

SCHOOL CONSULTATION CARINISH – 30 OCTOBER 2013 AT 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Catriona Stewart
 Mr Peter Carpenter
 Mr Robert Emmott
 Mr Calum Mackenzie
 Mr Allan Smithyman
 Mr Dan Macphail
 Mrs Patricia White
 Ms Lesley McDonald
 Cllr Archie Campbell
 14 parents and members of the public

Apologies: Cllr Uisdean Robertson
 Cllr Neil Beaton

Catriona Stewart	<p>Good evening. I am Catriona Stewart. I'm Chair of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Education and Children's Services Committee and I will be chairing this evenings meeting. With me this evening are a number of council officers and I think it would be easier just to start and go to my left and introduce them all to you. We have Mr Allan Smithyman who is the Learning Community Principal for this area, Mrs Patricia White who is our Early Years Officer, Mr Robert Emmott, Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Mr Peter Carpenter, Direct of Education and Children's Services, Ms Lesley McDonald, Head of Executive Office, We have Mr Calum Mackenzie Head of Asset Management, Mr Dan Macphail at the end of the table here is in charge of delivering projects on behalf of the authority in various departments. The other officers who are recording the meeting this evening are Miss Evelyn Coull who will have the roving mic at the end and behind me here we have Miss Morag Macdonald who is ensuring that the recordings are going properly.</p> <p>It's very important that you switch your mobile phones off because even if they are on silent or meeting they can actually interfere with the recording and we really do not want that to happen so please if you make sure that they are switched off.</p> <p>I've actually been caught out myself thinking that I've switched them off and they are on silent and duly reprimanded. Yes it is a disgrace, you would have thought that I would have known better.</p> <p>In August 2007 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar decided to undertake a review of education provision throughout the Western Isles. Since that time a number of formal consultations and informal conversations have been held in various communities which has resulted in the closure of some schools and the amalgamation of a number of others. This evening's meeting is part of the formal consultation process in respect of the discontinuation of primary education at Carinish School as required by the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010.</p> <p>It is proposed that education provision at Carinish School be discontinued with effect from 26 June 2015 or such late date as the Director of Education and Children's Services shall determine following service availability of the new North Uist Primary School.</p> <p>A new North Uist Primary School will be established or should be established on the existing school site at Paible, Isle of North Uist from 13 August 2015 or such late date as the Director of Education and Children's Services shall determine following service availability of the new school and the pupils of Carinish, Lochmaddy and Paible Schools continue their education there. The catchment area for the new North Uist Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment areas of Carinish, Lochmaddy and Paible Primary Schools. The new North Uist Primary School will include provision for statutory pre-school education.</p> <p>The aim for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is to provide our children with the best educational experiences and outcomes in modern learning environment suitable</p>
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	<p>for the 21 Century requirements within the resources available. The Comhairle continues to face serious challenges. School rolls have practically halved in 30 years and as education is resourced centrally according to pupil numbers, funding has therefore decreased. We face ever tightening financial constraints. Some of you present will have attended some of the various budget meetings that our Leader has held throughout communities and will have been made aware of just how significant the savings that we are required to make are.</p> <p>Our capital programme leading up to 2018 is half of the previous capital programme so we have in the region of £42million. Out of that allocation the Comhairle has agreed to use £6.5million to go towards the building of the new school in North Uist along with the monies that central government have allocated and that is in the region of £1.5million.</p>
	<p>There are significant pressures on other Comhairle services such as community care, roads and infrastructure and waste services. We have built 6 new schools across our islands and I hope that many of you have had an opportunity to visit either the nearest school in Balivanich or perhaps in Daliburgh. On completion of the new primary school in North Uist over 50% of our pupils will be educated in new efficient learning environments in which the Curriculum for Excellence will be delivered and is being delivered for we have quality education in quality buildings.</p> <p>Our aim in line with Scottish Government's estates strategy is for all our pupils to be educated in new or refurbished buildings by 2018. I will ask Miss McDonald to go over procedure now. Following that Mr Carpenter will speak to the proposal document and then I will open for questions from the floor. Thank you.</p>
<p>Lesley McDonald</p>	<p>Thank you Chair. You should all have received a copy of the Council's proposal document together with a correction to that document which was issued shortly after the document. The proposal document is the first stage in the formal process following the decision by the Comhairle to proceed to statutory consultation. The conversations that have previously taken place form part of the informal process. This is now the formal process.</p> <p>You have until 22 November this year to make representations in respect of the proposal. The word the Act uses is representations, they can be in favour of the proposal, they can be against the proposal. Those representations will all be taken into account in the preparation of a consultation report which I'll tell you more about in a moment, another thing that will be taken into account in the preparation of that document is the note of this meeting and it is a verbatim recording. So when you ask a question, when you want to express a point of view if you could give your name, that just makes the note more complete.</p> <p>After 22 November we will send the note of this meeting and any letters that the Chief Executive or emails that he has received to HMle who then have until the 18 December to prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. On receipt of that report officers in the Comhairle will then prepare what's called a consultation report which will be published at least 3 weeks before the Comhairle considers the proposal. That consultation report will address any issues identified in the written representations, the note of this meeting or from the HMle report.</p> <p>If we can answer your questions tonight we will but if we can't I'll take a careful note of them and get a response to you just as quickly as I can because that answer to the question may dictate something you may wish to say in a representation.</p> <p>So what happened after that is the consultation report is.....everyone who has made a representation will be given a link to that report.....that will be considered firstly by the Education and Children's Services Committee on 4 February next year which will make a recommendation to the Council meeting on 13 February. If the Comhairle decides to proceed with the proposal, within 6 working days of that meeting we must submit the proposal document, the consultation report, the written representations, the note of this meeting and the HMle report to Scottish Ministers who then have 6 weeks to decide whether they wish to call in the</p>

