Yes but that is from S3 onwards. You are now proposing that our children from S1 go so that is going to have a big difference because it is a big age gap, there is a big, big difference in the maturity of the children.

Catriona Stewart There are pupils in S1, S2 in the Nicolson from other rural areas, from Paicr from Uig, from Breasclete, they are there so it is not just Stornoway

Calum Morrison Yes but how many of them are taking up these after school activities.

Catriona Stewart He will check it out

Calum Morrison One other point probably for Bernie to take. Budget for study support for the Nicolson, is that being cut for next term?

Joan Mackinnon We will get accurate information on that one back to you.

Calum Morrison So a 40% cut would be a reasonable assumption.

Joan Mackinnon If you are implying that the afterschool activities wouldn't go ahead.

Calum Morrison I am talking about study support at the moment I am coming to afterschools in a second.

Joan Mackinnon Well if you are implying that they will be reduced as a result of the cut in the study support budget then we will have to wait and see.

Calum Morrison So is the afterschools project going to be used to be, sort of, provide these afterschools clubs, there is money set aside for that, where is all the money for afterschools going? It is going to be to provide extra classes for our children or where is the funding going to be for all these courses if there are any cuts?

Bernard Chisholm Those activities we are talking about there in terms of these clubs, these are not linked directly to the study support. The study support for what it is intended is to support the study of the young people in their learning. In terms of active schools we have a broad approach to that Butt to Barra, I think the granting over the last couple of years, it is SportScotland grant, is about £120,000. As we get the grant that is spent and will continue to be spent in the ways that they are doing to present and that provides support through all the rural areas and a wide range of a primary/secondary schools. So that has not been a part of any cut in direct provision and it is administered through Sport and Health and not directly through the Education Department, we do it in partnership but it is directed and lead through Sport and Health.

- Calum Morrison If you do get your way and you manage to get this excellent facility closed, can you, not only this facility but all the other primary schools that are proposed to closed. Can you give anybody in this room an assurance that you could put some co-ordinators into the three schools that are going to be left on this side of the island so that our kids, if they want to take afterschool activities but don't want to be lumbered with having to come with at 8 or 9 in the evening after being stuck in Stornoway that you will provide facilities on this side of the island specifically for our kids, in our own communities, can you give us a guarantee on that?
- Bernard Chisholm This particular point I couldn't give a direct guarantee in terms of a direct programme, I can say that it was an issue that came up clearly to us in the conversation. I can say in addition to that, that we have looked at that together with some other areas that have come in it and we have looked, or we are taking forward, trying to draft a proposal that we are reasonably confident has some chance of success to try and enhance some of the work we are doing. So at this stage we have taken a view that all the conversations have highlighted that in these S1/S2 situations and in some of the primary school closures so I would hope that sometime in a few months we would be able to come back with more detail but we are working on trying to develop proposals and trying to see how we could secure funding to try and work in partnership with other agencies. The reason I am saying that with a bit of caution is, we have definitely listened in these conversations to a range of things and that is just one of them, but you can appreciate within the couple of months from that to the present, trying to take it on board work up proposals, seek partnerships and see how that would go ahead. We are still working on but to reassure you, yes we have taken it from the conversations and are trying to work something that will give added value.
- Calum Morrison Yes because there is not much in our children being taken out of here on the basis of the excellent facilities you are going to give in the Nicolson if they can't access them. There should be a provision for them to access the facilities that are left in their own community and that should be a major point for you to consider.
- Catriona Stewart Can I say it is an aspiration at this point that we are genuinely working on but cannot go into detail until, as Bernard has said, we have worked with partner agencies and know what our funding will be but it is certainly something we are working very hard to try and provide.
- Bernard Chisholm Can I add to that as well, you are absolutely right, the issue about the Nicolson is not to try and ensure that every social activity and everything else operate round the cluster of Stornoway. The communities, the primary school remains here and remains even subsequent to this consultation even as you say if all the recommendations were to take place, we are committed to trying to work with these schools and community facilities we have in the rural communities, in partnership Sport and Health, Community Learning and Development and the voluntary sector to try and ensure we retain maximum use. Going back to the point you made early, I think some people raised it as the question of the impact on the community. We think that schools that remain the impact is, they are still there, they are engaged in the community and we need to try and maximise their use for the benefit of the community in all aspects beyond education and including it.
- Christine Maclean Can actually tell me what subjects you actually guarantee are going to be taught through Gaelic medium education in the Nicolson and not just the kids being spoken to in the class in Gaelic, what literature they are having Gaelic as well?

