

Future Facilities for Drumoak Primary School

Report of Public Meeting at 1915 hours on 14 June in the Drumoak Church Hall

1. Present

Those present at the meeting included C Charnley, P Fimpel, D Gray, R Skinner, G Wight, D Hecton, M Gibb, A McNeil, M Henderson, Rev. J Scott, P Cruickshank, C Cruickshank, A Smith, P Cooper, P McConnachie, M Robertson, Cllr. A Wallace, P Wilson, H Willan, M Robertson, M Keith, J Hopkins

2. Presentation

The objectives of the meeting were to:-

- Describe the meeting with Education Department on 7 March
- Describe interim comments made by Drumoak School Board and CDDCC for Education & Recreation Committee prior to 26 May meeting
- Discuss the comments and collect feedback from today's meeting
- Decide next steps

A presentation was given by J Hopkins covering the first two items, in the context of possible growth scenarios for Drumoak itself.

The point was made that the interim comments had been developed by a working group drawn from the Drumoak School Board (DSB) and the Crathes, Drumoak and Durris Community Council (CDDCC). Because of the deadline for the 26 May meeting, it had not been possible to organise public consultation in advance. That was the main purpose of the present meeting.

The interim comments are shown in the document "school_report_DK_mod.pdf"

3. Discussion

- 3.1 The point was made that Mr G Wight had undertaken to provide land for a possible extension of the existing site at low cost.
- 3.2 Responding to a question from the floor, Cllr. Wallace said that whether the decision in Drumoak were to be a redeveloped school on the existing site or a new school on a new site, this would have no effect on the future of Crathes School. A new school in Drumoak did not mean that Crathes had to close.
- 3.3 The question was posed as to why the specification was for 120 pupils. Paul Wilson stated that the Council projection for Drumoak School roll in 2011 was 120. His own, informal, projection indicated at least that number. The point was also made that school sizes were based on integer numbers of teachers. A specification of 120 pupils was believed to warrant six teachers. A comment was made that school roll projections were notoriously inaccurate and that Drumoak should press for a flexible solution, able to cover all credible eventualities.
- 3.4 The possibility of using the Drumoak Community Hall site for the new school was raised, but it was noted that this would mean the vast majority of pupils having to walk along the main road.
- 3.5 In response to the question of how long it would take to create the new school, Cllr. Wallace said that this might depend on the Scottish Executive's preparedness to allocate funds, although – if the plight of Drumoak were seen to be the most urgent need within

Aberdeenshire – funding might yet come from Aberdeenshire Council’s “own” resources. He considered that the fastest possible time to completion from today would be three years.

- 3.6 The mother of a 2 year old noted that such a timescale would mean severe disruption of her child’s schooling if the decision were made to redevelop on the existing site.
- 3.7 The view was expressed (and generally supported) that children should not have to cross the main road.
- 3.8 The point was also made that a school near the sewage works would be undesirable, as the smell would be highly distracting.
- 3.9 The question was asked whether the Keithmuir Park option would definitely be served by a new road, since the existing roads were crowded and dangerous. J Hopkins said that – as envisaged by DSB/CDDCC – this was an essential part of the proposal, in order to permit school transport vehicles etc. onto site. The possibility of accessing the Keithmuir Park site via the Sunnyside Farm road (the lane on the north side of the site) was mooted, but thought impracticable.
- 3.10 Cllr Wallace made the point that – by careful design, CCTV etc. - it would be possible to “design out” vandalism from the new school site. Another point was that – with evolving evening use, as a result of the incorporation of community facilities – vandalism would be less likely. This would mean better security for those backing onto the Keithmuir Park site than at present, since it would be fenced rather than open.
- 3.11 Some disappointment was expressed at the small size of classrooms and school hall at Banff School (a recently-completed school). The question of open-plan versus individual classrooms was also raised. This underlined for everybody the need to see in detail what was, in due course, to be proposed by the Education Department for the new school.
- 3.12 P Wilson asked for a show of hands, as to which option was supported by the meeting. The result was:-

- Option A (redevelop on existing site) – **no votes**
- Option B (new site to north of church hall) – **no votes**
- Option C (new site between former railway line and Keith’s Muir) – **no votes**
- Option D (Keithmuir Park plus replacement park option) – **seventeen votes**

4. Conclusion

It was concluded that the public meeting supported the recommendations made in the interim comments produced by DSB/CDDCC and sent to the Education Department for the 26 May report.

5. Feedback

J Hopkins undertook to advise the Education Department of the outcome of the present meeting.

Email and postal addresses were collected. J Hopkins undertook that all addressees would receive updates about any relevant future developments.

JFH 15/6/05