	<p>proposal. That would only happen in the event that the Comhairle agree to go ahead with the proposal.</p> <p>Within the first three weeks of that six weeks Scottish Ministers will take into account any further representation that they receive. Following the end of the 6 week period if we don't hear from Ministers they will be deemed to have agreed with what the Council has done. If they wish to call in the proposal they will advise us of that. I'm happy to take any questions. Thank you Chair.</p>
Catriona Stewart	<p>Thank you Miss McDonald. Any questions for procedure can be taken at the end of the meeting. It's probably easier if we were to keep the questions till then so Mr Carpenter if you would speak to the proposal document.</p>
Peter Carpenter	<p>Thank you Chair. In January 2013 the Comhairle led a community conversation regarding the future education provision in North Uist. At those meetings that were attended by parents and members, community representatives. There was strong support, strong approval for the creation of a new primary school in North Uist. In September 2013 further community conversations were held and at this stage the discussions focused on the communities' views on the proposed site of the school and the arrangements for 0-3 and 3-5 education.</p>
	<p>Following those meetings and subsequent to various technical reports, the proposal documents that you have received was prepared. I don't propose to speak at length this evening regarding the advantages of a new school because I know many folk here will have had the opportunity to visit Balivanich, Daliburgh or any of our new schools but I would say that as well as providing in the long term better value for money, new facilities are advantageous to our children for a number of reason. The school will offer an enhanced learning environment, better access for our staff and pupils for good facilities. It will offer a larger school roll offering social and educational benefits for our pupils and because we would have more pupils and more staff greater flexibility in the deployment of staff therefore more appropriately and successfully meeting the needs of our pupils. Further more this new school will offer the opportunity of Gaelic medium education which is currently not available at Lochmaddy School.</p>
	<p>The new school will have 4 primary aged classes from primary 1-7, 2 Gaelic medium classes and 2 English medium classes. There will also be 2 pre-school classes – 1 in Gaelic for 3-5 year olds and 1 in English for 3-5 year olds. The school will have the capacity for 100 pupils plus the preschool provision.</p>
	<p>The design at the current stage also includes capacity for 0-3 provision. Now this was incorporated because parents and community representatives expressed a strong view at the community conversations and subsequently that the Comhairle should plan a new school that provides one-stop single site educational provision. Parents stated that not only that this would be convenient and practical for them in terms of reducing travel, moving from one school or from one site to the other, but it would also help to ensure effective transition of educational experience and continuity of learning as the children progress from nursery into pre-school and pre-school into primary.</p>
	<p>Officers then prepared the proposal document that you have seen and we were asked to look at the school sites (the short listed sites) focusing on a number of education issues to see and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the different short listed sites. We looked at the sites from the point of view educationally in terms of transport, the sites access to community facilities and learning, children's safety, access for busses and cars and children's security and safety in and around the proposed site. We found a number of educational benefits in all of the short listed sites. However, Paible was selected as the preferred site from an educational perspective for a couple of reasons. Firstly the school site is owned by the Comhairle at the moment. There was the hope that the school could be completed earlier than would be the case at other sites which would save money but also the possibility that our children would access the site at an earlier stage. Secondly the Paible site includes a school field which could be incorporated into the design leading to both grass and man-made play sport</p>

	facilities for the pupils and the community.
	In conclusion from an educational perspective the opportunity of a new school for our pupils in North Uist is a positive vital step in our efforts to improve the educational experiences of our current and future generations of young people. This has been the case in the other WISP schools. It will be educational provision both sector leading and forward looking ensuring 21 st educational facilities for our staff as well as pupils. The proposal document has been made available to you and we want now if we could to listen to your views and either myself or my colleagues will be pleased to answer any questions you may wish to ask us. Thank you for listening.
Catriona Stewart	Thank you Mr Carpenter. If you would let Evelyn know if you wish to speak and remember to give your name so we have it for the record. Thank you.
Joanne Ferguson	I have a number of different points but if I start off with the costings. Your document, you have £200,000 assigned to the football pitch so if you were to proceed with a site other than Paible there's £200,000 for building a changing facility. Now I would be interested in your reasoning behind that because I don't agree with the costings being included.
Catriona Stewart	Mr Mackenzie or Mr Macphail.
Dan Macphail	Okay your questions about the costing being included for the retention of changing facilities at Paible.
Joanne Ferguson	That's correct.
Dan Macphail	The costings have been included in there because what you're going to end up with is the retention of a football pitch, a full size grass pitch in Paible. If you were to go to the other sites then you wouldn't have it unless you were going to retain facilities for changing.
Joanne Ferguson	I think the point I'm making is why do you need it. At the moments it's not being used by kids or the athletics people. So it's being used by adult football players as a training ground. I'm asking the question why is that linked to education? Why could that not be transferred to community ownership and let the community fund that if it's important to them? It seems an unfair cost to saddle the Clachan sites with is the point I'm trying to make.
Dan Macphail	There hasn't been any as far as I'm aware been any extensive consultation with regards to whether the community desire to keep the playing field at Paible should the school be built elsewhere. We did undertake some consultation in asking some of the user groups, whether it be the local football team or for example to athletics group who I believe use the facility quite regularly. This is the feedback that I have received from them and therefore the assumption was that there would be a desire retain the playing field. If you're aware of there being no need to retain that playing field then we are happy to listen to that but our assumption was that there was desire to keep the playing field within the community in Paible.
Joanne Ferguson	Well that's the point I'm making. I've spoken to some of the people who take part in athletics. I have spoken to some of the school kids who went across there for the trial Fridays and its what we've observed ourselves just from passing by. You don't see people out using the playing fields out the back so it struck me, they're not being used just now and I wonder why that is. We asked a few questions and we're all aware they're quite wet, they're sort of dampish playing fields, not that attractive at the moment. The athletics people that I spoke to said they weren't using them. Even the football sessions that happen after school are held indoors rather than outside and they expressed quite strongly that they would rather use a different facility at the new school if there was a new school elsewhere. So I wonder therefore why these costs were being included and I would ask you to look at that again.
Dan Macphail	Certainly. I mean we've got conflicting views there because the feedback that I've

