



**BARRA AND VATERSAY COMMUNITY CAMPUS**

Report by Chief Executive and Project Manager

**PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to provide an update on progress of the Barra and Vatersay Community Campus (BVCC) Project.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The previous update Report, though welcoming the First Minister's programme for government announcement, highlighted aspects of project governance, project delivery, project scope and project risk that required clarity from the Scottish Government.
- 2.2 At a strategic level, senior Comhairle officers have been meeting with senior Scottish Government officials and await further direction regarding aspects of project governance and procurement and project delivery. Once these decisions are made, the design team and project management team can be engaged, and work can recommence on the developing the design to market testing stage. In a recent meeting, Scottish Government officials confirmed their view that the delivery programme would more likely be around a five-year period as opposed to a longer term +10-year masterplan approach.
- 2.3 In relation to project resources and project delivery, the need for additional internal resources has been identified and the scope of these requirements is currently being considered by Human Resources.
- 2.4 In relation to project scope, work has continued with re-engaging project stakeholders on key elements of the project scope and further detail is provided within the body of the Report.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended the Comhairle note the Report.

Contact Officer: Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive, and Dan Macphail, Project Manager  
Appendix: None  
Background Papers: Report to Policy and Resources Committee of 18 June 2025.

**IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	The financial implications of progressing the project were set out detail in sections 5 of the report considered at the Special Meeting of the Comhairle held on 11 July 2024. The Comhairle's available remaining capital budget allocation is circa £11.9m taking into account project expenditure to date.

Legal	The BVCC project, as per the previous design, requires the purchase of additional land and this transaction requires to be concluded.
Staffing	The project will require additional human resources to enhance resilience around what will be a high-risk project. These staffing requirements will be more clearly defined following confirmation of the project delivery structure.
Assets and Property	The delay in progressing a new school project is increasing the risks associated with maintaining the existing school. Further capital expenditure on the existing school building(s) prior to the completion of new facilities is inevitable.
<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Implications/None</b>
Risk	The need for replacement education and leisure facilities for the Barra and Vatersay community is well known. Equally, abortive costs, project affordability/viability remains the principal risk moving forward. Irrespective of scope and delivery programme, this project will be a high corporate risk to the Comhairle due to its location, scale and cost.
Equalities	None at this stage
Corporate Strategy	Both the BVCC and the provision of new educational and leisure facilities for Barra and Vatersay are supported by the Corporate Strategy
Environmental Impact	None at this stage though the scale of the project will invariably have an environmental impact which will be assessed in more detail via the planning process in the first instance.
Consultation	A revised project communications plan requires to be finalised.

## PROJECT SCOPE

- 5.1 In terms of project scope and the education and sports provision, the current working assumption is the project scope will be consistent with the BVCC scheme as previously designed to RIBA Stage 1 and which comprised a 100% new build campus.

### Accommodation Schedules

- 5.2 Towards the end of the 2024/25 school year, work was undertaken on reviewing and revising the proposed accommodation schedules. This involved sessions with school management and staff and while there are no material changes to the school roll projections and the capacity of the school, some time has passed following the approval of the original schedules. Several amendments to the schedules are anticipated to reflect changes in the curriculum, feedback from staff as well as the need to incorporate emerging good practice design such as neuro-inclusive design principles to create a more supportive and enabling learning environment. Further sessions are planned with the school staff in the short term with a view to finalising and freezing the accommodation schedules in the short term to facilitate design development.

### Barra Children's Centre (BCC)

- 5.3 Having considered various new build/refurbishment/remodelling options for the Barra Children's Centre over the last 12 months, Scottish Government's recommitment to the BVCC projects means the Barra Children Centre will be included as part of the new build campus. The project team hope to meet with BCC staff and Board representatives soon to undertake a similar review to ensure the proposed design meets the BCC's operational requirements.

#### UHI North, West and Hebrides – Barra Learning Centre

- 5.4 UHI North, West and Hebrides is currently reviewing its estate requirements and has held discussions with the Comhairle in relation to how the existing learning centre in Castlebay could be better utilised. It is helpful this discussion is now taking place in the context of Scottish Government's renewed support of the BVCC project which allows a holistic view to be taken in relation to other aspects of the Comhairle's estate in Barra, the requirements of other public agencies and the many third sector groups in the area that use this facility on a regular and occasional basis.

#### Sports Facilities

- 5.5 In terms of sports provision, it is anticipated the project proposals would revert to the original BVCC scheme that included a new swimming pool, fitness suite, three badminton court games hall, 60m x 40m 3G pitch, and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). The project team will continue to consult school stakeholders and the Barra Sports Forum as the project briefing and design development continues. The project team are aware of an ongoing community led project regarding the existing MUGA and will work closely with the community as this project develops.

#### Renewable Energy, Heat Network, Energy System

- 5.6 In 2018, a Local Energy Plan (LEP) was developed for the islands. The overall aim of the Plan was to identify potential energy-related projects that would support low carbon objectives with local benefits such as fuel poverty reduction and employment. An Energy Technology Partnership (ETP) Scoping Study Report was undertaken in 2018 by Strathclyde University, and its aim was to consider, both technically and financially, several specific energy related opportunities raised within the LEP and by the community, with a focus on those that are achievable in the short-term. Following an initial screening analysis, two potential energy system projects were identified; a heat network in Castlebay with additional potential for a private-wire wind connection, and a multi-customer private wire system for the Northbay area. The Study considered the then anticipated BVCC project.
- 5.7 Having revisited this report and having discussed the matter recently with Coimhearsnachd Bharraigh agus Bhatarsaigh (Barra and Vatersay Community) Ltd, it is likely the best approach, especially given the varied and often complex inter-dependencies associated with community energy schemes, is for the BVCC project to maximise on site energy generation and storage through its design.