- Joan Mackinnon I think you will find it in the proposal document, I think it is in the proposal document at 9.4.
- Christine Maclean And what is the difference between the Nicolson and Shawbost?
- Joan Mackinnon Shawbost currently offer Gaelic medium teaching in social subjects and oral instruction in Gaelic, in technical and home economics. In the Nicolson Gaelic medium education will be available in social subjects, business studies and home economics and oral instruction in science and technical education and the media studies classes can produce the work that they do there through the medium of Gaelic although the instruction will be in English. For example in the media studies class if they were preparing a radio programme, dvd or a play or whatever it would be, it could be in Gaelic although the instruction, the skills instruction would be in English. That is what we are saying.
- Christine Maclean Can the skills instruction not be in Gaelic?
- Joan Mackinnon Well the teacher who teaches media studies, I understand isn't a Gaelic speaker.
- Christine Maclean So it can't be done in Gaelic?
- Joan Mackinnon No but the children can produce their work in Gaelic, there is a distinct difference. We are not saying it can't be done in Gaelic but the product can be in Gaelic and in fact has been that way.
- Catriona Stewart I have to say I attended along with Joan and there were other parents present in the room, a meeting of Addison House for parents and pupils, who are fluent Gaelic speakers or certainly the pupils are, some of the parents weren't and they were given opportunities to talk about various courses that were available and I have to say it was a very poor turn out from parents, I was actually quite astonished at how poor and there are people in the hall who will agree with me. I was very disappointed at the turn out that night because certainly there are quite a number of pupils and parents who are very atheistic about what is done through the medium of Gaelic.
- John Macleod Just a question, slightly moving away from education. 2012, is this the end of S1/S2 sort of mods, is that the end of it finished? Same with rural sports, football, is that the end of it for S1/S2?
- Joan Mackinnon Can I just say that maybe I will ask Mrs Munro because she has experience of this in her own ward where S1/S2 schools have close there is just one secondary school but it has not ended competition.
- Morag Munro Joan is right, Harris used to have two S1/S2 schools, we had one in Scalpay and we had one in Leverburgh they were both closed in 1995 or later than that maybe. Anyway it was when the Scalpay bridge was put in place the two year secondary's closed and parents were, I have to say very concerned at the time but afterwards the same parents who were concerned saw an improvement and actually their children were very happy in Sir E Scott in Tarbert and although they were very concerned at the time they were reassured as the years went by.