	received is obviously opposite to yours.
Joanne Ferguson	Exactly.
Dan Macphail	I have heard that in the past that pitch does get quite soft. I was there in the summer and it was the exact opposite. It was very hard so all we can do I guess is maybe do further background, so some further feasibility....not feasibility but survey work as to what the views are to the use of that pitch because I've been told that there is a need for it so.... I'm sorry.
Joanne Ferguson	That's okay. To carry on from that, if there is a strong view for a certain sector to carry on using that pitch, if it is adult footballers then I would say it would be fairer to transfer that to a community group and let them fund it. And do they actually need a £200,000 changing room, because what I've observed is other footballers coming down from Lewis to play at the back of the Dark Islands, they don't bother getting changed afterwards they just jump in their minibus and head off for the ferry. I mean is that really a reasonable cost to add to the other sites is the question I'm asking?
Dan Macphail	I think if there is any notion of retaining the playing field I think that the best that you can do is provide the community with a facility that is at parity with other facilities that are on not just in Uist but in Lewis also. The cost assumptions are based in the minimum standard provision as recommended by Sport Scotland. We are not looking at the high level end of the scale in terms of cost but the bare essential cost it would provide a changing facility there and I think that if you are going to retain the facility, obviously if there is a need for the facility going back to the earlier point, then £200,000 especially building in a remote place like Paible is not unreasonable and its based on the minimum provision specified by Sports Scotland.
Joanne Ferguson	I though you were calling Paible central but we'll leave that point for later.
Dan Macphail	Well just to clarify that point, when I say remote I mean in the context of building in the Western Isles not specific to Uist.
Joanne Ferguson	If there is a need to keep the football pitch, people do want it and there is a need for changing facilities then surely there's other ways of sourcing that funding as well. There are various other schemes out there just now for such facilities. The Commonwealth fund, there's various other sports facilities funds there just now so surely it would make more sense to try and access the money through them if the other two assumptions are correct.
Mr Mackenzie	Yes, there are a few 'ifs' in there with respect and I think both of us probably need to go back and check our sources to see if there is a need for that playing facility before we answer all these following questions, is that fair comment?
Joanne Ferguson	That's fine, I'm happy with that.
Dan Macphail	Just one point, I've had my wrists slapped before, I've called a playing field because it appeals to more than one user group, that's the feedback that I've been given.
Joanne Ferguson	That's fair enough, thank you. Does anybody else want to have a turn before I continue?
Robert Fraser	Hello, Robert Fraser. I'm actually involved in the athletics, I coach with the athletics. Now one straight question following on from Joanne's is how are you actually going to build the new school? Where is the new school going to go at Paible? Is it not more likely that it's going to be built on the existing football pitch retaining the existing building so we wouldn't actually have a football pitch?
Dan Macphail	That's a very good question. There is a couple of options there. Obviously before, one of the questions we were asked by Education was, if you are going to consider Paible as a site, would it be possible to retain the playing field so

	<p>obviously the minute you do that you have a constraint on the site as you will know. One option would be to build the school on the playing field. That is an option that would probably be the most obvious option. The other option is, and we have done this at two of the other WISP school sites. We've built one in Daliburgh and one at Point in the Isle of Lewis, is to demolish the secondary wing of Paible as an initial phase and to locate the footprint of the school within that part of the school into what is predominantly the primary department area of the building. You would complete the new school, you would retain the playing field. On completion of the new build you would decant the pupils back into the new school and then as a second phase you would finish off by building your astro turf playing facility. That's been tested on a high level, obviously you would need to do that before you would even consider it as a site. Admittedly I think you would want to go in and do that in a little bit more detail but until this process has been concluded one way or the other I think that is the time to do that. We have done it a high level, does that answer your question?</p>
Robert Fraser	Yes it does. It will just be interesting to see how that pans out.
Dan Macphail	Yes it would be.
Robert Fraser	<p>If I say something more from the athletics club, we use the facility there every Thursday night. We do use the pitch actually quite a lot in the summer months on a Thursday evening. We do use that facility at the minute at no charge. Now I am aware that at other WISP schools charges for using facilities in the evenings is actually quite high. That would have a big effect on the athletics club if we had to start paying for that facility. We are a small group of volunteers. We take a lot of kids of the mainland. We improve fitness. It's a good experience for kids which I think is part of their education and it's really important that that facility is kept for us in terms of access to the school free of charge when the new school is built and I'd like some assurances that that will happen.</p>
Lesley McDonald	<p>We have just been to a meeting where Dan has described the new school as a WISP Plus school but technically it is going to follow the design of the WISP schools. This will not be a WISP school, this will remain a council school so exactly the same rules that apply at the moment will continue to apply. We will be doing the maintenance, the running, FESFM will not be involved as they are involved in Balivanich and Daliburgh. This will continue to be a council run facility and exactly the same rules that apply at the moment will continue to apply.</p>
Robert Fraser	Thank you.
Joanne Ferguson	I just wanted to clarify. If there was a new school at one of the Clachan sites would the athletics be happy with one of the pitches there?
Robert Fraser	Absolutely.
Joanne Ferguson	<p>Thank you. Does anybody else want a go before I continue? Right next point. We are happy with the standard of education we get at the moment through Carinish School. It's a very small school but we don't feel that our children are disadvantaged. I wasn't at the meeting in January, partly because we were only given two days notice, but I know that most people voted for a new school at the Clachan site. They didn't vote for a new school at Paible and that's causing quite a lot of bad feeling. I'm sure you're aware of that. I wonder if you could comment why you are so supportive and tied into the Paible school site as opposed to one of the Clachan sites?</p>
Catriona Stewart	<p>I actually chaired the meeting in January and there was no preferred site chosen. It was quite clear from everybody at the meeting that they wished a new school in North Uist. There was no specific site mentioned. People had the opportunity to give their views and I can say that the feedback. There was more than one site identified by people there so there was no site chosen at the meeting. The Comhairle looked at 12 sites in all and what is in the proposal document is what came out as result of the evaluation of the sites that was placed before members who voted on this as being the preferred site having taken account of both the</p>

	educational report and the reports that came from the officers from the Technical Services so there was no one site identified at the meeting in January that I chaired.
Joanne Ferguson	I know there was not one site identified but can you maybe understand as to why so many parents got the wrong end of the stick then?
Catriona Stewart	I couldn't possibly comment on what parents' views are I'm just giving you the view that we got from the meeting.
Joanne Ferguson	Mmm well I wasn't there so I suppose I can't take that any further. The other thing I wanted to mention was you showed us a table before at one of the conversation meeting that showed a saving in mileage I think for the Clachan site, I think was it a mile a day per pupil?
Peter Carpenter	I think you're referring to is it the travel times? The children's travel times Joanne?
Joanne Ferguson	Average travel times yes.
Peter Carpenter	Yeah that was in the September conversations and I'll give you the context to that. What happened was that we identified the postcode address of every pupil currently attending the three schools and the children attending pre-school and mapped that onto the current location and we worked out the average travel time for those pupils and distance from their current location to the different short listed sites. So that information was gathered. You're right and it was part of the discussion. You're right, that we had at September and we wanted to have that information so we could understand the educational outcomes from the different sites. What would be the effect of site A versus B there's a C in terms of travel journey times? The broad message of that was that there were some children who would be travelling further to school or site A and some would be further to B but on average there wasn't a huge significant difference in travel distances between the short listed sites. We've looked at that further, my colleague Allan Smithyman might say a few words Allan about the travel side of things?
Allan Smithyman	Thank you. I've just got a simple table here and you may well have seen this before but the difference between Paible and Cladach West and East is between 7.5miles and 8.9miles. So you're talking about 1.4 miles distance average journey. The total millage is between 997miles if you add up all the outcome that children have to travel to Claddach West and Claddach East sites. Site D is Claddach East to 1144miles to Paible so the average distance increase is 1.4 miles between one sites and another between Paible and the other sites there; so that's an average obviously there will be some children who will clearly depending on what site was chosen, travel more or less but that's the average increase in the distances 1.4 miles.
Donald Mackenzie	Have you taken into account where the population is going to come from in the future? Just that the west side is slightly aging and most of the youth now is coming from the east and south and I'm just wondering would that change then you know as the west side is getting older and its decreasing there on the youth side? There is less people coming back to it.
Allan Smithyman	Thank you. Our colleague Hamish Budge was the person who was tasked with analysing all the post codes and every single child who is currently in school, pre-school and just born so, as best we could project where the future demographic was, we did and it is slightly further south but its almost imperceptible really. It's really difficult to do. You've got a small population and we could only look at it in terms of the demographics that we had available to us which are pretty limited really because you can't predict in a small population how many children are going to be born from one year to another. All we can look at is a trend so it is correct to say there is a slight trend south but it is almost imperceptible not only enough to make a big difference to the kind of average mileage that I've just mentioned to you.
Dan Macphail	Can I maybe just add briefly to that Chair? On that theme also the census data for

	<p>2011 was coming through and we sought that information out in the hope that it might reveal some sort of a trend as you suggest whether there's a bias towards east or west. The information that we received from the Census 2011 results was that it's pretty split right now between east and west. That information is available online and that was produced this summer and it tells you various demographic statistics on that so it would be worth having a wee look but its roughly 50/50 currently.</p>
Heather Wheeler	<p>There is a lot of us just now who don't have family on the island who really depend on the nursery for year round childcare and really wouldn't be able to work otherwise, who don't have any backup. Will that continue in the new school?</p>
Patricia White	<p>As Mr Carpenter said we've only got a statutory obligation for pre-school education. We do currently work with the community to support all the extended services that you're currently getting just now and we would continue to work with families and groups in the future to see how best to meet the needs of families.</p>
Female Voice	<p>Inaudible</p>
Particia White	<p>We would need to get into further consultation about that but certainly the plans at the moment have 0-3 provision within them.</p>
Female Voice	<p>Inaudible.....a statutory pre-school could be different sessions which wouldn't allow someone to actually go to work. It would only be a session in the morning or the afternoon. We really need the afterschool care and to encourage young families to the islands we have to provide year round childcareInaudible.</p>
Particia White	<p>Well the Comhairle tends to provide services, well we do provide services subject to demand so we always survey parents, find out what the demand is and we design our service round that depending on the viability. There is a change in the statutory pre-school hours coming in August 2014 so the number of pre-school funded hours is going to increase and the Scottish Government want us to be more flexible in how we deliver that so that will also hopefully help families that are working.</p>
Female Voice	<p>When will a decision be made on pre-school and nursery provision? How much notice is going to be given.....inaudible.....will this be decided in the next few months or.....It can have a major impact on someone's work really that the thing....Inaudible.</p>
Particia White	<p>Well that's part of the consultation process is to get parents' views and to see what the views and to see what the needs are in the community.</p>
Joanne Ferguson	<p>If parents were strongly supportive of having flexible care in school during the holidays, would that be provided then?</p>
Patricia White	<p>For the Comhairle to provide the service it's really dependent on the numbers and the viability. We do costs analysis and then that has to go to the council members for decision. So I can't give you a definite answer until we did further analysis in terms of our own service provision. However, we will continue to work with the local service for the services that are already in place.</p>
Oliver Foot	<p>I think it was at the September meeting we spoke at length about the provision of out of hours nursery provision. It was one of the major discussions that we had at that meeting and I think the group that was there made it very very clear that that was a priority so I don't quite understand where this we're not sure sort of attitude is coming from. I think it was absolutely, you know the group was solid in that's what they wanted so I don't see not providing it is an option. It has to be done. I think if you're going to move forward as an island you've got to provide people with employment, that's one aspect. People need to work full time, costs are going up for everyone and husbands and wives or partners working and if the provision isn't there you know the decline will continue because people will go elsewhere. So I think it's very short sighted to even think about not providing it. It</p>