- John Macleod Well that's ok Morag but we are talking a lot smaller pupil numbers down in Sir E Scott but we are talking about our kids going from P7. Now lot of kids especially in the sport, and I have seen it myself over the years, late developers but come 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a smaller school they get the opportunity to do sport, do football but I'm afraid once you take that step from P7 into the Nicolson then I am afraid it is the elite that take over after that.
- Catriona Stewart I have to say that I don't find that true as a parent and I think what you find is that in some of our rural schools as well as the Nicolson were you have house systems, you have health competition which continues and the other thing I noticed as a parent of a child who is relatively sporty that they know all the children throughout the islands now, it is certainly not like when I went though school where you didn't know many people outwith your own school.
- John Macleod (not using mic) What about mods, Gaelic mods?
- Joan Mackinnon I think you will find may instead of having a Shawbost school choir you would still have many choirs competing in the competition.
- John Macleod Not using mic
- Joan Mackinnon Well certainly and you have said yourself the numbers in Sir E Scott are small but you have Sir E Scott A and Sir E Scott B and I am sure that could be maximised to the Nicolson and have, I don't know, 6 or 8 choirs.
- John Macleod (?) How many choirs were there from the Nicolson this year?
- Lady They were actually struggling to take a choir
- John Macleod Well that speaks for itself
- Catriona Stewart Well I think what happens is that children have different interests and you will find that these things cyclical depending on what children actually want.
- Could you just wait until the mic actually comes to you, I don't know where it is now.
- Cathie Finlayson I think you will find that, that just proves the point where children cannot stay behind for afterschool clubs, they can't stay to practice in choirs they can't take part the same way that they used to when they are not in their local community. Therefore they lose interest because it is just not safe for them to stay back afterschool.
- Joan Mackinnon Well I accept that, that is right but if we are able to develop, what we are hoping to develop you could still have Shawbost choir.
- Cathie Finlayson We also keep getting quoted choices, more choices, more choices but as we have already heard pupils aren't guaranteed places in classes that they have chosen because these classes are too full therefore they are not going get choices they want even if they do go to the Nicolson. I feel that we would be losing far more than we are gaining like closing these S1/S2 schools.

- Christine Macinnes Just a few points, one of the points just came to me when we were talking about itinerant teachers and not being in schools all the time and I was thinking about teachers who have left this school being seconded to the Educational Development Centre, the EDC, could it be an idea rather than teachers being taken out of teaching and working in the EDC in a centralised location in Stornoway that they could carry on as part time teachers in schools such as Shawbost, Lionel, Castlebay and then in their non-teaching time they could be doing curriculum development?
- Joan Mackinnon Yes
- Christine Macinnes Thank you. Another point I would just like to make briefly is about the likely effects on the local community. I read, I must sound like a bit of a bore, but I read the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 in its entirety plus the guidance plus there is about four different and I am sure you have yourselves but I am quite sure it actually says as regards the local impact on the community the council really should do their impact study. What is mentioned here is the Outer Hebrides Migration Study 2008 and whilst you are saying that it won't have an impact one of the items is self determination, I think it is quite clear what the will of the people over here is. I would like to read a bit from that consultation guidance if you would bear with me. The Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 in its statutory guidance states that the Act aims to establish a new consultation process that is robust, open, transparent and fair and seen to be so. The Act also introduces a presumption against the closure of rural schools by ensuring that a decision to consult on a rural school closure proposal is not made until the local authority has had regard all viable alternatives and assess the likely implications of closure. It is the viable alternatives to closure impact on the local community and transport issues, I believe are the three factors that the Council are supposed to have special regard for, it says here that the first factor which an authority must have special regard is any viable alternative to closure. The intention here is to ensure that when an option to close is proposed the decision to consult is a last resort only proposed after all the viable alternatives have been considered. Also down the page, it is page 8 of that, it says that this includes consideration on how the school roll may be increased and whether other management options might be a possibility. At the recent conversation we were tasked in groups to come up with ideas as to what specialism Shawbost could be at the forefront of, now Christine mentioned a Gaelic secondary it was also I think suggested that it could just be that we had a specialism in Gaelic and more courses were offered through the medium of Gaelic rather than being a purely Gaelic secondary and also another specialism that came up was textiles and design with the mill being here and so forth. Now up the road Breasclete primary, if I am not mistaken is actually a Gaelic school with an English medium class, am I right?
- Joan Mackinnon It is exactly like this is, it is not a Gaelic school, it is just a school that offers Gaelic medium education and English medium education.
- Christine Macinnes Ok but I think there are more Gaelic
- Joan Mackinnon It's the balance, you are right, yes