	<p>has to be provided somewhere and you either give the nursery at Kirkibost a clear go a head now that you will continue to fund them or you say no and so we will all know where we are moving on this because there are a large group of people who need that flexibility of going in before 9 and collecting after 5 or thereabouts especially during the school holidays. It difficult even for 2 weeks to have to take your child out of nursery for just a short while and I know parents have children in other schools that close for longer but it been difficult for me and I'm self employed where there's a little bit of flexibility in my working day. To not have that facility would have been very difficult.</p>
Particia White	<p>The Comhairle have always been very supportive of child care and additional services around the statutory pre-school education and we do work with a number of community groups to find solutions to support families that are working and will continue to do that.</p>
Anne Mackenzie	<p>So as a parent I've been using Saoghal Beag nursery for about 9 years and both my daughters go to the after school club after school now that they are no longer at the nursery and without that facility I wouldn't be able to work. And if I couldn't work I wouldn't be living in Uist and I think that's a similar story for a lot of people and I think it would be disastrous if that provision wasn't kept going either in the new school or at Saoghal Beag and I might add that they do a fantastic job and I think its crucial that this is looked at.</p>
Ada Campbell	<p>My name is Ada Campbell and I'm here representing Saoghal Beag nursery and Urachadh Uibhist who have been running the service for 13 years. We welcome the comments from the Comhairle this evening and on the previous night and we hope that we might find some way of finding a partnership or arrangement where we can protect the services. We feel that the new legislation coming through the Scottish Government requiring additional hours and more flexible access for parents also the need to support the local economy. We feel that the Community Empowerment Bill and the Children's and Young People's Bill; Bills that are coming through Parliament are all sort of pointing for or hoping that local authorities will be able to move in that direction. We think that this would be an opportunity for the Comhairle to be ahead of the game and to find a model that will really work well. We are a community organisation and we hope to work in some sort of partnership in the future and to support the parents as we have done in the last 13 years.</p>
Catriona Stewart	<p>Thank you and we welcome that. As Mrs White has said we will be working with the community groups to ensure that we provide the services that are required by parents.</p>
Sean Mackenzie	<p>Can you break down some costs for us? The demolition costs for Paible and what's the valuation of Paible at present for the land minus the scope and if you were to sell on the building maybe would it be worth.....</p>
Calum Mackenzie	<p>Your first question was about the demolition cost of Paible, that's been estimated at £150,000. Your next question was about the value, the market value of the school in its current condition or you did say.....yes we haven't done a market valuation on that at the moment. We would.....I wouldn't like to say so because we've gone through this process for quite a lot of schools in the past 2-3 years where we've had market valuations for them. We've gone through a disposal process with them and part of the disposal process first of all looks at whether the Council has any further use for these assets. The next stage is to go to a registered social landlord and ask them do we have scope for housing development in that area. The next step is to go to the communities and ask if they would like to express an interest in taking on that scope. At that stage we would be looking for market valuations so that we can evaluated a potential bid against the disposal of land in Scotland Regulations because there is certain regulations we have to follow in disposing of the assets so at that stage we would be looking for market valuations however, the value of the asset is basically what it's worth in the current climate and therefore we may have some schools which are valued at say £90,000 which we cannot dispose of because there is no community of private interest in them. So it's very hard to answer that question</p>

	just now, one because we haven't gone for a market valuation and two, it all depends on what the market is doing at the time.
Sean Mackenzie	Why haven't you gone for it because its part of the bid? You'd have to sell that land if you're going to build in Clachan. Why haven't you approached a valuer for this? That has to be taken in to the other sites as money that could be taken in to go towards that build. I'm just saying that you have to consider this, even at the land value at the lowest value without the building that should be considered in the Clachan site.
Calum Mackenzie	You've taken that as income that you would get?
Sean Mackenzie	Yes, It should be considered.
Calum Mackenzie	Okay, there's two aspects to that. One aspect is that you are going to retain the playing fields so that's been taken into consideration so....
Sean Mackenzie	You've put a costing there for £200,000 for a flaming changing room. Why don't you price the land and take that into consultation for building a new school? That should be considered. Don't put in something and take something out. Put it on an even keel for us.
Calum Mackenzie	Sorry, what we have done is kept it on an even keel because what we've considered the end picture for each of the options we've considered and the option for Paible was to demolish the school and to retain the playing field and that what's been costed. What you're saying is that we should sell the whole site. That's not being one, that's not being considered because we have no confidence that somebody would buy that site in the present condition and in the present climate and that is going through experience of similar sites over the last number of years.
Sean Mackenzieput in for £200,000 for a changing room because people have changed in their cars for years. We've played in every park in Lewis, in Uist and on the mainland and not everyone's got a changing room. I know it might be thingy but I don't think that should be considered in the other schools bids. I'm just saying like, it's my opinion.
Calum Mackenzie	I believe that's been answered by Mr Macphail earlier on and I think going forward you're wanting to provide better facilities as you're going on in the years. You don't want to take a step back in facilities and that's again as Mr Macphail spoke about earlier on I think that's been answered.
Joanne Ferguson	We carried out a monkey survey of parents of their preferred location just prior to you coming out and announcing your own preferred location which I'll send to yourselves but just for interest 80% of parents voted for Cladach Illeray as their first or second choice and there were over 42% of parents actively against the Paible site. Does that surprise you? And would the Council have taken that into account if it had that information in from of them when taking the decision?
Catriona Stewart	When you say parents are you talking about Lochmaddy, Carinish and Paible?
Joanne Ferguson	Yes.
Calum Mackenzie	Can I maybe come in on that? With that kind of survey you haven't given them any technical information or the educational benefits of either site so it's purely a heartfelt where they want to have the school. We have technically evaluated three preferred sites and we are presenting the evidence to you on why we think that we have come up with Paible as the preferred site. So I think it's very important in every decision making process that you have is that you have al the relevant information before you.
Joanne Ferguson	Well they had seen the relevant information from Dan's presentation at the last conversation meeting at the hall, that has been outlined to them so they were

	aware of that and I'm sure they could have accessed it on your website or as I did ask Peter for copies of information so I don't believe that didn't have the information in front of them but one thing that was missing from your deliberations was the parents' views.
Dan Macphail	Just one point there. You will recall that during that meeting the technical report hadn't been completed and I addressed that a number of times during that night and the technical report came after that meeting so I didn't have all the information either at that point and I made that very clear on the night and anybody that was there I'm sure would concur with that.
Catriona Stewart	And the decision that was reached by Councillors was having taken cognisance of the full technical report that was in front of them as well as the educational benefits that were outlined by the Director. We have to make decisions based on fact and evidence.
Joanne Ferguson	Correct me if I'm wrong here but surely the big difference between the two sites were that there was a cost and there was the ownership that was going to delay things with the Clachan site. These were the two big things was it not?
Catriona Stewart	There was some of them but there were other significant costs. We are talking about services which the officers are better placed to talk about than I am.
Dan Macphail	One of the major impacts on the site selection is the provision of services. Now in the Paible site you have adequate water, waste water and electricity services. If you were to go to the other two sites you have water connection which should be easy enough, electricity reasonably easy, waste water is a big issue and you would have to provide new waste water infrastructure which you would expect or you would hope that Scottish Water would adopt but then there is an adoption procedure to go through that. But the whole cost of that decision would come in the development because it's not serving anything else but the development and that is one of the major swaying factors with the sites.
Joanne Ferguson	Yes I noticed you'd added that to the cost, that's fair enough, but that's balanced out partly by the cost of demolishing Paible school if you use that site so the costs are far more balanced, far more equivalent if you take out the £200,000 changing rooms it becomes very similar then. The costs of the two sites.
Dan Macphail	There's still about £300,000 in the difference.
Joanne Ferguson	I make it about £200,000.
Dan Macphail	You've got to look at the complete picture so you've got the demolition cost you've actually included for Paible as well.
Joanne Ferguson	Yes I noticed that. If you chose the Paible site for the demolition costs. You do note in your report that there might be additional costs there if you encounter things like asbestos or something else nasty so it might cost more than what you've outlined at the moment.
Dan Macphail	Well asbestos has been taken into account from what we know. The asbestos surveys, as you may be aware, are at this stage non-intrusive so you might find something. To the best of our knowledge these are all the costs.
Joanne Ferguson	Yeah. And what about broadband? I mean as we are all aware high speed broadband will be coming into Lochmaddy next year sometime hopefully so the further away you get from the point that it hits the island the lower your speed and the more expensive it is to get to the place so if your school is at Paible in the near future it will cost you more to get broadband, high speed broadband there from where it enters the island at Lochmaddy than it would if your site was at Clachan.
Robert Emmott	The Council's in a procurement exercise at the moment for the replacement of broadband facilities. I don't think that the cost between, and its likely there will be

	<p>a bespoke solution for Paible as it stands at the moment obviously it will change when the council reaches its decision on where the schools going to be. It's likely it will be dedicated specific service for wherever the new school is. So wherever it is its unlikely to be significantly cost. It will be a higher cost probably if the; I can't remember if the fibres coming into Lochmaddy, but if it's at Lochmaddy then clearly it will be cheaper in broadband terms to have the school in Lochmaddy. Whether it's in any of these three sites I don't think it will be significantly different between the sites. There will be an additional cost of getting the broadband to it. There already is an additional cost of getting broadband to the three schools at the moment.</p>
Joanne Ferguson	<p>But surely it must cost more to get from Clachan to Bayhead in broadband terms? That must cost more.</p>
Robert Emmott	<p>It depends on what solution is provided to us and we don't know what that's going to be at the moment so it is difficult to tell. But if your taking it from, and I don't know how BT will put the infrastructure in, and another company which may or may not be will provide the Council with its service so it's too early to say but I think you've got in broadband terms three difficult to reach sites and I don't think it's possible to say there's a significant difference and I don't think anyone can. BT are very very careful about what information they'll disclose at the moment but I think you all know that the service will improve and hopefully will reduce the cost overall. I don't think from what we know at the moment there'll be significant difference between these three sites.</p>
Unknown Male	<p>I wonder if somebody from the council can actually clarify the pre-school provision within the new school. We have a centre at Kirkibost which the Council actually put a lot of money into making happen and then we're going to effectively replace it with a new build section of the new school at significant cost and I'm wondering why we are actually doing it? Why aren't we just retaining the existing provision? That my first question. My second question is more a statement in that I feel the Council should be listening to what the views of the parents in the local area and finding a technical solution that matches that desire.</p>
Peter Carpenter	<p>Is your second point a technical point?</p>
Unknown male	<p>It's not really technical no. I think there is always a technical solution and there is always a strong feeling for Clachan and I think we shouldn't be getting muddled up with technical issues. I know there's a cost associated with that but the first thing should be to try and meet the desires of the community.</p>
Peter Carpenter	<p>Okay I'll try and answer your first point about the pre-school provision. As I said in my opening comments actually parents intimated to us through a whole range of discussions and correspondence indicating that for some parents their preferred arrangement would be a single site so there is a range of views. Educationally speaking as a teacher I think the significant advantages of having 3-5 provision in a single school with primary and I think I outlined so I'll not repeat myself, I think there is educational value in providing 3-11. The 0-3 element I think we've addressed already and I would say from an educational point of view there are advantages of having that again in a single site. But where ambitious to maintain the current provision in a single school site I think there is many significant advantages educationally in providing care and education in all three situations with the Curriculum for Excellence requiring us to think about children's needs from the very earliest age. The first level is about children of that age achieving and therefore the advantage of continuity of education, consistency of leadership, curriculum planning has been proven to be successful in many ranges of educational sources and primary schools throughout the country so I think we have different views. I think that's fair of you to say that but from an education point of view there's significant advantages of having single site provision.</p>
Unknown Male	<p>Inaudible</p>
Peter Carpenter	<p>There wasn't just myself actually my colleague Allan has been in schools over the</p>