Christine  
Macinnes

Well perhaps, it is not really so far away I know there is not a huge roll but perhaps there are parents there who would be happy for their children to transfer to Shawbost school at S1 I have not consulted them, have you? If Shawbost was indeed a school offering specialist subjects isn't it possible for parents from even further a field might wish to enrol their children here. I was brought up in Glasgow and a few schools around me were specialist schools, Douglas Academy in Bearsden was for music, Knightswood I think had a dance school in it and there was kids from all over Glasgow and further a field went to those schools. If we had our specialism's in either of these areas or something else pupils who chose, whose parents chose they wouldn't be forced to travelling but if their parents chose they could come here. I passed Taigh Dhonnchaidh in Ness the other day and I was thinking Lionel could have music, you know there is so many options. In the section of the Councils review relating to viable alternatives to closure there was no mention of these suggestions that came up during the conversation workshop and neither was there mention of the different management options for Shawbost and Lionel that had been muted at that meeting. One suggestion was that Shawbost and Lionel secondary's become a twin campus establishment, another possibility it was referred by a gentleman over there, was that they could become satellite schools of the Nicolson. We talked about a campus approach similar of that of UHI, the University of the Highlands and Islands, utilising new technology to link classes for example, sharing staff more effectively and also in the way I just mentioned so it would be teachers making the journeys rather than pupils travelling everyday and so on. I think there is a feeling where it says that a fair process and seen to be so, I think there is a feeling amongst parents that we put in a lot of effort and time and really believed in what we were saying and we feel we haven't been listened too. Now Joan, I really believe that you were genuinely enthusiastic about these ideas, that you do believe that they would be an exciting way forward in facing the challenges of keeping education provision on the westside of the island or retaining an element of choice for parents and pupils and of engaging with the community and listening to and delivering what this community really wants education to S2 or beyond here in Shawbost.

Joan Mackinnon

Thank you for that Christine and I know that you are passionate about what you say too but just a couple of things. Just to get back to Breasclate, we did consult with Breasclate parents about making Breasclate a Gaelic school, there wasn't an appetite for it therefore I would doubt there would be an appetite for another Gaelic secondary school for their pupils when they didn't want it .

Christine  
Macinnes

I am not talking about a Gaelic, sorry I would like to clarify. I am not talking about a Gaelic secondary school, I am talking about continuing to help the subjects that are taught currently in Gaelic in Shawbost ensuring that they are kept being taught and maybe introducing more being taught. Not that it would be solely Gaelic.

Joan Mackinnon

Well I think without wanting to drag the Headteacher in Shawbost school into this conversation and I am not going to but just to say that Shawbost I know struggles to deliver in Gaelic because the numbers they have are not big enough, that is an issue. Parents make choices Christina and you know that yourself.

- Christine Macinnes I know but what I am trying to say but I might not be saying it eloquently enough is that we very much have, if you go to a certain feeder school you will go to a certain secondary school and that will be your progression. What I am trying to say that if it was a more flexible system there may be people far away from here who choose, if they were allowed, and giving travelling expenses for it, they may choose to send their children over here. The school in Nicolson I think the 1100 capacity that is being talked about.
- Joan Mackinnon Yes that is right.
- Christine Macinnes I was reading recently that in the States that there is a huge movement towards the small school project. It started of with rural schools and supporting rural schools. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation they fund a lot of projects through the small schools project and actually what is happening now, there is a trend in urban areas where they have large schools of that scale is that they are actually trying to convert them into smaller schools and just because of the benefits of smaller schools.
- Joan Mackinnon Just to say all our schools are rural schools, even the Nicolson and Lionacleit which has 400 and whatever pupils, is a very small secondary school.
- Christine Macinnes I am going to make one other point, I read something else and then I am going to pass it on to another parent who has got something to say about what you have just said. In their submission to the Rural Schools Consultation Document children in Scotland say that rural schools are well placed to use the community as a natural laboratory for learning science, to serve as the communities hub heart through place based learning, employing new technologies to bring learning resources to students, promote intergenerational programmes and mentoring which is another aspect we discussed at the workshop, blend academic and practical vocational skills in community settings, I think we mentioned that too, integrate children's services and health services and promote healthy outdoor learning, play and leisure activities. So there is a lot of support for the kind of ideas we came up with.
- Joan Mackinnon Yes absolutely and we haven't forgotten them Christine and just to say, to re-iterate what Mrs Stewart said earlier we have some plans in place which we hope that we will be able to share with you in the not to distant future that will reflect that we were listening, that we are excited about what could be happening, not necessarily at S1/S2 but possibly in the senior phase but we do have aspirations to have pupils learning in their communities across the islands.
- Bernard Chisholm Could I also say on that in relation to some of the points you made, in terms of the consultation it has been really good for us to do the conversations in this, it has lead us to look at, for example, you mentioned place based learning. We have been working in an areas there through pre-school and primary to see how we can do more of that. When we are talking about the vocational, the integration of health both our learning communities and shared headships have been mechanisms in responding to the rural nature of our schools. I think unlike many of the authorities nationally I think there has been a strong, within the Western Isles, there has been a strong commitment for the retaining and maintenance of the rural schools and even within this consultation process we are still attempting to keep a footprint of rural schools community engagement and therefore a real desire through Curriculum for Excellence and partnerships with the schools to deliver on a broad range of community learning experiences and therefore the idea of hub learning, shared learning none of that has been lost from the consultation and I can reassure you that already we have taken some of that information back into our CfE Planning Group, into potential proposals for some pilot projects

and experiments and we will, I hope, in due course be able to come and share more of that with you. It is exciting, we really are excited by it and I can share on the place based learning because I have a special interest, we linked up with somebody in one of the European countries who reminded me to bring his good wishes back to some of our colleagues who worked in the Westside because 25 years ago, from other areas in Europe they were here looking at sustainability of rural communities in education so we are trying to work with these things and hope to bring more of it back as we develop it.

- Shona Maclean Just a few words written here. It is about, I would like to issue with a statement made at the Bragar School meeting regarding the classification of schools. I think it was Mr Chisholm who said that all of the schools in the Western Isles are classed as remote rural schools, whereas it is the case that communities with a population between 3000 and 10,000 people living further than an hours drive from a community at 10,000 or more people are classed as very remote or small towns. Something I am sure the good people of Stornoway will be pleased about. Therefore the Nicolson is a school in a very remote town
- Joan Mackinnon Very remote small town
- Shona Maclean Not a remote rural school as suggested at last Thursday's meeting.
- Joan Mackinnon No I am sorry, it is classed as a rural school, that is where that list is found under the classification for rural schools.
- Lady Not using mic
- Joan Mackinnon I accept that.
- Shona Maclean The reasoning for my mentioning this is because it is directly related to one of the three main purposes of the new Schools Act 2010 which is to consider the likely effect on the local community if the school were to close. According to Highlands and Islands Enterprise figures the population of Stornoway was 7868 in 2006, a 3.3% increase from 5 years previously. This compares to a 1.8% increase in the Highlands and Islands and a 1% increase in Scotland as a whole over the same period. I would suggest that this increase is due to, in no small part, to migration out of the country areas to Stornoway and the area immediately surrounding it. This has been to the detriment of the more remote communities there are many country families living in the town simply because of the better access to facilities, how many more will leave our villages or not move back rather than send their children from the age of 11 across the Barvas Moor everyday. I have to admit that my first thought when I heard, and it is still my thought, when I heard that Shawbost secondary was to close was I will have to move to Stornoway and I more, if my husband move I would tomorrow simply because I cannot bear to parted from the kids. I very much doubt that, and the only one who feels this way, as well as son on P3 and daughter about to start school after the summer, I have two daughters who are in their early 20's and pleased to say they are still living in Lewis, however the closure of S1/S2 in Shawbost could easily mean they chose to raise their families in Stornoway not in the country, another loss of young folk to the community.
- Catriona Stewart Thank you very much for your attendance here this evening I will ask Mr Mackay if he will list the questions that have, sorry