	<p>last couple of days so we sort of shared the responsibility. I'll say a little bit about the children I met in Paible today. We met I think with all of the children but in different groups and I had a colleague with me who speaks Gaelic better than I do and she spoke to the children who were wanting to communicate in Gaelic so I think we got a good representation of their views. In Paible the children talked a lot about the Friday events that they've enjoyed recently that the schools had organised. The benefits of working with more children of the same age and the range of activities that were available at the schools staff had provided. They saw many benefits in a new school, I think quite a few of them had been to Balivanich for sports activities and joint events so they had a picture of what a new school would look like.</p>
	<p>They are very keen to have a voice in what a new school would look like and I think that's very important that we sort of build that into the process as best we can. I think they wanted a windmill, they wanted an eco-school, the windmill being part of that so they're sort of the same message. We also asked if they had any concerns. What would be their worries about going to a new school and I must be honest in Paible very few expressed. They are very keen to make new friends, have better facilities than they have at the moment so that was Paible and perhaps Allan would say a little bit about the other two schools, would that be alright?</p>
Allan Smithyman	<p>Yes I met with the children in Lochmaddy yesterday and Carinish. We asked exactly the same questions so there could be consistency for the children. I met all the children in fact with another colleague and exactly the same thing as Peter was saying came out. The vast majority of children were very keen to get together with others. They could see the advantages of having bigger classes and other activities with children the same age. A lot of interestingly in both Lochmaddy and here the older children saw that one of the main advantages is that they wouldn't have to do music with primary 1's because they 'Inaudible'. That's all natural. There were concerns though about it being a larger building and they might get lost. Some children suggest we could have a timetable like they had on the getting together day. They all seemed to enjoy that even though some of them lost their timetable so we need to make sure we have spares. These are the kind of discussions that we had with them. They were asking all about their concerns. They are genuine, these are about although it would be great to be in other classes and meet new friend as some people said the friends that I have in the other school I could see them every day. There were concerns about a larger school and these kind of things. One person even mentioned bullying which is natural for children to say. A number of them expressed concerns about that the would no longer be at this school and particularly primary 7's of course wont be going to the new school they will be moving onto Liniolate by then but a genuine affection for the schools that they are in and again that's absolutely natural. My favourite though today was when a young man suggested, we talked about what kind of things that you might like to see in a new school, there were things like vegetable garden, poly tunnel and a go karting track so that suggestion seemed to get wide spread acceptance from everybody else. I thought that was just a great idea. So there was a degree of enthusiasm but by and large a lot of very positive comments but at the same time that kind of concern that the school that they had spent seven years in wouldn't be there for them. So for the most part the children are very positive about these things. You can even understand some of them said we get a better education because we'll be in groups with the same peers so there was a lot of thought going into their answers and personally speaking it was really good fun.</p>
Catriona Stewart	<p>Can I just say that I obviously had the opportunity to visit new schools on the first day of when some schools have amalgamated and I visited one in Lewis with the then Director of Education and the children made it quite clear that they would like to stay on in the school because it was exciting, it was new so when we asked then you know okay what's so good today – the cakes. So they genuinely enjoyed coming together and it was exciting for them because their new schools. They have facilities that are fantastic in comparison to what we have been able to offer in the older buildings so of course there are concerns and we recognise that. We would always make sure that wherever schools come together to form a new</p>

	school you know that staff are aware of these problems and look out. But enthusiasm mostly and when they get there total excitement.
Un named Male	You mentioned a wind turbine. Is there a provision for a wind turbine at the new school?
Dan Macphail	One of the requirements of the WISP project was to achieve a Bream Excellent score and that involved implementing a number of sustainable techniques so just passive and active measures of energy efficiency.
	In the WISP project the design team reviewed the merits of renewable technologies and ultimately in the end the solution was a mixture of both passive and active techniques for example active measures would be air source heat pumps and PV panels to heat the hot water. Rain water harvesting, these kinds of things they're all existing in all new schools. Passive measures were for example additional insulation to better the building regulation, natural daylighting. You've probably noticed that Balivanich and Daliburgh that they have the full height glazing panels to reduce things like putting artificial lighting in. So a wind turbine would have been considered in the mix there as well. The reason wasn't considered appropriate in the a case of this schools whether or not that remains the care for Paible remains to be seen and would be left to the design development. During design development these things would be looked at. Does that answer you question?
Un-named Male	'Inaudible'Sometimes the MOD block things like that up here depending on how close you are to Cleitival and that would probably considered so I just didn't know.
Robert Fraser	I can just answer that for you. You will not get consent for a wind turbine at Paible.
Dan Macphail	Sorry??
Robert Fraser	You would not get consent for a wind turbine at Paible.
Dan Macphail	That may be true. I'm happy to take any advice on that.
Un-named male	You would at Clachan.
Joanne Ferguson	Could I ask a question about opening times for the proposed new school at Paible? The reason I ask is that obviously Carinish and Lochmaddy close at 3pm. Paible has a different closing time but if the Carinish and Lochmaddy pupils would be expected to travel further we would expect that to be 3pm for the new school as a closing time.
Peter Carpenter	There has been no decision as yet about the exact times and that would be something that would be done later obviously in consultation with the Parent Councils and looking at the transport arrangements. Now we have an opportunity in the development in the school in April 2015 with the tendering specification for the new bus contracts that would be part of the process of designing and developing the school and making arrangements for day to day organisation of the school. So there has been no decision made yet about the timings but obviously we would need to be consider the current arrangements and matching that to meet the needs of the children's, the parents and the staff in the school.
Joanne Ferguson	But you would take parents views into account for that.
Peter Carpenter	Absolutely
Oliver Foot	I have a question regarding catering, are you hoping to provide food on the premises or cooked on the premises.
Peter Carpenter	Yes. Can I just add as well that obviously fresh food cooked here not brought in?

Oliver Foot	In a van from elsewhere. Just one other question, if no-one else wants it for a minute? Regarding the assets of existing buildings. I have a concern about the long term future of people here and employment particularly and I am wondering whether the Council rather than looking at the buildings that will be closed if they were looking at them as an asset to be disposed of I wonder if they have considered the possibility of taking them on board and trying to make small business units or any other asset to come in rather than to dispose of them and get a lump sum, possibly at the beginning and just get rid of them basically.
Calum Mackenzie	Well the initial step of the disposal process is as soon as it ceases to become a school it will be surplus to the Education Department's requirements. The first stage is to check with all other council Departments. Whether they have aspirations to use that for any other need, that includes the Development Department who would take a lead in that. So if there was a need and that was seen as being the most economic way of delivering that need there is no reason why your suggestion will not go forward. However, just the practical difficulties with that are they are generally quite old buildings, not really well suited to developing into business units so new business units may just be looked at on green field sites. However, it doesn't rule out that suggestion that for development purposes it could be looked at.
Oliver Foot	You say they are not good buildings but I think these buildings have probably been built better than a lot of the houses have up here so I tend to disagree. They may not be fuel efficient but as far as the fabric of the buildings I think they could be last quite well.
Calum Mackenzie	Potentially but your probably looking at spending quite a bit of money to do that. I agree with you they've got lovely character, you would like to retain them as assets within the community and we have achieved that with a few of the schools however, you have to take into account that somebody will have to run these in the future. We are looking, and I think even more so, at energy prices going up. Very topical in the headlines. Everybody is going to looking for energy efficient buildings and unfortunately old buildings are not energy efficient and to make them energy efficient you're talking a lot of money.
Sean Mackenzie	You've chosen your three sites. If some new information came up about one of your other sites would you review it again? I'm sorry folks, I know this is a Lochmaddy thing but we had the hospital site there with power and with waste disposal facilities and everything at the moment. It's just that, sorry about this again but, now that site, could you tell me why it was not considered?
Dan Macphail	There is various reasons for it.
Sean Mackenzie	Could you list them to me?
Dan Macphail	Sure.
Sean Mackenzie	The good points.
Dan Macphail	Are you actually talking about the sites or are you talking about.....
Sean Mackenzie	The hospital site. Why is it not being considered at the moment?
Dan Macphail	One of the main considerations there was that it belongs to someone else so you're looking at acquisition. There were also discussions that it was going to be used for something else so from that perspective the potential availability was under significant risk so we looked at the various risks to actually delivering this project. Peter mentioned earlier that one of the things that we want to do is to get into operation as soon as possible for the children. Looking at land acquisition can lead to significant delays in construction not to mention cost and really the uncertainty of the position of the site was one of the major factors in discounting

	that site.
Sean Mackenzie	Do you mind if I throw over some information. I'm part of the committee that are looking to try and buy the hospital land. We're going to develop it but we never really considered putting it forward for a new school. We always thought Clachan would be better but we would like you to consider it as well because the acquisition is £135,000 that is what they are asking for us to buy so that the costing of it. You've got an 8 acre site. 2 of it is a loch, I've got to admit it's a big site and you have provision for a lot of other rooms. You can use that loch for many things as you say heating sources anything that uses water. It's got quite a good bit there but I hate to say it but it's the capital of North Uist. Where's Tarbert? Where is the school in Harris? In Tarbert. Where's the school in Stornoway? The Nici, in the town. I hate so say it here but the collage are looking to take sixty students there for art. They're talking of Gaelic, trying to promote Gaelic there in learning. That could be incorporated into the school. I don't know if we could get to the collage to bring in them as well into building or helping with the build of the school and incorporating part art college, Gaelic college anything like that because we have no provision and we would like more of that to be brought in and we have a chance here maybe of incorporating that and the collage are looking and they are coming down next week to review the hospital at this moment and they would like, and I'm sure if yourself and the college got together maybe you could cut the costs a wee bit and maybe they would help out but it's something to look into. Would you be interested in that?
Catriona Stewart	Well I think what we have in front of us is a proposal that has to be looked at and a decision has been before council. They have decided that this is the preferred site. If we were going to start again we would be in a situation where you are almost going back to the beginning and there is a risk attached to that as well but I will take advice from officers.
Dan Macphail	One of the major risks here is speculation and I have been involved with various agencies looking at the use of other sites as well and although they can be very good ideas at the start unless we very quickly bottom out these potentials and get agreement we could be years down the line before all the agencies manage to meet and agree on funding packages, on designs etc. So that is just another list you would fit into this process that we could not meet timescales and it may not come of in the long term either and we might just revert back to the start. That's just a point on my experience in that field.
Sean Mackenzie	I'm sorry to put it like this but will give me straight answer. Will you consider it or not? I would like that please.
Lesley McDonald	The decision on this will be made by 31 elected members. The people who are going to make the decision aren't in the room tonight, some of them are. Two of them are, two people in here will be part of that decision. As I said earlier a representation can be positive, it can be negative. The decision that will face the Council in February is do you go with the Paible site or don't you go with the Paible site and if you want to put it in information saying you should not go with the Paible site because another site would be better then that's what the Council will take into account in reaching their decision. So the thing is if you've got something to say put it in a representation to us and we undertake that will go before the 31 elected Members.
Dan Macphail	If I could very briefly add to that. My instruction at the outset of this process was to look at sites in the Clachan area and Paible and I actually asked permission to widen that out so that other sites may be considered because I wanted to follow the same process as was followed in Benbecula for example when we were looking for a site at Balivanich so I actually asked permission just to be as fair as we possibly could. We went back and had a look at Lochmaddy and asked the technical guys to look at Lochmaddy as part of the process.
Catriona Stewart	Thank you very much everyone. The Comhairle will review the proposal having regard to the HMIe Report, written representations and oral representations made at public meetings. A consultation report will then be prepared which will be

published in electronic and printed formats and its availability will be published in local news papers. The report will be available on the Comhairle website and from Comhairle Offices as well as the affected schools free of charge. This consultation report together with any relevant documentation will be considered by the Education and Children's Services Committee on 4 February 2014 for their recommendation and the Committee's recommendation will then be subject to the approval of the Comhairle on 13 February 2014. Should the Comhairle decide to close any of the schools at this stage it is required to notify Scottish Ministers of that decision and provide them with a copy of the proposal document and 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. If Scottish Ministers call in the proposal they may refuse to consent to the proposal or grant their consent to the proposal subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of that 6 week period Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the 6 week call in process has been notified to the Comhairle the Comhairle will not proceed to implement the proposal. The last date for the receipt of written submissions is 5pm on Friday 22 November 2013. All submissions should be forwarded to Mr Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Sandwick Road, Stornoway or electronically to schoolsconsulttion@cne-siar.gov.uk. That address is actually at 3.5 in the proposal document. Thank you all very much for your attendance this evening. Moran Taing agus oichdh mhath dhuibh uile.