- April Maclean Hi sorry to interrupt. It was just, I made a suggestion at the previous meeting here that the Council look into providing S1/S3 or above in Barvas, combining the catchments of Shawbost and Lionel secondary's. My suggestion was rather briskly dismissed and I was told that I had my chance to say this 13 years ago when the proposals for the first new Westside school were going through. I would like point I personally was only 8 years old then and further more I don't believe that the public had any inclination at that point that Shawbost School would be threatened with closure. I am not the only one who has suggested that this is a possible way forward, I think I am right in saying that if it was one of the suggestions that came out of the community workshop style meeting held in Barvas last year.
- Catriona Stewart Thank you. I will now ask Mr Mackay to read out a list that he has prepared of questions that have been asked tonight.
- Derek Mackay Ok I have got a few questions and I think there are a couple of guarantees here.
- The first was the questions at the school conversation meetings and the Director of Education agreed to get a response to that and that all the paperwork associated with the schools conversation meetings would form part of the submission in respect of the proposal documents.
- The Director also agreed to take up the issue of the supervision of school children in the Lewis Sports Centre with Sport and Health.
- There was clarification required on the number of secondary children going through Gaelic medium education and the proposed class sizes for S1 and S2 in the Nicolson Institute, a break down of S1 and S2 children from rural areas taking afterschool activities.
- Now that is the questions I have, is there anything else that is remaining unanswered tonight?
- Catriona Stewart Calum do you have a question that you feel hasn't been addressed? Well there is absolutely no problem you can submit questions up until the 39 June.
- Iain Mackay I have got a question regarding how do you propose to cater for the feeding of all the children that is going to be in the proposed new Nicolson.
- Catriona Stewart There will be new canteen within the new school which will cater for the pupil population there.
- Iain Mackay And is that guaranteed that should all children desire to go to the canteen that you are able to feed them in the allocated time.

Catriona Stewart Yes. People will remember that there was a question over canteen facilities about 2 years ago. The Comhairle provided an extra canteen and what we have found is that the same under of pupils use the two canteens rather than the number using one canteen so it hasn't actually had an effect on the number of pupils who chose to leave the campus at lunchtime.

The Comhairle will review the proposal having regard to the HMIE report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by anyone at the public meeting here. A Consultation Report will then be prepared this Report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be published in local newspapers. The Report will be available on the Comhairle website and from Comhairle offices as well as the school here, free of charge. The Consultation Report together with any other relevant documentation will be considered by the Education and Children's Services Committee who will make a recommendation which will then be considered for approval by the Comhairle. Should the Comhairle decide to close the S1/S2 stage this particular time it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers of the decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and the Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 within 6 working days of the decision being made. Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call in the proposal. Until the outcome of the 6 week call in process has been notified to the Comhairle, the Comhairle will not proceed with the implementation of the proposal. The deadline date for the receipt of written submissions is 5.00pm on 30 June 2010. These should be sent to Mr Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Sandwich road, Stornoway or electronically to [schoolconsultations@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:schoolconsultations@cne-siar.gov.uk) and I would urge you to take advantage of that and to make sure if there any questions that have occurred to you during this process to please let them be made known to the Comhairle.

I thank you for your attendance here this evening.

Joan Mackinnon Can we just clarify to whom would you like us to send the responses to the questions that have been asked tonight? Is it to the email address I have Kirsteen Maclean? Is that where I send it? Will that be ok? And if then, Kirsteen, any other information, since I have been writing to you can I see who you are? I didn't connect the name with the face. So if there is anything else if you could just let us know.

Catriona Stewart So thank you very much everyone I am sure there are some men wanting to go watch football.